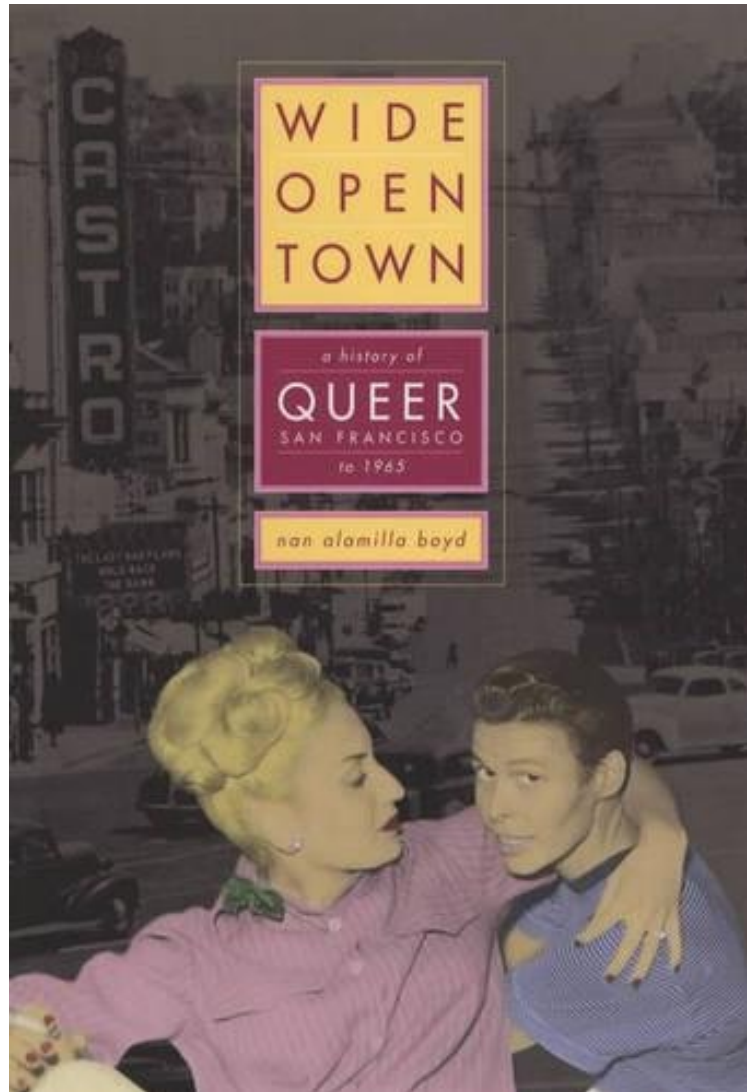


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Wide-Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965

Nan Alamilla Boyd

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Nan Alamilla Boyd : Wide-Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wide-Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Thorough history of a fascinating era!By Frank ButterfieldGreat book and great research. So many interesting facts and bits. As always, some of the best parts are in the footnotes, which are meticulous.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Item - Fast Shipping - Will Purchase AgainBy A. RaymondInteresting Book on History of Gay Life in San Francisco4 of 8 people found the following

review helpful. Lots of information presented all over the place. By Student77 First of all, I was looking for a book written more along the lines of the George Chauncey's, "Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940". This book is well researched and clearly proves that there was a thriving gay culture in San Francisco well before the Stonewall uprising in New York. The idea that San Francisco was able to sustain a gay community based upon its "wide open" ideology and its status as a shipping port and military base also helped further cement this position as a gay bulwark in America. The only problem I had with this book, is that it covers a lot of minutia which makes it somewhat of a laborious read and I found myself skipping ahead. All in all, this is a good book and is priced right for a digital book.

Wide-Open Town traces the history of gay men and lesbians in San Francisco from the turn of the century, when queer bars emerged in San Francisco's tourist districts, to 1965, when a raid on a drag ball changed the course of queer history. Bringing to life the striking personalities and vibrant milieu that fueled this era, Nan Alamilla Boyd examines the culture that developed around the bar scene and homophile activism. She argues that the communities forged inside bars and taverns functioned politically and, ultimately, offered practical and ideological responses to the policing of San Francisco's queer and transgender communities. Using police and court records, oral histories, tourist literature, and manuscript collections from local and state archives, Nan Alamilla Boyd explains the phenomenal growth of San Francisco as a "wide-open town" a town where anything goes. She also relates the early history of the gay and lesbian civil rights movement that took place in San Francisco prior to 1965. Wide-Open Town argues that police persecution forged debates about rights and justice that transformed San Francisco's queer communities into the identity-based groups we see today. In its vivid re-creation of bar and drag life, its absorbing portrait of central figures in the communities, and its provocative chronicling of this period in the country's most transgressive city, Wide-Open Town offers a fascinating and lively new chapter of American queer history.

From Publishers Weekly Many people presume San Francisco's gay-friendly character began in the 1970s, but this engaging if sometimes facile social history uncovers sexually tolerant roots that go back much further. Boyd, a women's studies professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder, shows that as far back as the Gold Rush of 1849, the city manifested a charmingly lax attitude toward enforcement of public morals—gaining a reputation as a "wide-open town"—and repeatedly resisted civic moralists who tried to enforce antice laws. By the 1930s and the fall of Prohibition, the city hosted "publicly visible queer cultures and communities" with tourist-friendly nightclubs and bars. While Boyd relies on standard historical texts and sources such as police records for basic city history, the book is deeply informed and enlivened by 42 oral histories she gathered with lesbians and gay men who have lived in San Francisco since the 1930s. Five are partially reprinted here, and this terrific material allows Boyd to explore topics that have traditionally been ignored by gay historians: how drag shows helped stimulate the tourist economy of the city; how its African-American community engendered changes in the structures of the gay community; how a distinct lesbian public space evolved with the advent of such bars as Mona's in the 1930s and '40s; and how the city put itself at the forefront of transgender activism in the 1950s and '60s. Boyd has a keen ear for distinctive details, and it is this (rather than her major contention, that "the politics of everyday life were every bit as important as the politics of organized social movement activism") that drives this welcome study. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. "A vital book, a fact-packed chronicle of the people and the places that kept San Francisco 'open.' It not only demonstrates the richness of the city's early gay culture but also seeks to validate the influence of the (not so) underground bar culture on generations of queer San Franciscans and on the city they call home."--San Francisco Chronicle -- From the Inside Flap "A smart, insightful, readable book. Boyd expertly outlines the political, economic, and legal contours of San Francisco's queer history. With a rich array of sources, she reconstructs the nightclubs and bars where customers, workers, and owners fought for the right to public assembly and helped inaugurate a movement for gay and lesbian civil rights." Joanne Meyerowitz, author of *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* "An outstanding book, a major contribution to U.S. gay, lesbian, and queer history. Nan Boyd has produced a fascinating account that helps us to understand why and how San Francisco has come to occupy such pride of place in the queer imagination. Traversing the complicated geography, the multiple gender and sexual cultures, and the multi-layered politics of a great metropolis, Wide-Open Town is a must-read for historians, students and scholars of sex, gender, and sexuality, and all those who have ever left their hearts in San Francisco." Marc Stein, author of *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972* "Boyd spins out a fascinating story of a unique community and in the process informs our understanding of the development of gay/lesbian communities and activism in places beyond San Francisco. She does this by showing the links between and relationship of cultural resistance and various forms of political organizing, and by rethinking the ways that major events in U.S. history, such as Prohibition and the Second World War, have shaped gay/lesbian history." Leila J. Rupp, author of *A Desired Past* "Nan Boyd has excavated a queer pre-history of gay liberation movements in San Francisco. By highlighting sex and race tourism as well as the centrality of gender transgression to the creation of gay communities, she sheds new light on the formation of sexual identities in the twentieth century. Both insightful and highly readable, Wide Open

Town takes lesbian and gay history a step further by locating its roots in gender subversion and through the compelling stories of individual sexual pioneers who frame her analyses."Estelle B. Freedman, author of No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women