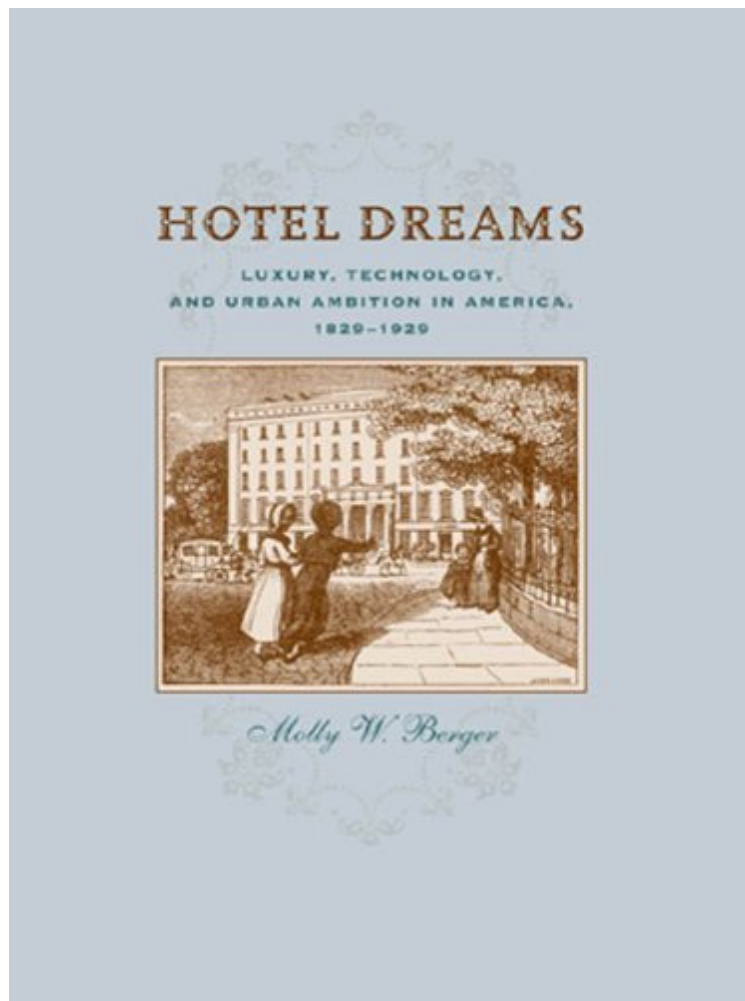


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Hotel Dreams: Luxury, Technology, and Urban Ambition in America, 1829--1929 (Studies in Industry and Society)

Molly W. Berger

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Molly W. Berger : Hotel Dreams: Luxury, Technology, and Urban Ambition in America, 1829--1929 (Studies in Industry and Society) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hotel Dreams: Luxury, Technology, and Urban Ambition in America, 1829--1929 (Studies in Industry and Society):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Hotel History By david l. poremba Most people, at one point in their lives, have spent the night in rented lodgings, be it hotel, motel or cabin. Those who have been fortunate to have spent time in the larger, older hotels (almost always found in larger cities), will remember the size, style, glamour and opulence of the place. Molly Berger takes us back to the beginnings of the hotel in American history and its impact on life and society. Beginning in the 1820's, she focuses on four hotels: the Tremont House, Boston, 1829; the

Continental Hotel, Philadelphia, 1860; the Palace Hotel, San Francisco, 1875; and, the Stevens Hotel, Chicago, 1927. Each gets a chapter devoted to their design, construction, marketing and how these buildings became cultural symbols that shaped each of their respective cityscapes. Interspersed are chapters defining the development of the commercial luxury hotel; their emergence as distinctly American; their proliferation from the 1830's to the Civil War; their resurgence as an American palace; and, finally, the new modern hotel (up to 1929). This book is not just the story of buildings but also the story of life unfolding within those buildings and how they shaped ideas about class, gender and race. Very much a part of this story is the public debate each generated concerning urban development, economic power and the ideals of a democratic society. As the "luxury hotel" is still with us, much of these ideas and debates are relevant today. A very informative and entertaining read.

From the time they emerged in American cities in the 1820s, commercial luxury hotels were far more than places where a traveler could eat and sleep -- they were icons of style, opulence, and technological sophistication. Molly W. Berger offers a compelling history of the American hotel and how it captured the public's imagination as it came to represent the complex -- and often contentious -- relationship among luxury, economic development, and the ideals of a democratic society. From New York to San Francisco and points in between, Berger profiles the country's most prestigious hotels, including Boston's 1829 Tremont, which served as a model for luxury hotel design; San Francisco's world famous Palace, completed in 1875; and Chicago's enormous Stevens, built two years before the great crash of 1929. The fascinating stories behind their design, construction, and marketing reveal in rich detail how these buildings became cultural symbols that shaped the urban landscape. Though America's large, luxury hotels were impressive architectural and corporate accomplishments, they were lightning rods for public debate about urban development and economic power. Inside the buildings unfolded human dramas that shaped ideas about race, gender, and class. Berger deftly explores the tension between both elite and egalitarian values that surrounded America's luxury hotels. The American hotel evolved into a "machine for living," soaring to skyscraper heights, defining ideas about technological innovation, and creating a unified system of production and consumption unique to the modern world. *Hotel Dreams* is a deeply researched and entertaining account of how the hotel's material world of machines and marble integrated into and shaped the society it served.