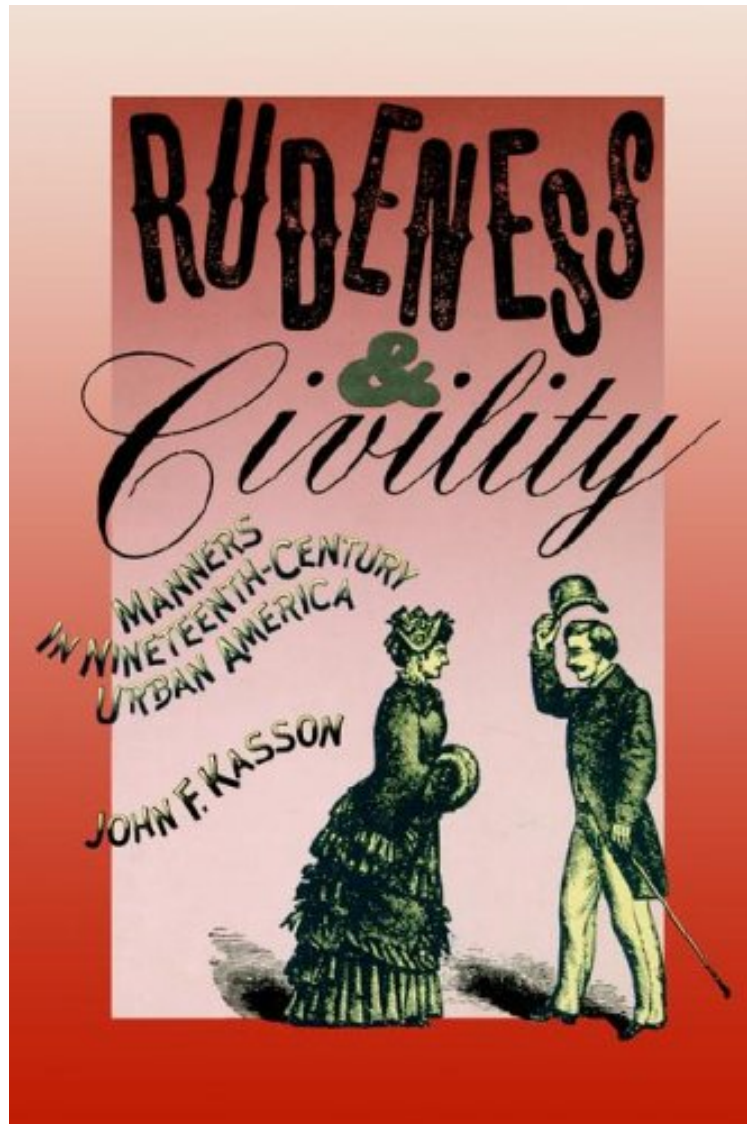


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Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America

John F. Kasson

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4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Good History on the History of PolitenessBy Lionel S. TaylorThis book traces the history of manners in the U.S. and in many ways as the book makes clear this is really a history of the rise of the middle class in this country and its efforts to distinguish itself from the lower classes and rural farmers. This is also a history of the growing material culture in the United States and how that in conjunction with the rise of middle class self consciousness prompted a growing industry of books about how one presented oneself to the wider world. This is an academic book but it is not dull by any means. The author does a good job of dividing the different types of manners into way that one body and manners were controlled in public. The book also makes the point that this quest for refinement continues to this day with the focus now being more on the internal character and self improvement just as much as public improvement. This book will appeal to anyone interested in manner of just how people behaved in the 19th century and what was considered good and bad behavior in public. As one reviewer has already pointed out it is not popular history but it is still a book that someone with a general interest in history would find interesting.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Carol JoyceGreat book lots of information for interesting reading or a sociology student and behaviors6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Disagreement with the 3-star reader (I liked it)By FelicityJohn F. Kasson is not about how idiosyncratic Victorian Americans were but about us in the contemporary world. It all depends on what you are looking for of course, but I found this book accessible, informative, and well written. It is a great introductory book for those who have never thought about these things, which is , in my view, the case for most of us.

With keen insight and subtle humor, John F. Kasson explores the history and politics of etiquette from America's colonial times through the nineteenth century. He describes the transformation of our notion of "gentility," once considered a birthright to some, and the development of etiquette as a middle-class response to the new urban and industrial economy and to the excesses of democratic society.

Kasson adds an important and delightful dimension to our previously narrow understanding of the history of everyday life in the United States. His book offers a wonderful way to trace the relationship between socioeconomic change and cultural norms. Michael Kammen, Cornell UniversityAbout the AuthorJohn F. Kasson, who teaches history and American studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is the author of *Houdini*, *Tarzan and the Perfect Man*; *Amusing the Million*; *Rudeness and Civility*; and *Civilizing the Machine*.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.*Rudeness and Civility*