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Inventing Modern Adolescence: The Children Of Immigrants In Turn-of-the-Century America (Rutgers Series In Childhood Studies)



Synopsis

The 1960s are commonly considered to be the beginning of a distinct "teenage culture" in America. But did this highly visible era of free love and rock 'n' roll really mark the start of adolescent defiance? In *Inventing Modern Adolescence* Sarah E. Chinn follows the roots of American teenage identity further back, to the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. She argues that the concept of the "generation gap"â "a stereotypical complaint against American teensâ "actually originated with the division between immigrant parents and their American-born or -raised children. Melding a uniquely urban immigrant sensibility with commercialized consumer culture and a youth-oriented ethos characterized by fun, leisure, and overt sexual behavior, these young people formed a new identity that provided the framework for today's concepts of teenage lifestyle. Addressing the intersecting issues of urban life, race, gender, sexuality, and class consciousness, *Inventing Modern Adolescence* is an authoritative and engaging look at a pivotal point in American history and the intriguing, complicated, and still very pertinent teenage identity that emerged from it.

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Customer Reviews

Chinn's argument, that early 20th century immigrant youth were the first teenagers (conceptualized as having disposable income and out of control desires) is the kind of "wow, why didn't anyone think of that before?" that can completely change your way of thinking about history. On top of that, Chinn

is a clear and engaging writer. Great book!

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