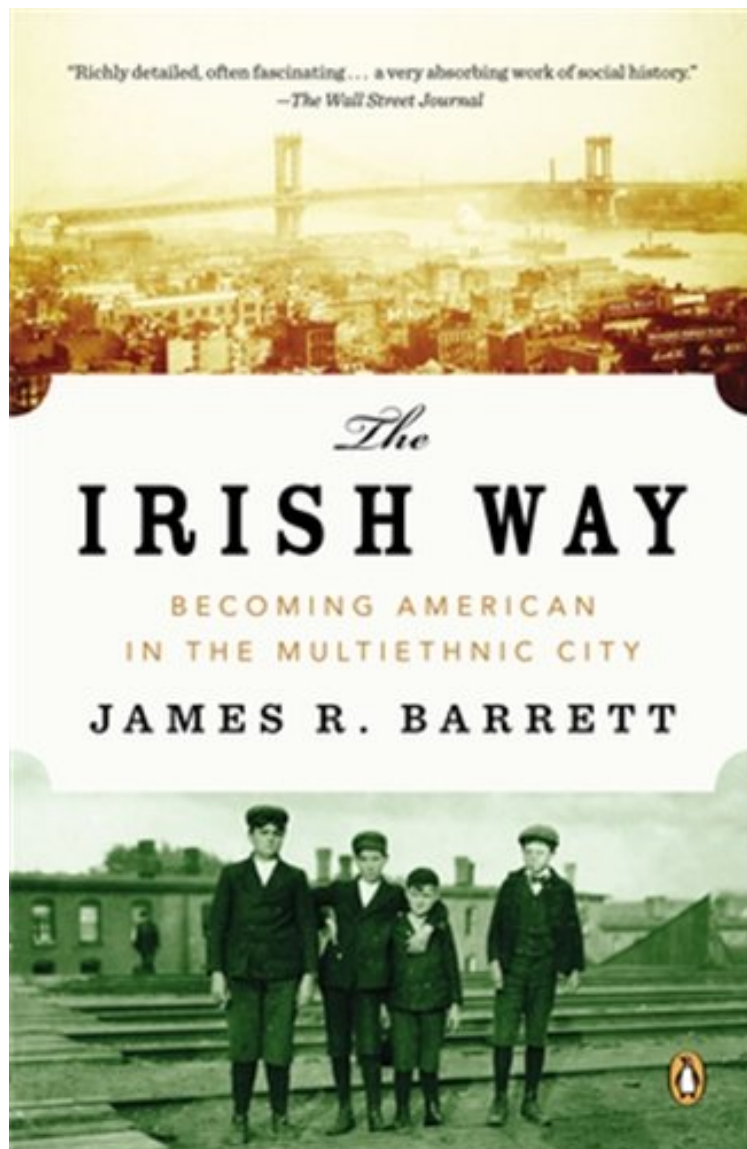


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James R. Barrett

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James R. Barrett : The Irish Way: Becoming American in the Multiethnic City (Penguin History of American Life) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Irish Way: Becoming American in the Multiethnic City (Penguin History of American Life):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. What I Didn't Know About My Fellow IrishBy P. Lynn KearneyIn the '50's, I grew up in the West in a family dominated by the Irish side, in a parish dominated by Irish clergy and in a community in which many Irish (my father included) still worked for the railroads. I never knew the prejudice faced by the Irish who peopled The Irish Way. I never knew how the Irish sometimes fought with and demeaned other ethnic groups. I never thought about the importance of the Irish in unions and public service. I never realized that educating Irish daughters (as I was) was a long tradition as was teaching (which I did for 43 years) and nursing. I never realized how the Irish infiltrated the entertainment industry nor did I realize how ubiquitous was the Irish politician. As Professor Barrett says, the farther west the Irish went, the better it got. I would love to see him write a history of the Irish in the West.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Easy to Read, Gives Great Historic PerspectiveBy davebresExtremely well-written, with great references to sources. This book does a great job of giving historic perspective to the impact the Irish have made in America, and particularly the impact they made on other immigrants for other countries.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommend this book for anyone interested in Irish historyBy CustomerWell written, well balanced, and thoughtful, James Barrett's book tells us not only what was happening but why. The social forces surrounding the immigration experience transcend the Irish experience, though for various reasons the Irish experience is unique. This is a must read for anyone interested in Irish history, immigration history, or labor history.

In the newest volume in the award-winning Penguin History of American Life series, James R. Barrett chronicles how a new urban American identity was forged in the streets, saloons, churches, and workplaces of the American city. This process of "Americanization from the bottom up" was deeply shaped, Barrett argues, by the Irish. From Lower Manhattan to the South Side of Chicago to Boston's North End, newer waves of immigrants and African Americans found it nearly impossible to avoid the Irish. While historians have emphasized the role of settlement houses and other mainstream institutions in Americanizing immigrants, Barrett makes the original case that the culture absorbed by newcomers upon reaching American shores had a distinctly Hibernian cast. By 1900, there were more people of Irish descent in New York City than in Dublin; more in the United States than in all of Ireland. But in the late nineteenth century, the sources of immigration began to shift, to southern and eastern Europe and beyond. Whether these newcomers wanted to save their souls, get a drink, find a job, or just take a stroll in the neighborhood, they had to deal with Irish Americans. Barrett reveals how the Irish vacillated between a progressive and idealistic impulse toward their fellow immigrants and a parochial defensiveness stemming from the hostility earlier generations had faced upon their own arrival in America. They imparted racist attitudes toward African Americans; they established ethnic "deadlines" across city neighborhoods; they drove other immigrants from docks, factories, and labor unions. Yet the social teachings of the Catholic Church, a sense of solidarity with the oppressed, and dark memories of poverty and violence in both Ireland and America ushered in a wave of progressive political activism that eventually embraced other immigrants. Drawing on contemporary sociological studies and diaries, newspaper accounts, and Irish American literature, *The Irish Way* illustrates how the interactions between the Irish and later immigrants on the streets, on the vaudeville stage, in Catholic churches, and in workplaces helped forge a multi-ethnic American identity that has a profound legacy in the USA today.

Richly detailed, often fascinating . . . a very absorbing work of social history. *The Wall Street Journal*"A fast-paced tour." *The Boston Globe*The *Irish Way* will be of high interest to anyone who cherishes the old industrial cities of America and, of course, the Irish story. *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*Barrett has written an excellent, bottom-up survey of the Irish experience over the past two centuries . . . he is most successful in describing the Americanization of policemen, teachers, nuns, and even gang leaders. This is a superior ethnic study that will have value for both scholars and general readers. *Booklist*Portraying colorful characters like New York reformer politician boss Timothy Sullivan and showing how the blending of African-American and Irish dance resulted in tap dancing, Barrett gives us an authoritative, fact-filled analysis. *Publishers Weekly*About the AuthorJAMES R. BARRETT is a professor of history at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of *William Z. Foster and the Tragedy of American Radicalism* and lives in Champaign, Illinois.