



Hallelujah Lads and Lasses: Remaking the Salvation Army in America, 1880-1930

Lillian Taiz

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So strongly associated is the Salvation Army with its modern mission of service that its colorful history as a religious movement is often overlooked. In telling the story of the organization in America, Lillian Taiz traces its evolution from a working-class, evangelical religion to a movement that emphasized service as the path to salvation.

When the Salvation Army crossed the Atlantic from Britain in 1879, it immediately began to adapt its religious culture to its new American setting. The group found its constituency among young, working-class men and women who were attracted to its intensely experiential religious culture, which combined a frontier-camp-meeting style with working-class forms of popular culture modeled on the saloon and theater. In the hands of these new recruits, the Salvation Army developed a remarkably democratic internal culture. By the turn of the century, though, as the Army increasingly attempted to attract souls by addressing the physical needs of the masses, the group began to turn away from boisterous religious expression toward a more "refined" religious culture and a more centrally controlled bureaucratic structure.

Placing her focus on the membership of the Salvation Army and its transformation as an organization within the broader context of literature on class, labor, and women's history, Taiz sheds new light on the character of American working-class culture and religion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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