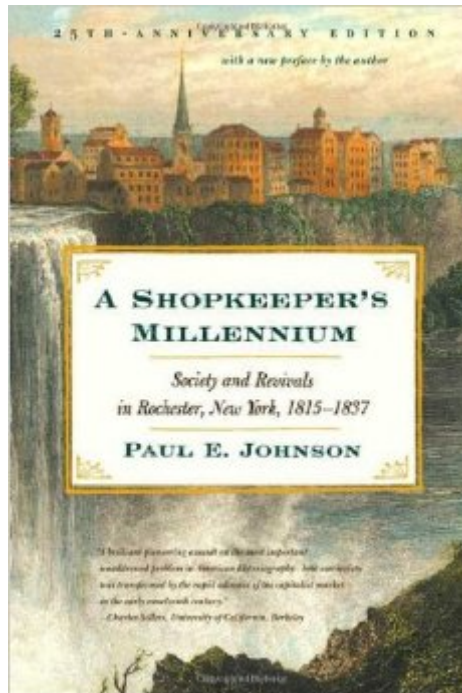


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A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society And Revivals In Rochester, New York, 1815-1837



Synopsis

A quarter-century after its first publication, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium* remains a landmark work--brilliant both as a new interpretation of the intimate connections among politics, economy, and religion during the Second Great Awakening, and as a surprising portrait of a rapidly growing frontier city. The religious revival that transformed America in the 1820s, making it the most militantly Protestant nation on earth and spawning reform movements dedicated to temperance and to the abolition of slavery, had an especially powerful effect in Rochester, New York. Paul E. Johnson explores the reasons for the revival's spectacular success there, suggesting important links between its moral accounting and the city's new industrial world. In a new preface, he reassesses his evidence and his conclusions in this major work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A Shopkeeper's Millennium is in response to new interest in the Great Awakening. But while previous studies have explained the growth of multiple cities during this time period, Johnson's book focuses entirely on Rochester, arguing that it was "America's first inland boom town" (33). A combination of factors, including improvements in inland transportation and prime geographical location, made Rochester an ideal place for opportunity and social mobility, according to Johnson. His book utilizes many rags to riches stories that effectively demonstrate how farmers started to become businessmen, which increased their revenues (16). One example is Johnson's illustration of how two of the ten richest men in 1827 Rochester grew up in poverty (28). The promise of rags to riches experiences led to an increase in migration from those seeking to advance their economic

status, and Johnson discusses how this increased influenced and changed people's relationships, especially as citizens were constantly moving. With all of this social upheaval, Johnson argues, many turned to the churches for stability. With this milieu of social forces came the emergence of distinct social classes and pronounced party politics. Ultimately, Rochester offers a rich account of how these classes and party politics operated in early 19th century New York. This book effectively explains how party politics emerged in response to the newly distinct social classes. According to Johnson, social classes started to become distinct after 1825. Johnson believes this happened because some of the middle class started to move away from their businesses and into side streets while the working class started to live in their own residential areas.

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