

Greater Gotham: A History of New York City From 1898 to 1919 is volume 2 of a series. Volume 1, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (1999) by Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in History. That book started in the early 16th century and spanned almost 400 years of history in 69 chapters and over 1200 pages. Volume 2 covers a little more than two decades in 24 chapters and over a thousand pages. Both are reference books for quick look up rather than books to read straight through. The hardcover edition of *Greater Gotham* weighs five pounds.

Mike Wallace is the Distinguished Professor of History at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. His original collaborator on the Gotham project, Edwin Burrows, a Professor of History at Brooklyn College- CUNY, died in 2018 and is not credited here, possibly because Burrows' area of historical expertise was in the earlier historical period.

In the introduction, Wallace explains that the book is organized to present the history of New York City, starting with the consolidation of its five boroughs into one metropolis in 1898, through five "vantage points," starting with a global perspective and ending with a "ground level" look at the people of the city.

The first vantage point is the global role of New York City as it moves "from the edge to the center of the world" to become an economic super-power "poised to wrest the financial leadership of the global capitalist system from London" by the end of World War I (10). Vantage point 2 examines the relationship between New York City and the United States as a whole as it emerges, in Wallace's view, as the unofficial capital of the country. It is the largest city in the United States, located in the state with the most electoral clout, and with large industrial, financial, and cultural sectors. Vantage point 3 chronicles the growth of the physical city itself and a real estate boom in response to its new prominence while vantage point 4 recounts the response of the city to cyclical economic booms and busts. The final vantage point is a close-up look at the people of New York themselves as they work, struggle, play, pray, parade, and propagate. This last vantage point interested me the most because among the people living in Greater Gotham

are both sets of my grandparents, Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, and my father's older sister. My father, himself, was not born until 1920 and my mother until 1926.

Wallace and his collaborators, dozens of whom he thanks for their contributions, display an astounding understanding of the role geography, economics, and technology play in shaping history. There are chapters on housing booms in the outer boroughs, mergers, acquisitions, and the role of business leaders and bankers in making money but also in promoting the arts through philanthropy. Readers learn about the technology that makes possible the early New York skyline and its infrastructure of bridges, tunnels, roads, and rails. One area Wallace seems to slight are the city's water and sewage systems. There is a brief section on water (203-205) subsumed in a chapter on arteries where Wallace calls "Greater New York" a "thirsty super-city." Much of the section focuses on whether the water network should be privately or publicly owned and operated. There could be no Greater Gotham without water so the development of the reservoir system, the construction of the aqueducts, and the role of workers deserved greater attention. The vast sewage disposal system and the workers who built it get even less notice (217-218).

Part Three on Culture includes four different chapters, Acropoli, Show Biz, Popular Culture, and Seeing New York. Wallace didn't explain the term Acropoli, which I assume is the plural for the Athenian Acropolis, and he argues that Greater Gotham had multiple competing cultural centers because of class divisions and because of competition between elite upper-class cliques. The American Museum of Natural History became identified with the Roosevelts. Morgan and Rockefeller money patronized that

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