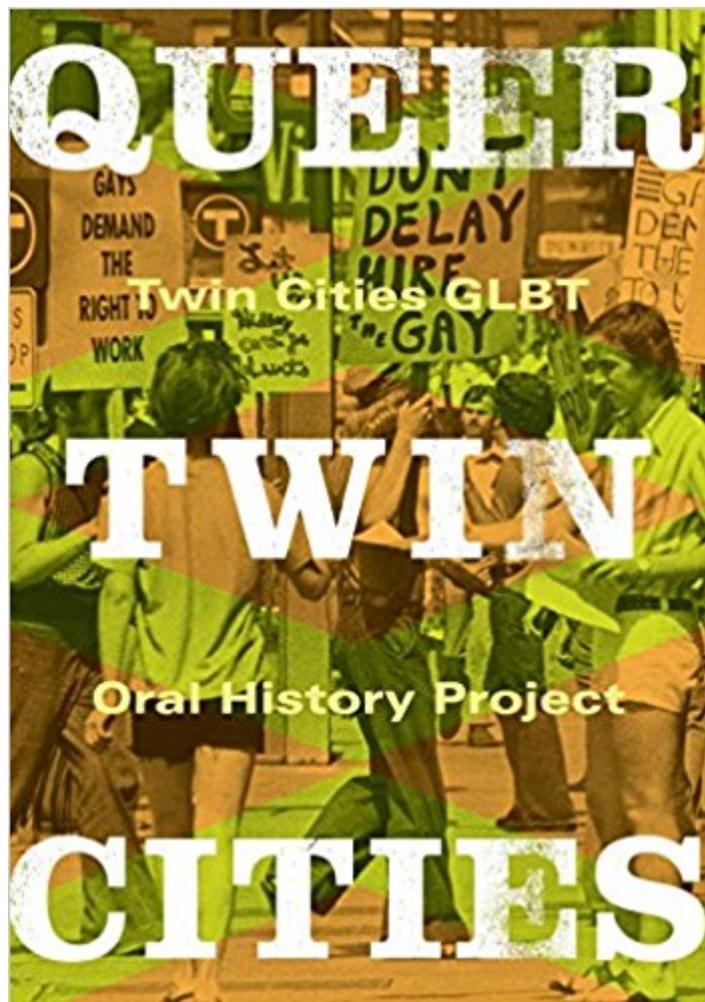


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Queer Twin Cities



Synopsis

The Twin Cities is home to one of the largest and most vital GLBT populations in the nation-and one of the highest percentages of gay residents in the country. Drawn from the pioneering work of the Twin Cities GLBT Oral History Project-a collective organization of students, scholars, and activists devoted to documenting and interpreting the lives of GLBT people in Minneapolis and St. Paul-"Queer Twin Cities" is a uniquely critical collection of essays on Minnesota's vibrant queer communities, past and present. A rich blend of oral history, archival research, and ethnography, "Queer Twin Cities" uses sexuality to chart connections between people's lives in Minnesota. Topics range from turn-of-the-century Minneapolis amid moral reform-including the highly publicized William Williams murder trial and efforts to police Bridge Square, aka "skid row"-to northern Minnesota and the importance of male companionship among lumber workers, and to postwar life, when the increased visibility of queer life went hand in hand with increased regulation, repression, and violence. Other essays present a portrait of early queer spaces in the Twin Cities, such as Kirmser's Bar, the Viking Room, and the Persian Palms, and the proliferation of establishments like the Dugout and the 19 Bar. Exploring the activism of GLBT/Two-Spirit indigenous people, the antipornography movements of the 1980s, and the role of gay men in the gentrification of Minneapolis neighborhoods, this volume brings the history of queer life and politics in the Twin Cities into fascinating focus. Engaging and revelatory, "Queer Twin Cities" offers a critical analysis of local history and community and fills a glaring omission in the culture and history of Minnesota, looking not only to a remarkable past, but to our collective future.

Book Information

Paperback: 376 pages

Publisher: Univ Of Minnesota Press (September 23, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0816653216

ISBN-13: 978-0816653218

Product Dimensions: 7 x 1.1 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #109,845 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #36 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > History #139 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Nonfiction > LGBT Studies #1260 in Books > History > Americas > United States > State & Local

Customer Reviews

A collection of essays drawing from the Twin Cities GLBT Oral History Project. I'll say upfront this is not your typical local queer history--it's more interested in interrogating questions of process and parts of Twin Cities history that resist dominant narratives in queer history. For that alone, I think it is really incredibly valuable, especially if you are interested in the ways that non-coastal cities posit themselves (or those living in those cities, really,) in the larger narrative of queer history that we tell in the US. Hearing again and again how unimportant Stonewall was to the residents of the Twin Cities at the time, for example, really challenges the dominant narratives about that event's centrality to histories of queer resistance. There are some pieces that really raised a lot of questions for me--specifically, the roundtable of queers of color made me really reflect on where Two-Spirit queers fit into narratives of queers of color (claiming there are very few people of color in the Twin Cities when, for me, it has the most visible Native population of any place I have ever lived in, which is complicated! And I wished had been addressed by the roundtable, but wasn't) really challenged me to think hard about what my role as a white settler in supporting BIPOC members of my community, especially as someone who is living here. All of the pieces in this are interesting in their own ways, though it is interesting to see the intellectual well from which each of the authors is collectively drawing (Miranda Joseph's Against the Romance of Community is cited about 800,000 times, which makes sense but is also funny to see.) I'd really recommend this book to anyone interested in a more critical local queer history that isn't afraid to challenge dominant narratives, specifically of progress, in queer history. [Also, full disclosure, I work with one of the authors, so that may have impacted how I read the book.]

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