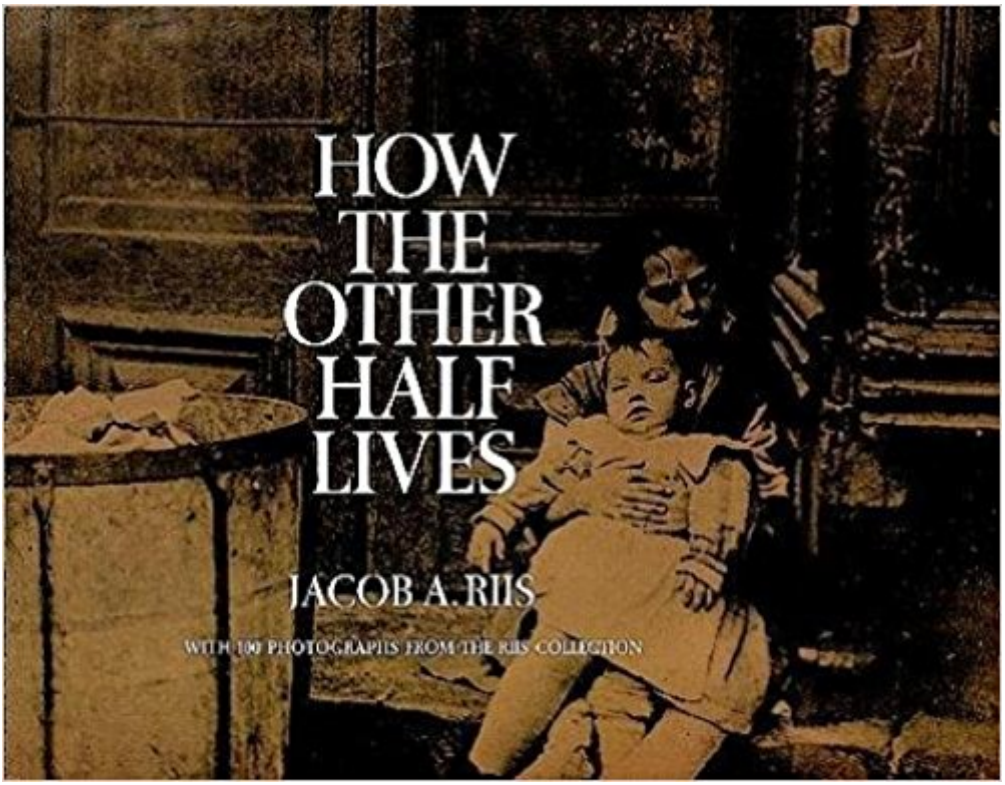
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How The Other Half Lives: Studies Among The Tenements Of New York



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Synopsis

Jacob Riis was one of the very few men who photographed the slums of New York at the turn of the twentieth century, when as many as 300,000 people per square mile were crowded into the tenements of New York's Lower East Side. The filth and degradation made the area a hell for the immigrants forced to live there. Riis was one of those immigrants, and, after years of abject poverty, when he became a police reporter for the New York Tribune, he exposed the shameful conditions of life with which he was all too familiar. Today, he is best remembered as a compassionate and effective reformer and as a pioneer photo-journalist.In How the Other Half Lives, New Yorkers read with horror that three-quarters of the residents of their city were housed in tenements and that in those tenements rents were substantially higher than in better sections of the city. In his book Riis gave a full and detailed picture of what life in those slums was like, how the slums were created, how and why they remained as they were, who was forced to live there, and offered suggestions for easing the lot of the poor. Riis originally documented all his studies with photographs. However, since the half-tone technique of photo reproduction had not been perfected, the original edition included mainly reductions in sketch-form of Riis' photographs. These could not begin to capture what Riis' sensitive camera caught on film. The anguish and the apathy, the toughness and the humiliation of the anonymous faces is all but obliterated in the sketches. This Dover edition includes fully 100 photographs, many famous, and many less familiar, from the Riis collection of the City Museum, and their inclusion here creates a closer conformity to Riis' intentions than did the original edition.

Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages
Publisher: Dover Publications; Revised ed. edition (June 1, 1971)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0486220125
ISBN-13: 978-0486220123
Product Dimensions: 10 x 0.5 x 7.9 inches
Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars 145 customer reviews
Best Sellers Rank: #131,457 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Architectural > Cities #79 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > History #359 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences >

Sociology > Urban

Customer Reviews

In How The Other Half Lives New Yorkers read with horror that three-quarters of the residents of their city were housed in tenements and that in those tenements rents were substantially higher than in better sections of the city. In his book Riis gave a full and detailed picture of what life in those slums was like, how the slums were created, how and why they remained as they were, who was forced to live there, and offered suggestions for easing the lot of the poor.

Hasia R. Diner is Director of the Goldstein-Goren Center for American Jewish History and Paul S. and Sylvia Steinberg Professor of American Jewish History at New York University. She is the author of The Jews of the United States, 1645 to 2000; Hungering for America: Italian, Irish and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration; Her Works Praise Her: A History of Jewish Women in America from Colonial Times to the Present; The Lower East Side Memories: The Jewish Place in America; In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915Ã¢â ¬â œ1935; and A Time for Gathering, 1820Ã¢â ¬â œ1880: The Second Migration (Volume 2 of The Jewish People of America, edited by Henry Feingold) and coeditor of Remembering the Lower East Side: American Jewish Reflections. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This edition is full of typos, many of which render entire sentences illogical. The whole thing is awkwardly formatted, as if the editor had no concept that the information was going to appear on the page of a book. There is no table of contents. "Special illustrated edition" is a complete lie -- the images are uselessly reproduced. Many of the images are so illegible that the typed captions within the image had to be reproduced outside the image. Not a single image in the book is adequate or useful -- I went online for worthwhile reproductions. I was truly disappointed with this edition which is in no way fit to be published. The publisher, "Seven Treasures Publications" does not seem to have a website, and offers only a fax number and an email address, nor is an editor named. This is clearly not a serious nor reputable publication company -- anyone who has bought this book, including me, was duped.

Wonderful book, I got it since my great g-parents, grandparents and parents came from the Victorian to 1935 era of in Manhattan. They left Ireland to make their fortune here. I was aware of some of the poverty and conditions, but this book really shows how awful and harsh the immigrants

had things and especially their children living sometimes on the streets. They suffered much, and people have no idea except for eyewitness accounts of the appalling conditions of shelters, work houses, suicides, alcoholism that they fell into after leaving their poor home countries for a better life in America. This is a classic by Jacob Riis and a window into a world unknown to most people. He attempted to alleviate the bad living conditions of poor people by exposing their living conditions to the middle and upper classes. Think things are bad now?, You should see how bad, "bas is", as you travel with the writer into ghettos and alleyways of working people toiling to just eke out an existence at long hours, often working at home making clothes and other goods to sell.

What a scam. The pictures are distorted, as if they were printed from a run down office copier. In addition, there are typos galore. The publishers of this edition are especially crooked for labelling this a "special illustrated edition."

This isn't a bad copy of this text. However, Many Urban Historians such as myself look to this piece in order to gain an understanding of the environment in the tight ghettos of the lower east side of Manhattan. This piece is something that I would chronicle as being an important piece of urban literature, among the likes of Upton Sinclair's The Jungle. Jacob Riis took a long time and effort in providing illustrations and photographs in his original copies. However this copy contains no photographs, thus removing a monumental element of the effectiveness of this piece. When this piece was first released, the images provided sent a chill into the readers. Simply due to the fact of knowing that there were young immigrants, mainly children who were living in squalor six blocks beyond their comfortable abodes.Lack of Photographs aside, this is an important and historical piece of work in American, Urban American, and New York History. Unfortunately many schools neglect to included this in required reading, which is honestly disgraceful. If I were to turn back to teaching, I would include this in my syllabus. This should be required reading for all!

Jacob Riis's book How The Other Half Lives, written in 1890, remains an outstanding example of the importance of investigative journalism and the continued vitality of the Fourth Estate.Jacob Riis was among the earliest of what Theodore Roosevelt later termed " muckraker", "taking the rake to uncover the most unpleasant conditions in American society." In Riis's case, the issue was the plight of thousands of immigrants living and working in horrid conditions in the New York City tenements of the late 19th century. How The Other Half Lives is not a historical novel but rather a work of non-fiction, well researched reporting, personally witnessed by the journalist.Riis was

himself an immigrant, born in Denmark among a family of fifteen children. He apprenticed as a carpenter in Copenhagen but discouraged by job availability he immigrated to the United States in 1870 at age 21. Having caught a brief glimpse of the squalid living conditions among immigrants in New York's tenement district, he left for western Pennsylvania and found work there as a carpenter. Perceived as being taken advantage of by his employers, he returned to New York as a salesman of flat irons whereupon he saw an advertisement for a Long Island newspaper looking for an editor. Thus, with no experience as a writer, he began his career in journalism. He later accepted a position as a reporter for The New York News Association where he began writing with assignments covering both the rich and the impoverished. Riss was aware of conditions among the extremely poor in New York from his previous brief stay in and around the notorious Five Points. However, his job at the NYNA, the New York Sun and later in a big step up to the New York Tribune , he found a pulpit from which to begin informing the public on How The Other Half Lives . Riis turned his print platform into a personal crusade, attempting to alleviate the bad living and working conditions of the poor by exposing their horrid circumstances to the people who could make a difference, the middle and upper class of the city and its political establishment. Riis was perfectly willing to hold both the upper class and politicians accountable for the exploitation of men, women and children in both employment and housing. The pages of his early articles for Scribner's Magazine and later in the complete volume How The Other Half Lives are so vivid that uninformed critics, in disbelief, termed the details of his reporting an exaggeration and sensationalism.Surely this work is an early reformist look at income inequality but Riis referred to this large percentage of the New York City population as a class unto itself, literally without identity or voice, enslaved by landlords who exploited their fears. The same people were recruited as the machinery of piecework in the early garment and cigar making industry at wages below any standards of decency. The tenement districts in New York exploded with thousands of men, women and children crowded into one or two rooms often without ventilation, sanitation or running water. Riss estimated that at one fifth of the city's population lived under these conditions.There is a major difference between Riis's reporting and sensationalism. Riis spent months in the tenements, which were factories by day and barely livable sleeping quarters by night. His research was impeccable and he was among the very first reporters to incorporate photo journalism into his stories, utilizing the newly invented flash to photograph his subjects in their darkened rooms. His work was the beginning of photo journalism, adding documentation to the written word. The photos and editorial content had dramatic impact with his readers and ultimately gained the attention of New York's newly elected Police Commissioner, Theodore Roosevelt. Riis became an advisor to Roosevelt, escorting him on nighttime tours for the

commissioner to see for himself how the poor were forced to live. Many credit this educational relationship with Roosevelt as the beginning of the Progressive Movement, a hallmark of TR's future presidency.After Roosevelt's election he wrote this tribute to Riis. " Recently a man, well qualified to pass judgement, alluded to Mr. Jacob Riis as ' the most useful citizen of New York.' The countless evils which lurk in the dark corners of our civic institutions, which stalk abroad in the slums, and have their permanent abode in the crowded tenement houses, have met in Mr. Riis the most formidable opponent ever encountered by them in New York City."How The Other Half Lives was first published as an article in Scribner's Magazine in 1889, but while working for the New York Sun, Riis expanded the work into the book, complete with his photographs and published it a year later. A much less famous work by Riis, Children of the Poor was published as a sequel in 1892. In it Riis wrote of children he had encountered while researching How The Other Half Lives.Riis was not alone among a new breed of investigative ">Read more

As of late 2014, this Kindle copy is the correct version, with numerous good-resolution scans and proper OCR, resulting in searchable text. Scattered throughout are a few illustrations in lieu of photos from early reprints. I really wanted more photos from Chinatown, which is why I bought it, but it's about all of the slums of various flavors and races and no more than a couple of photos from each segment.

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