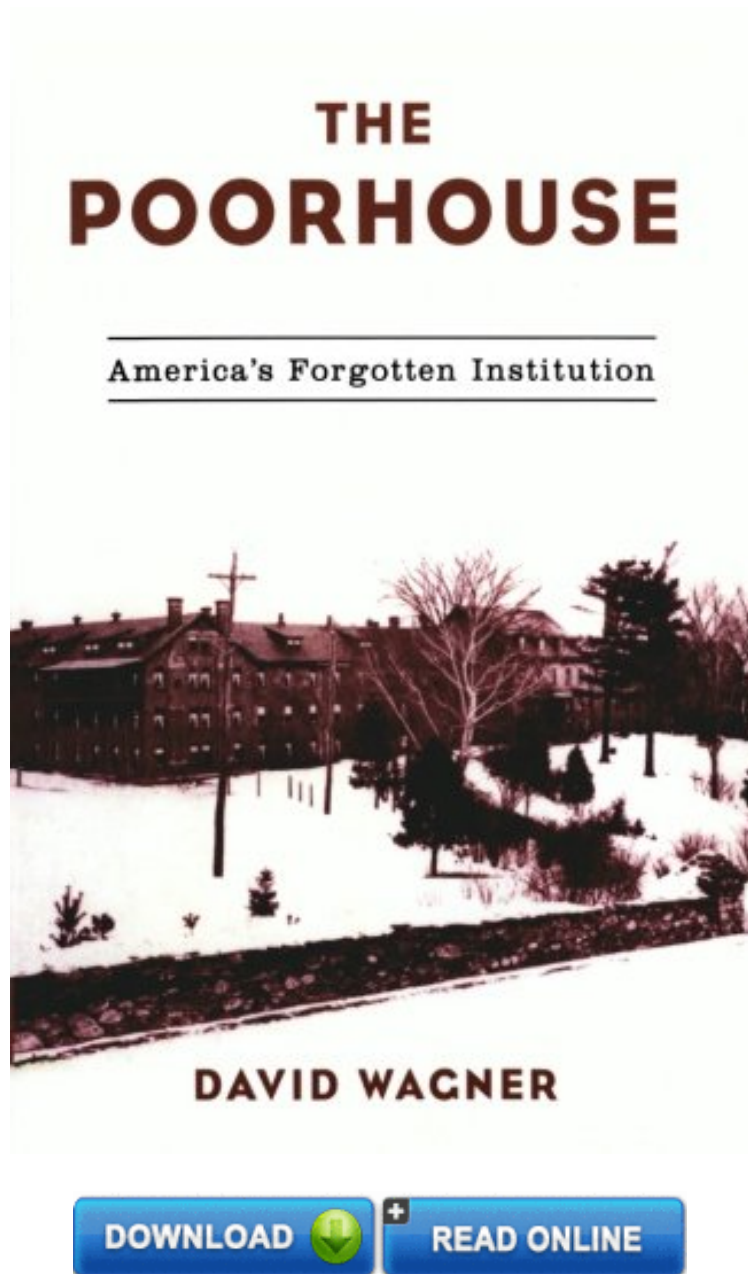


[Download pdf] The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution

The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution

David Wagner

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#500810 in Books Rowman n Littlefield Publishers 2005-01-17 2005-01-17Original language:EnglishPDF #1 9.12 x .60 x 6.12l, .63 #File Name: 0742529452200 pages | File size: 15.Mb

David Wagner : The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The PoorhouseBy Rebecca EllisThis is a really great book. It is very well-written, informative and entertaining. I didn't want to put it down.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Janette DwyerPurchased for a friend0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy April MarvelousGreat book for school.

Many of us grew up hearing our parents exclaim 'you are driving me to the poorhouse!' or remember the card in the 'Monopoly' game which says 'Go to the Poorhouse! Lose a Turn!' Yet most Americans know little or nothing of this institution that existed under a variety of names for approximately three hundred years of American history. Surprisingly these institutions variously named poorhouses, poor farms, sometimes almshouses or workhouses, have received rather scant academic treatment, as well, though tens of millions of poor people were confined there, while often their neighbors talked in hushed tones and in fear of their own fate at the 'specter of the poorhouse.' Based on the author's study of six New England poorhouses/poor farms, a hidden story in America's history is presented which will be of popular interest as well as useful as a text in social welfare and social history. While the poorhouse's mission was character reform and 'repressing pauperism,' these goals were gradually undermined by poor people themselves, who often learned to use the poorhouse for their own benefit, as well as by staff and officials of the houses, who had agendas sometimes at odds with the purposes for which the poorhouse was invented.

An eye-opener! Wagner carefully and judiciously combs through the data to give us a vivid picture of 19th century institutions for the care of the American poor. There is nothing quite like this, and American social welfare history will never be the same. (Frances Fox Piven, Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Sociology, CUNY) David Wagner's extraordinary journey through the history of 'the poorhouse' in the United States is meticulously researched and brings alive, in eminently readable prose, the lives of those human beings who were both victims and overseers of this much-neglected part of American life. This is an important contribution to our social history. (Howard Zinn, author of A People's History of the United States and professor emeritus of Political Science, Boston University) At a time in which the Social Security Act (1935) itself is under ideological assault, Wagner's informative book is required reading. (New England Quarterly) This impressively researched history of the poorhouse, a mainstay social welfare resource for 300 years in America, will fascinate and enlighten even a casual reader. (Journal Of Religion and Spirituality In Social Work) For a small volume, David Wagner's *The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution* has a hefty agenda. Over seven short chapters, Wagner sketches the story of the fabled symbol of vulnerability and failure that for generations accumulated America's infirm, superannuated, and dispossessed while birthing specialized institutions for child welfare, substance abuse treatment, and psychiatric, medical, and geriatric care. (Social Service) *The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution* takes its place as a thought-provoking, well-researched volume that has no rival in the field. It will be the standard of reference for years to come. (Maine Sunday Telegram) *The Poorhouse* turns out to be a most appealing and timely book with much to say about contemporary social policy. It is highly recommended for undergraduate and graduate students in schools of social work, for social welfare and social policy historians, and for historians of disability. (Journal of American History) Based on newspaper accounts, poorhouse records, oral history interviews, and local government records, Wagner provides a rich description of life in six New England poorhouses between the 1830s and the 1940s. (Journal of Sociology Social Welfare) With many photographs, the book provides an excellent picture of a forgotten aspect of American history. (Midwest Book) About the Author David Wagner is professor of social work and sociology at the University of Southern Maine. He is the author of five books, including *Checkerboard Square: Culture and Resistance in a Homeless Community*, winner of the 1993 C. Wright Mills Book Award.