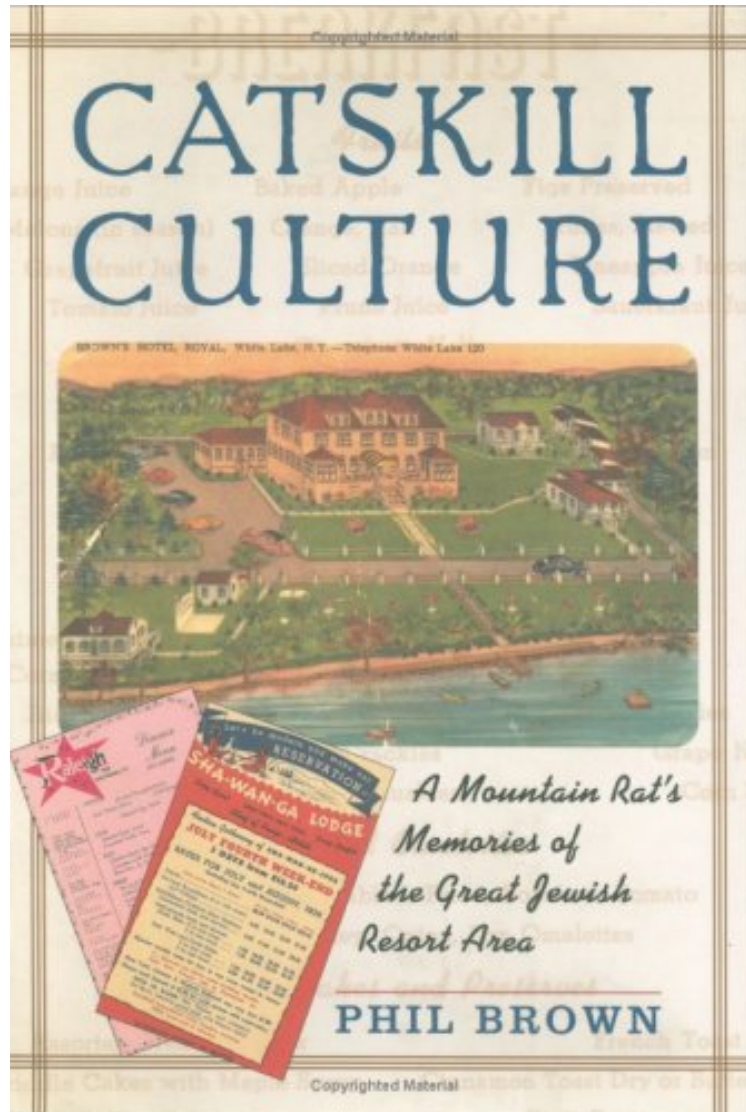


# Catskill Culture: A Mountain Rat's Memories of the Great Jewish Resort Area

*Phil Brown*

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#2234548 in Books Temple University Press 1998-09-22 Original language: English PDF # 1 10.00 x 1.10 x 7.00l, #File Name: 1566396425298 pages | File size: 44.Mb

**Phil Brown : Catskill Culture: A Mountain Rat's Memories of the Great Jewish Resort Area** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Catskill Culture: A Mountain Rat's Memories of the Great Jewish Resort Area:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Worthwhile piece of history By Alex If you are a baby boomer or older and ever went to the Catskill Mountains, then this book is a must-read. Having gone to the Catskill's as a child to

visit my grandparents who stayed there during their summers, this book brought incredible and fantastic memories back to life. The author knows the Catskills like the palm of his hand. His knowledge of the Catskill Mountains is vast, insightful, touching and funny. This is a lost period in time that the book memorializes so that this time in history may continue to live on in our hearts and minds. Again, a must-read! I gave this book to my older sister as a gift and she said that "this book is a treasure". Younger generations may find this interesting also. Thank you to the author for writing this! I just happened to be researching the Catskill Mountains on-line and pleasantly stumbled upon this book! What a find! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great nostalgia By Customer I loved the book and tell people about it. This brings back great memories for me and for the generation that went to and worked in the Catskills. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Catskill Culture By Happy Horse I bought this as a present, therefore cannot review contents. I was very pleased with the rapidity with which the book was shipped. It was well packed and accurately described with regard to its excellent condition.

A rich ethnographical study, drawing on the memories of guests, staff, and entertainers, chronicles the development of the Jewish Catskill resorts, discussing their impact on both American and immigrant Jewish culture and tracing their slow decline since the 1970s. UP.

From Publishers Weekly The author, a professor of sociology at Brown University and co-founder of the Catskills Institute, this book is an examination of his childhood legacy. He grew up a "mountain rat" in the Catskills where his mother worked as a chef, his father in various resort occupations; Brown himself had numerous jobs. His visits as an adult to his old haunts reveal a changed emotional and social landscape. Most of the bungalow colonies and once-grand and second-rate hotels are vacant or burned down and the resorts still alive today are run by Orthodox Jews or have become New Age ashrams. A once vibrant culture, "a major facet of the Jewish experience," has, says Brown, disappeared with the secularization of Jewish daily life and the growth of affordable airline travel. Lasting for a good part of the 20th century, the Catskills were a community that went beyond a simple vacation escape. Tourism grew with demands for better facilities and entertainment. There was a magic in mountain life for the workers and for the summer residents that became truly glitzy with the addition of big-name entertainers. In 1991, Brown first began to see his roots as "grist for an ethnography" and from that time on he read, compiled oral histories and, in 1995, organized the first annual "History of the Catskills" conference. It was, he said, a "spiritual homecoming." Because of his fond experience, Brown's ethnography is much warmer, more personal than most. It is a documentary of assimilation and of a return to one's roots. An appendix lists 926 hotels. 91 bw photos. (Oct.) FYI: Temple also published Irwin Richman's Borscht Belt Bungalows: Memories of Catskill Summers (Forecasts, Nov. 17, 1997). Copyright 1998 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Warm and poignant memories of a bygone place and time, the Borscht Belt of the 1950s, fill this memoir-cum-socioethnological study. A small resort area that catered to New Yorkers and was a catalyst in the Americanization of the immigrant Jewish population, the Catskill Mountains also served as the training ground of many of the comedians and writers who are so well known today. Brown's parents were owners of a small hotel in the area, where he worked during his college years; subsequently, Brown (sociology, Brown Univ.) became cofounder of the Catskills Institute. Using photographs and interviews, he takes a nostalgic look at the Borscht Belt and its decline. The old bungalows and hotels, in rundown condition, are now being used by Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish communities. A pleasant read with a scholarly bent; recommended for libraries with ethno-American, New York State, or Judaica collections. ?Idelle Rudman, Touro Coll. Lib., Brooklyn, NY Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Part memoir, part history, part sociology: Catskill Culture is basically an engagingly-written jog down Memory Lane augmented by anecdotes..." -The Journal of American Ethnic History "Whether you remember the summers in the Catskills, or heard nostalgic tales about this bygone era, this book is worth reading." -Lifestyles Magazine in Buffalo, NY "One of the virtues of Phil Brown's unapologetically nostalgic memoir of growing up and working in the legendary Catskill Mountains-as busboy, cook, waiter, musician and all around 'mountain rat'-is that his particular nostalgia is profoundly earned. Indeed, he is deeply in touch with the vanished Jewish world of his parents who labored for their entire lives in the mountains. Brown offers an insider's-a native ethnographer's-account of this region and the astonishing Jewish culture it spawned." -American Jewish History "Because of his fond experience, Brown's ethnography is much warmer, more personal than most. It is a documentary of assimilation and a return to one's roots." -Publishers Weekly "Using photographs and interviews, [Brown] takes a nostalgic look at the Borscht Belt and its decline....A pleasant read." -Library Journal "With part autobiography, part ethnography, Brown takes us back, nostalgically, to the halcyon days of this resort community. Remarkably, he depicts the area with such vivid illustrations that he brings alive the emotions, sentiments, and good will for which the Catskills were known. A labor of love...Mazel Tov, Phil!" -Contemporary Sociology "A powerful blend of personal memoir, sociological study, and historical ethnography, Catskill Culture recalls the life of Jewish Catskill mountain resort culture from its early years before World War II through its heyday in the postwar era and its subsequent decline in recent decades. Phil Brown's engaging and eminently readable account is shot through with nostalgic ambivalence for the world of work that produced the leisure industry known as 'the borscht belt'... An insightful exploration of the workplace culture of the

Catskills resorts, the book speaks to all who have ever visited the mountains or heard stories about them as well as to students of contemporary ethnicity and culture." -Deborah Dash Moore, Professor of Religion, Vassar College, and author of *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A.* "With an insider's love and knowledge and a sociologist's objectivity, Phil Brown has written a book that avoids the sentimentality and condescension that have marred many of its predecessors. Interviews with former employees, owners and guests provide priceless insights into the culture of the Mountains. Brown's own voice is so warm, rich and good natured you will feel as if you are in the care of the most gracious of hosts as you experience life at the great-and not so great-Jewish resorts of the past." -Eileen Pollack, Director of Creative Writing, University of Michigan, and author of *The Rabbi in the Attic and Other Stories*