



Day of Jubilee: The Great Age of Public Celebrations in New York, 1788-1909

Brooks McNamara

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Day of Jubilee: The Great Age of Public Celebrations in New York, 1788-1909 examines civic performances designed to honor prominent individuals, mark political events and issues of significance to New York City, or signal the completion of great projects that have touched the lives of New Yorkers. The great jubilees of recent years, including the ticker tape parades for the astronauts and championship sports teams and the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, all drew on traditions established in the nineteenth century. Brooks McNamara sees these events as an extension of the traditional theatrical form. Although public celebrations take place outside of the playhouse, they are often loosely scripted, stage-managed, and performed by enormous casts - with an entire city as stage and auditorium. McNamara examines the evolution of the broad themes of popular pageantry, and the effects of the growing and changing population on these events. Through contemporary accounts and illustrations, readers can experience the excitement of Lafayette's visit, the debut of Jenny Lind, and the first St. Patrick's Day parade. McNamara also traces the decline of the golden age of jubilees, highlighting such factors as rising costs to the City, increasing traffic congestion, and alternative popular entertainment. Readers will ask: Is our society too big and too complex for public performances of togetherness? And if so, have we found a better way to enact our appreciation of what we value?

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