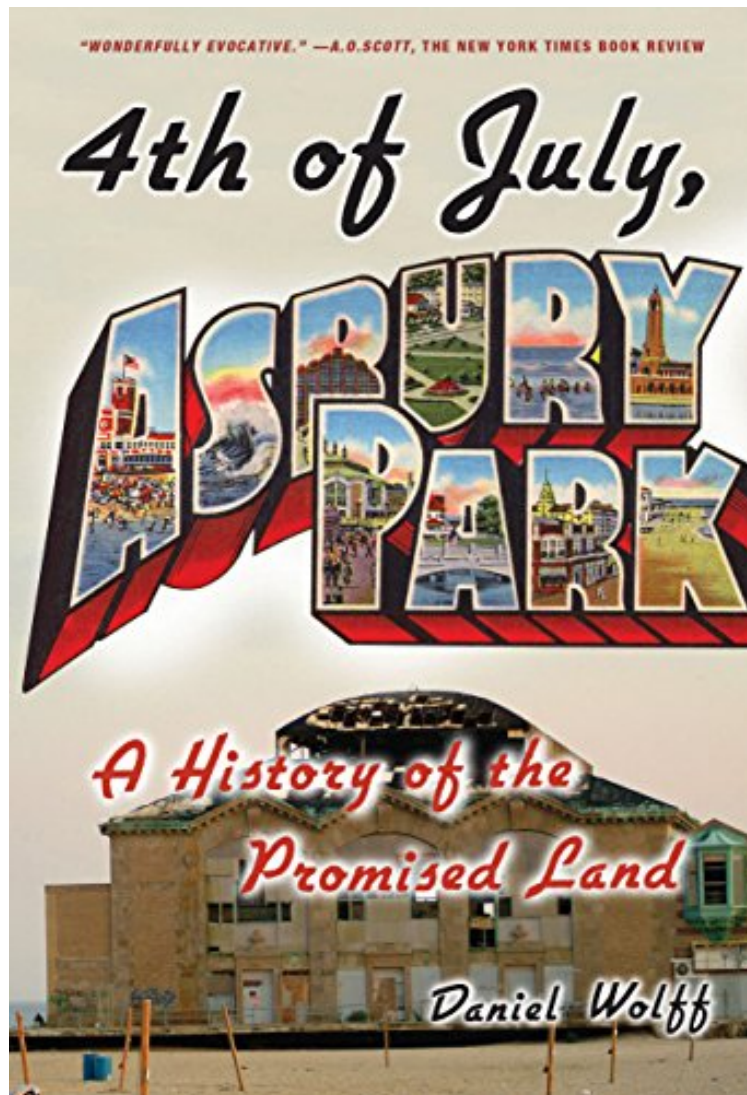


(Download ebook) 4th of July, Asbury Park: A History of the Promised Land

## 4th of July, Asbury Park: A History of the Promised Land

*Daniel Wolff*

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**Daniel Wolff : 4th of July, Asbury Park: A History of the Promised Land** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised 4th of July, Asbury Park: A History of the Promised Land:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Hiding in the backstreetsBy Andy in WashingtonThe only way I can review this book is to divide it into two parts. The first is a history of Asbury Park, NJ. I have spent quite a bit of time in this area over the years, and was somewhat familiar with the history of the city before I read this book.Wolff's narrative is a bit choppy. His habit of starting off chapters on the 4th of July of a certain year comes across as forced, and distracts from the flow of the story. Some of the book appears incredibly well researched, while other parts seem to be one step above local oral histories told in any NJ bar.The history of Asbury Park is not pretty, especially if you were the wrong color, but Wolff doesn't really get his arms around the problems minorities faced. There are a few

stories and anecdotes, but no serious consideration of how a NJ beach resort town became as segregated as any city in the American South. When violence did erupt, Wolff misses the rage and sense of hopelessness that drove it. Wolff spends a lot of time on the early history of the city- how it was founded, the motivations of the early leaders, the town's geography and business climate. This section appears well researched, and was interesting and new to me. Later parts of the narrative, including corrupt politicians and stalled growth seem to lack detailed research and specifics. In short, as a history, I found the work to come up a bit short. Certainly there are interesting elements to it, and some of these are related quite well. However as a whole, I think the book misses some of the more important parts of the town's history and it light on facts and research. The second piece of the book is an attempt to relate Bruce Springsteen lyrics to the history of the town. For the most part, I cringed when I came across one of these passages...and I am a Springsteen fan. The Boss is hardly Friedrich Nietzsche. The meaning of "All men want to be rich, Rich men want to be king. And kings just want to rule everything" seems pretty obvious, and really doesn't need to be explained. In summary, the book wasn't too bad, and if you are interested in this little corner of the US, you will find it an interesting read. As a more general history of the US, its racial relations, or of life in the 20th century, I find it comes up a bit short. If the book wasn't about an area of the country that I am interested in, it would be a 1 or 2 star effort.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Asbury Park: A History Of The Promised Land By Betty W Butler An excellent book no disappointments. I've resided just outside of Asbury Park for seventy five years and learned some and authenticated other facts. I'd recommend highly to those familiar and those not with Asbury Park, well written and enjoyable.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ... dry to read but the info is so incredibly amazing, especially as someone who lived at the Jersey ... By matt cadenelli A bit dry to read but the info is so incredibly amazing, especially as someone who lived at the Jersey Shore as a kid.

When Bruce Springsteen called his first album *Greetings from Asbury Park*, he introduced a generation of fans to a fallen seaside resort town that came to represent working-class American life. Starting with the town's founding as a religious promised land, music journalist and poet Daniel Wolff plots a course through Asbury Park's entwined social and musical history, in a story that captures all the allure and heartbreak of the American dream.

From *Publishers Weekly* In attempting to blend the social and musical history of New Jersey's faded seaside resort Asbury Park—where Bruce Springsteen first made his name in the 1970s—Wolff has an overabundance of engrossing material that never quite coheres to animate his thesis that the history of Asbury Park is the history of America. Founded in 1871 by James A. Bradley as a Methodist retreat, Asbury Park was designed to attract religious, moneyed vacationers who wanted a resort uncorrupted by alcohol and gambling. But the history of the resort is not so pretty, according to Wolff. The many African-Americans who served the rich there were restricted to the dingiest part of the beach. The Ku Klux Klan moved in, as well as organized crime. Continuing racism led to rioting in the 1970s, when the ghetto erupted in looting and the destruction of local businesses. Wolff (You Send Me: The Life and Times of Sam Cooke) weaves into his narrative the musical heritage of Sousa, Sinatra and Bill Haley to underscore the social changes affecting the town over time. Asbury Park's current renewal efforts are mired in troubles—but the song Wolff hears there is still one of hope.

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From *Booklist* \*Starred\* Anyone familiar with Bruce Springsteen's music knows about the role place plays in his work, and no place more than Asbury Park, New Jersey, a seaside resort town that has seen many ups and downs and for Springsteen exists in imagination as well as reality. In this luminous history of Springsteen's Asbury Park, journalist, biographer, and poet Wolff tells the story of a promised land. This Asbury Park somehow inspired hope in people like Springsteen, who were able to see beyond its often shabby exterior to what once was and could be again. Asbury Park was also the hometown of Springsteen's fellow outsider, author Stephen Crane (1871-1900), who saw it as symbolic of both a still-young nation's ideals and the hypocrisy of late-nineteenth-century America. Contradictions are a part of Asbury Park's history. Established to honor Francis Asbury, the pioneer of American Methodism, the city was envisioned by founder James Bradley as a resort town. Despite its small size, it has embraced many paradoxical visions--model religious community, beach town, haven for music from ragtime to rock--and represented freedom, fun, and democracy, though also Northern racism, violence, and corruption. Writing about the idea of a place, Wolff creates popular history at its best. Springsteen fans will love it, and so will anyone interested in American social history.

June Sawyers Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved "A luminous history of Springsteen's Asbury Park—Wolff creates popular history at its best. Springsteen fans will love it, and so will anyone interested in American social history."--Booklist (starred review) "It's an ingenious idea, as the author, a poet and an award-winning biographer of Sam Cooke, filters the town's history through more than a century of its all-American summer holiday celebrations."--San Francisco Chronicle "Unflinching, artful, and indispensable."--Dave Marsh, author of *Glory Days: Bruce Springsteen in the 1980s*