

Franz Kafka, the sometimes inscrutable Czech writer who chronicled man's search for worth and meaning, and Mickey Spillane, the tough detective writer whose novels featured sultry blondes and bleeding bodies (often the sultry blonde is the bleeding body) have little in common. Amid their many differences, however, both men found inspiration in New York and wrote books that the academics, writers and others we asked cited as among their favorite works about the city.

MORE NEW YORK READS

Summer Reading Part I:

People who make their living from books pick the book they love about

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Summer Reading: Experts Pick Their Favorite New York Books

by Gotham Gazette Staff Monday, July 02, 2007 12:00 AM -

The Latest Books About New York:

New books â€" fiction and nonfiction â€" about the city.

This week's recommendations come from experts about the city and from artists who work in the city. Most of those who responded also told us what made their selection especially noteworthy. (Their comments are included.)

Interestingly many of the experts, including many who have written nonfiction works about New York, pointed to works of fiction or photography as their favorites. So, if you are heading out of town, whether to Jones Beach or the Kalahari, and want to bring a piece of New York with you, there's almost certainly something here to satisfy your taste. If not, look at our <u>choices</u> from last week when people who work with books â€" as booksellers, librarians and writers â€" recommended their favorite volumes about the city.

FICTION

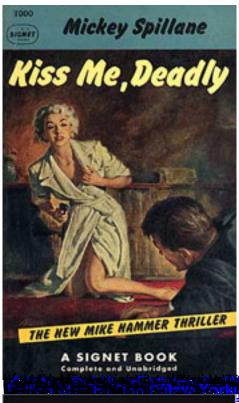
Andreas Killen, professor of history, City College of New York

Amerika by Franz Kafka

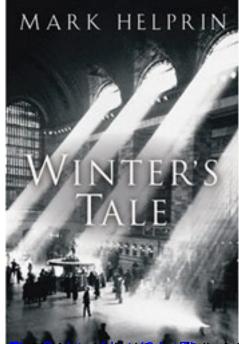
__ One of my favorite books about New York is actually by someone who never visited it. The New York that Kafka creates is a place of wondrously tall buildings, elevators, speedy vehicles, businessmen sitting behind enormously large desks, slightly creepy characters, and mysterious, opaque events. It is an almost childlike vision of New York at the dawn of its emergence as the capital of the 20th century. Kafka's city is a purely imaginary construct, and precisely for that reason it captures something quite basic about New York, which is for so many people an imaginary construct before they ever visit it and even after they have come to know it quite well.

Jenny Weiss, editor, Overheard in New York

V. by Thomas Pynchon







THE ART OF NEW YORK

Deborah Schwartz, director, **Brooklyn Historical Society**

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Broken Land, an anthology of Brooklyn poems edited by Julia Spicher Kasdorf and Michael Tyrell

__ It's just very lovely, … very evocative and gives the reader a very powerful sense of the many faces of Brooklyn, the different characters of Brooklyn, the tension and dynamism and the beauty of the borough. Some of it is about neighborhood; some about emotional issues; some about political issues; one about the Brooklyn botanic garden. There are stories that are very personal and private and others that are the grander scheme of urban life. It's a great treat. It's beautifully done.

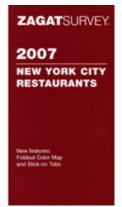
Lester Thomas Shane - actor, director, writer, and faculty membr at New York's New York'

. the

American Academy of Dramatic Art

New York Film Academy

, and a children's company, the TADA! Ensemble.



Broadway by Brooks Atkinson

The Season: A Candid Look at Broadway by William Goldman

Eloise by Kay Thompson

The Zagat's guide
The one I use most.

Steven McElroy, artistic director and member of the New Ensemble Theatre Company,

<u>LITE (Laboratory for International Theatre Exchange)</u> and <u>Emerging Artists Theatre</u>

<u>Company</u>

Playing Underground: A Critical History of the 1960s Off-Off-Broadway Movement by Stephen J. Bottoms

Off Off Broadway Explosion by David Crespy

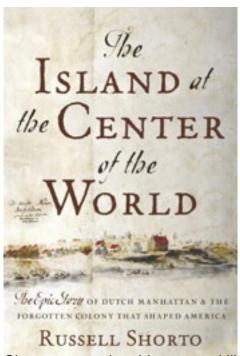
Caffe Cino: The Birthplace of Off-Off-Broadway by Wendell C. Stone

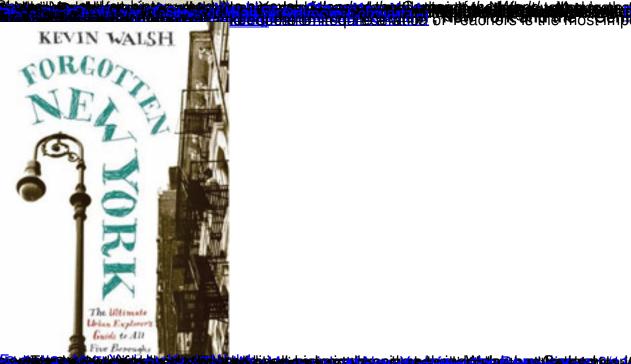
Most of the reading about the city I've done in the recent past has been about the birth of the Off Off Broadway theater movement in the 1960s and there are three great books on my short list. Since, to me, Off Off Broadway is a vital part of the city's history -- not only theatrical, but generally -- these books are definitely books about New York, and good ones.

LOOKING TO THE PAST…

Eric Sharfstein, communications manager, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History .

The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony That Shaped America





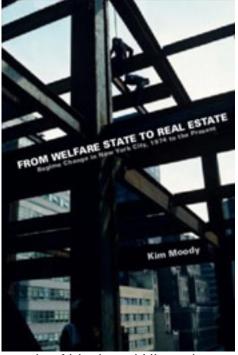
a€¦THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

Michael Wallace, co-author of Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898

From Welfare State to Real Estate: Regime Change in New York City, 1974 to the Present by Kim Moody

The juxtaposition of rags and riches is an old story in New York City, but the divisions

have never been

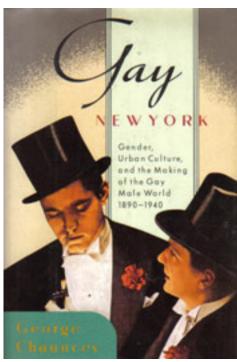


thousands of black and Hispanic youths, spurred by a poverty rate twice the sharper. While line up for a handful of jobs at a Times Square store, the superrich are country's, snapping up \$20 million condos. Kim Moody's compelling narrative of Gotham's post fiscal crisis history offers an explanation of what produced this jagged social topography. Economic elites and powerful mayors, operating in a municipal environment transformed by globalization and 9/11, were able, he argues, to impose a neo-liberal agenda on the city. And subsidizing real estate and corporate development, while rolling back social programs, in gap. Moody's assessment â€" comprehensive, cogent and turn exacerbated the income rooted in solid research – is essential reading for those seeking to understand the contemporary relationship between "progress" and poverty.

The Suburbanization of New York: Is the World's Greatest City Becoming Just Another Town? edited by Jerilou Hammett and Kingsley Hammett

__ What's next for New York? Will it retain its edgy preeminence as global crucible, the place par excellence—where the world's peoples come to clash and fuse and create the future? Or will the forces of suburbanization â€" now sprawling and malling their way into town â€" tame the raucous metropolis, subdue its contrarian politics, make of it just another—outlet for Disneyfied culture, big-box commerce and franchise food? Perhaps—something altogether new is busy being born at the contested urban-suburban—frontier? Only—two things are sure: New York is in rapid motion, and this book is a great—guide to where it might be headed. Its diverse array of speculations -- written—by—some of the country's smartest (and wittiest) analysts and activists -- are—incisive and accessible, provocative and entertaining, perfect for an urban studies course—and for anyone interesting in pondering the past and future of cities.

Mark Finley, playwright and theater director



Gay New York by George Chauncey

Because it's so thoroughly researched, it's full of scope and detail - two things you rarely find in the same place.

Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution by David Carter

__ It also is impeccably researched and detailed. It's so immediate and relevant because it focuses on a time closer to our own and some of the key players are still around. A boundless source of insight.

(Finley also likes several novels: Old New York by Edith Wharton, because "The author does such a fantastic job in evoking the period you feel like are there, not just want to be there": and Time and

Again by Jack Finney

and

The Alienist by Caleb Carr

. Both of which he says are not classics of the Edith Wharton mold, but terrific stories told by great storytellers.)

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Reporting by Besa Luci, Mara Gay, Zach Rose and Valerio Russo

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