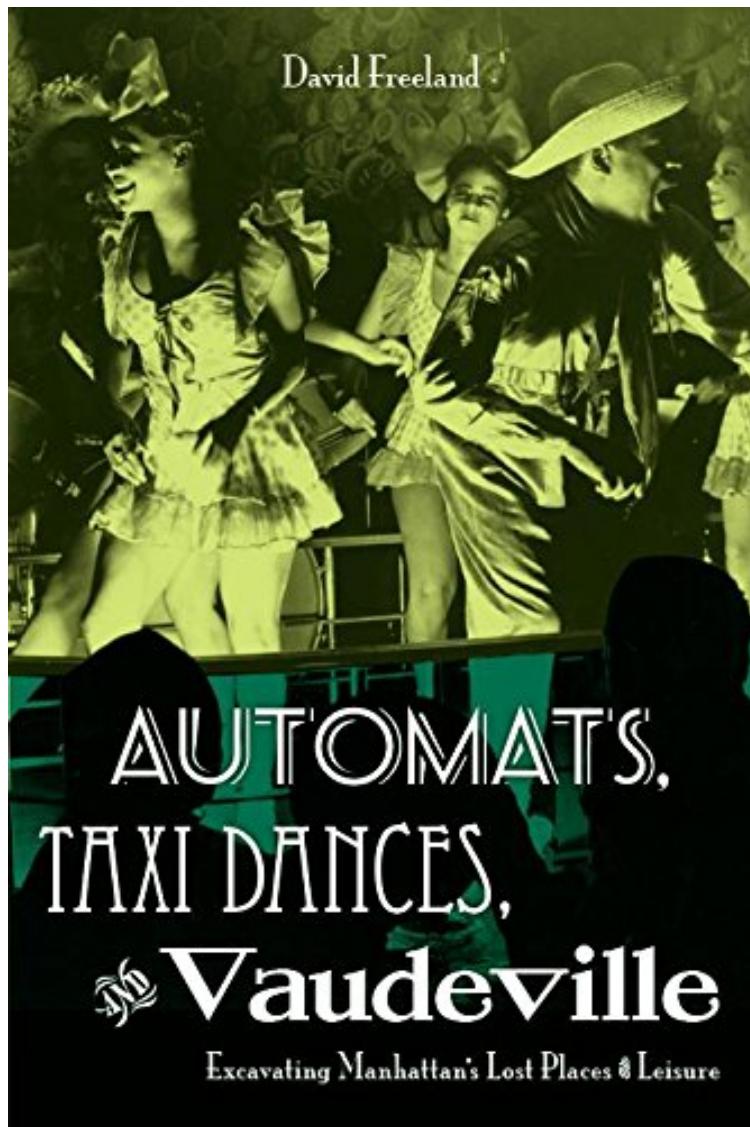


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## Automats, Taxi Dances, and Vaudeville: Excavating Manhattan's Lost Places of Leisure

David Freeland

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**David Freeland : Automats, Taxi Dances, and Vaudeville: Excavating Manhattan's Lost Places of Leisure**  
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Automats, Taxi Dances, and Vaudeville: Excavating Manhattan's Lost Places of Leisure:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A Well-Researched Look Back into New York City HistoryBy Robert in NYIf you're interested in the social history of NYC neighborhoods, and want a well-researched, and still very

readable account, I recommend this book. It discusses neighborhood evolution in areas like Times Square, Chinatown and Harlem. (The book's title gives a hint of some of the stories it tells). Its also has a great bibliography for those who want to keep on reading - there's no one book about NYC that could possibly tell the whole story. The only negative I have is the poor quality of the photos -- there aren't many of them, and in this paperback, they're far from high quality (web sites like those of the NY Public Library, the Museum of the City of NY, and the NY Historical Society have some great on-line photo collections for those interested in better pictorial histories). All-in-all, a very enjoyable read by a guy who did his homework. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting history of New York City. By remboA little wordy but interesting0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. VERY PLEASED WITH BOOK AND By youtwoFULL OF INFORMATION. VERY PLEASED WITH BOOK AND CONDITION

Winner of the Publication Award for Popular Culture and Entertainment for 2009 from the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America. Named to Pop Matters list of the Best Books of 2009 (Non-fiction). From the lights that never go out on Broadway to its 24-hour subway system, New York City isn't called "the city that never sleeps" for nothing. Both native New Yorkers and tourists have played hard in Gotham for centuries, lindy hopping in 1930s Harlem, voguing in 1980s Chelsea, and refueling at all-night diners and bars. The slim island at the mouth of the Hudson River is packed with places of leisure and entertainment, but Manhattan's infamously fast pace of change means that many of these beautifully constructed and incredibly ornate buildings have disappeared, and with them a rich and ribald history. Yet with David Freeland as a guide, it's possible to uncover skeletons of New York's lost monuments to its nightlife. With a keen eye for architectural detail, Freeland opens doors, climbs onto rooftops, and gazes down alleyways to reveal several of the remaining hidden gems of Manhattan's nineteenth- and twentieth-century entertainment industry. From the Atlantic Garden German beer hall in present-day Chinatown to the city's first motion picture studiomdash;Union Square's American Mutoscope and Biograph Companymdash;to the Lincoln Theater in Harlem, Freeland situates each building within its historical and social context, bringing to life an old New York that took its diversions seriously. Freeland reminds us that the buildings that serve as architectural guideposts to yesteryear's recreations cannot be re-createdmdash;once destroyed they are gone forever. With condominiums and big box stores spreading over city blocks like wildfires, more and more of the Big Apple's legendary houses of mirth are being lost. By excavating the city's cultural history, this delightful book unearths some of the many mysteries that lurk around the corner and lets readers see the city in a whole new light.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . In its people and its real estate, New York maintains a complicated relationship with its past: though always moving forward, the city is also preoccupied with its grand old architecture, a refined sense of nostalgia and an idealized sense of times gone by. Still, few New Yorkers know much about the city's actual history. Historian and music journalist Freeland (Ladies of Soul) provides an excellent correction in this detailed exploration of Manhattan's lost leisure spots, from defunct 19th century Chinatown beer gardens to the earliest integrated theaters in Harlem. Along the way, Freeland unreels meticulous accounts of Manhattan's more fascinating and scandalous moments. New Yorkers past and present will learn much about parts of the city-buildings, neighborhoods, people and hot spots-long gone, or so transformed as to be unrecognizable. Focusing on five neighborhoods-Chinatown, Union Square/East Village, the Tenderloin, Harlem and Times Square-these stories provide a vivid cross-section of the city as a whole in ways a more generalized approach couldn't. Exceptionally well-written and researched, this volume will satisfy anyone curious about New York, or the way a modern metropolis builds and rebuilds itself to reflect the times. "Exceptionally well-written and researched, this volume will satisfy anyone curious about New York, or the way a modern metropolis builds and rebuilds itself to reflect the times." -Publishers Weekly, starred review "In this wonderful book Freeland, a writer who has the courage of his dreams, is not afraid to remind us of what we have wiped out, and in our stumbling childlike sleepwalk through time continue to destroy." -PopMatters.com "A worthy successor to Herbert Asbury's All Around the Town and The Gangs of New York and, more recently, Luc Sante's Low Life, in depicting a long-vanished New York and its entertainments. . . Many New York locales of a bygone age are depicted with panache in this incredibly well-researched volume. Freeland "gets it" that behind the mostly bland facades of modern NYC lie decades of colorful history." -Kevin Walsh, author of Forgotten New York "Reading this book is like going on a walking tour with a really knowledgeable guide, who knows not only what building to point out but also what stories lurk behind the front door." -The New Leader "Freeland offers an area-by-area archeology of New York City's popular culture as revealed in remnants of buildings that housed leisure activities in the late-19th century to the recent past. . . A necessary resource for anyone interested in popular culture. . ." -CHOICE "What a treat to have Freeland take us by the hand and lead us on his own unique guided tour through a not-so-vanished Old New York! For anyone who craves a glimpse of the glamorous city of days gone by, this is a trip well worth taking. Freeland has an amazing flair for uncovering all the little pockets of history that are hiding right under our noses and even beneath our feet. I don't think I'll ever see the city in quite the same way again." -Charles Busch, actor/playwright (The Tale of the Allergist's Wife, Vampire Lesbians of Sodom) "The richness of the New York stories he

presents, in elegant prose, is more abundant than the actual brick and mortar that remain. His is a guidebook to the city's history, to what it has bequeathed us, even as much may be lost. - Library Journal - With an archaeologist's eye and a storyteller's wit [Freeland] roams from Chinatown to Harlem - concentrating on scenes of the city's nightlife a century ago during the vaudeville era but also reaching back into the nineteenth century as he summons up forgotten neighborhoods and personalities who gave old New York its raffish vigor. - Wall Street Journal - Freeland's affectionate, detail-packed tome about Manhattan's forgotten pleasure centers - from dance halls to gambling dens - adds a lyrical song to the cacophony. Organized geographically and for the most part chronologically, the book explores eight neighborhoods - Chinatown, Chatham Square, the Bowery, the East Village, Union Square, the Tenderloin, Harlem and Times Square - via their entertainment centers, with the added hook that physical remnants of these historical hot spots still exist. - Time Out New York - Freeland combines the detective acumen of a modern Sherlock Holmes and the exploratory curiosity of Indiana Jones as he uncovers forgotten but still visible treasures of Gotham's offbeat and seamier underside. This physical genealogy of Manhattan's historic nightlife will become an invaluable companion for anyone exploring New York's neighborhoods. - Timothy J. Gilfoyle, author of *City of Eros* - Only a reader made of stone will be able to resist the occasional longing for what used to be; but overall, Freeland's headfirst dive into the past makes the experience seem utterly contemporary, vital and alive. He brings a scholar's knowledge and a native New Yorker's passion to the table. - The Village - Only a reader made of stone will be able to resist the occasional longing for what used to be; but overall, Freeland's headfirst dive into the past makes the experience seem utterly contemporary, vital and alive. He brings a scholar's knowledge and a native New Yorker's passion to the table. - *Downtown Express* About the Author David Freeland is a writer who specializes in music history and popular culture. He is a contributing writer to the weekly *New York Press*, and his articles and criticism have also appeared in music magazines including *American Songwriter*, *Relix*, and *Goldmine*. He is the author of *Ladies of Soul*, a history of under-recognized female vocalists from the 1960s, and wrote the introduction, supplementary articles, and over 100 entries for Schirmer's reference work *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Popular Musicians*. He lives in New York City.