



Five Points: The 19th-Century New York City Neighborhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum

By Tyler Anbinder

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All but forgotten today, the Five Points neighborhood in lower Manhattan was once renowned the world over. It housed America's most impoverished immigrants—the Irish, Jews, Germans, Italians, and African-Americans. Located in today's Chinatown and Little Italy, Five Points played host to more riots, scams, prostitution, and drunkenness than any other neighborhood in America. But it was also crammed full of cheap theaters, dance halls, prizefighting venues, and political arenas that would one day dominate the national scene. From Jacob Riis to Abraham Lincoln, Davy Crockett to Charles Dickens, Five Points horrified and enthralled everyone who saw it.

Drawing from letters, diaries, newspapers, bank records, police reports, and archeological digs, award-winning historian Tyler Anbinder has written the first history of this remarkable neighborhood. Beginning with the Irish potato famine influx in 1840 and ending with the rise of Chinatown in the early 20th century, the story of Five Points serves as a microcosm of the American immigrant experience.

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...spares no gritty detail in this recreation of this immigrants' hell on earth... -- *The Washington Post Book World*, January 5, 2003

Tyler Anbinder has so thoroughly re-created Five Points that the stench of life there all but rises from its pages. -- *New York Daily News*

About the Author

Tyler Anbinder is an Associate Professor of History at The George Washington University. His first book, *Nativism and Slavery*, was also a *New York Times Notable Book* and the winner of the Avery Craven Prize of the Organization of American Historians.

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