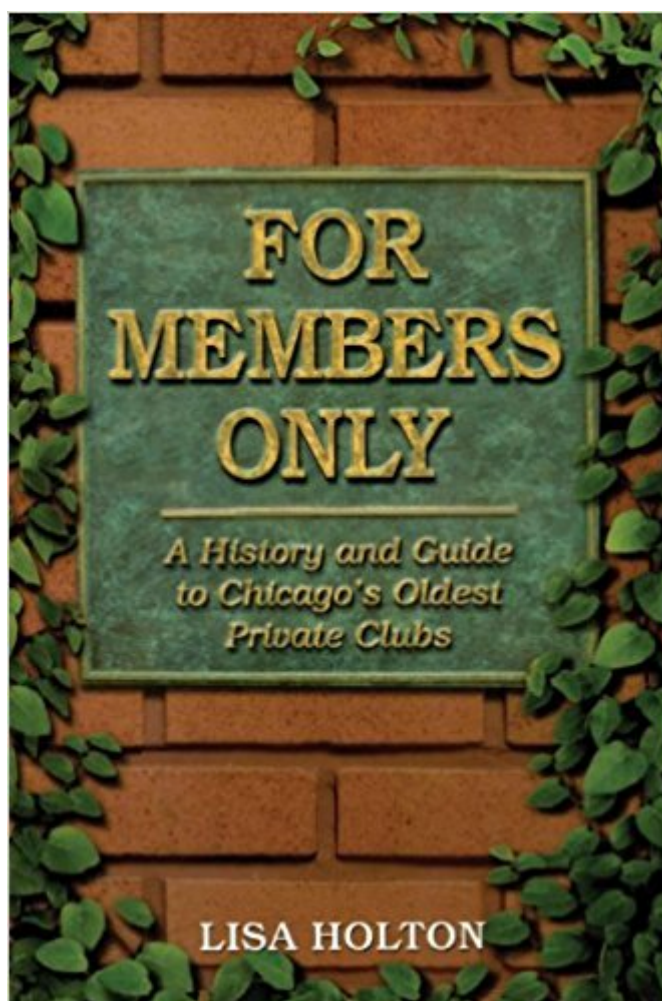


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For Members Only: A History And Guide To Chicago's Oldest Private Clubs



Synopsis

Providing an opportunity to see how the business, nonprofit, and political leaders of Chicago shaped the city for more than 140 years behind closed doors, this book consolidates the histories of current and former private social clubs in words, pictures, and first-person commentary. Chicago would be a very different place without the contributions made by the members of the city's landmark clubs—which have been oases for the rich and privileged, playgrounds for the social set, and private watering holes for the city's movers and shakers—and this resource discusses how clubs once restricted by race, sex, and birthright, enclaves that flourished in the days of Marshall Field and Louis Sullivan, have adapted to a modern society. With chapters devoted to the city's top clubs and a guide to current membership requirements, readers explore the past, present, and future of these elite communities. Chicago's Private Clubs: A Rich and Unexpected History There wouldn't be a Burnham Plan. The World's Columbian Exposition wouldn't be in our history books. Al Capone might have lived out his days with a comfortable grasp on Chicago's crime rackets. . . . The 2000 moratorium on the death penalty in Illinois might not have had the support it did, and Millennium Park might still be merely a grand idea instead of the showpiece it is today. As Lisa Holton writes in her introduction, Chicago would be a very different place without the contributions made by the members of the city's private social clubs. Yet most of us walk past their stately facades without any idea what goes on within. Holton, a freelance writer and former business editor of the Chicago Sun-Times, reveals a fascinating history of the hidden world that has united--and divided--the city's leaders since Chicago's first days. These clubs have been oases for the rich and privileged, playgrounds for the social set, private watering holes for the city's movers and shakers. Places that, certainly at their inception, most of us couldn't get in. Here's your chance to enter that world, to see how the business, nonprofit, and political leaders of Chicago shaped the city for more than 140 years behind these closed doors. With chapters devoted to the city's top clubs and a guide to current membership requirements, explore the past, present, and future of these elite communities. Learn how clubs that flourished in the days of Marshall Field and Louis Sullivan, enclaves once restricted by race, sex, and birthright, have adapted to a modern society. Whether you're a prospective member or a student of Chicago history, *For Members Only* is the first comprehensive book consolidating the histories of these current and former landmark clubs in words, pictures, and first-person commentary.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Chicago's private clubs have always been alluringly mysterious: What does go on behind those closed doors? Now, and it's about time, Lisa Holton uses her fine reporter's skills to unlock many of the secrets, to give us an exhaustively researched, a finely detailed, and enlightening look inside those bastions of money and power and influence. This is an important Chicago story." — Rick Kogan, Chicago Tribune and WGN radio

"A sweeping, 150-year history of the social habits of Chicago's leadership class, For Members Only captures neatly the spirit of ambition and status-seeking of early Chicago, where clubs offered men (and only recently, women) a way to gather with those of similar standing to relax, boost their city, and build their own stature and wealth. Lisa Holton opens the mahogany doors into a private world that up to this day will captivate and sometimes dismay the reader." — James D. Nowlan, author, Glory, Darkness, Light: A History of the Union League Club of Chicago

"A rich addition to our understanding of our city's expansion [that] informs today's discussion on the directions of its growth." — Windy City Times

Lisa Holton is a former business writer for the Chicago Sun-Times and currently writes about business history and other topics at her own firm, The Lisa Company. A prolific corporate writer and ghostwriter, she is the author of Are You Ready to Incorporate?, Buying a Franchise, The Encyclopedia of Financial Planning, The Everything Guide to Mortgages, and Rental Property Investing. Lisa Holton began her career as a business writer at the Chicago Sun-Times and today writes about business history and other topics at her own firm, The Lisa Company. A prolific corporate writer, ghostwriter, and author, For Members Only is her eleventh

book. Holton has written for a variety of national magazines and newspapers including *Corporate Board Member*, *American Bar Association Journal*, *Parents*, *American Demographics*, *Latina*, *Working Mother*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. She also writes for associations and universities worldwide. A graduate of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and a former national board member of the Society of American Business Editors and Writers (SABEW), Holton is a member of the Authors Guild, the International Association of Business Communicators, and the Society of Midland Authors. In her spare time, Holton writes short stories and screenplays. Her feature screenplay *The Plant* was a quarterfinalist for the 2002 Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting offered by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She has attended the film program at Chicago's Columbia College and completed film production courses at Chicago Filmmakers Workshop. A native of Moline, Illinois, Holton grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, and now considers the Windy City her home. She lives in suburban Evanston.

Very well researched book on Chicago Social Clubs.

One could walk down a Chicago street and pass many of them, never knowing they passed an important part of Chicago's history. Knowledgeably compiled and expertly written by Lisa Holton, *"For Members Only: A History and Guide to Chicago's Oldest Private Clubs"* looks at over a century of secrecy and how it is not always a bad thing. Identifying these clubs and their contributions, examining how they were formed, and revealing how they exist in the modern world which frowns on exclusionary practices, *"For Members Only"* a solidly informative and educational study. Highly recommended for non-specialist general readers with an interest in American History in general, and the city of Chicago in particular, *"For Members Only"* is a great piece of history and a welcome addition to library reference collections.

Great read! These clubs, while anachronistic to some, were the social networking sites of their day -- Facebook and MySpace built with bricks and mortar, instead of electrons and photons. Chicago is, and was known early on for its brash (some say bordering on obnoxious) civic boosterism. And so it was. These are institutions that helped focus the hearts, minds and wallets of the city's rich and powerful on what was needed ... and then they helped to get it done. And they continue to get things done today. Good primer on one of the things that makes the city work.

Although I am not a mover and shaker I enjoy reading about them and this wonderful book tells me

who and where they unwind after their moving and shaking is done or to move and shake some more over cocktails and thick steaks. As a life-long Chicagoan I was fascinated to learn what goes on behind the scenes at some of the buildings I aimlessly walk by every day without a clue. The author clues me in on a well researched guided tour from the past to the present (and future) of these hidden dens of prosperity. Kudos to Lisa Holton!

Lisa Holton takes readers behind closed doors for a fascinating glimpse into the history of Chicago's storied private clubs. In describing the civic and business elite who lounge within, Holton provides a rich history lesson on the city itself. One wonders whether the mortal wounds once-mighty business titans are suffering now, during this unprecedented economic turmoil, will force these discreet dens to rethink their membership requirements!

Lisa Holton did it again! This is a great book... one that mixes business with history, Chicago style. Well worth reading, the author snags the reader with her great prose and storytelling. Very well done!

Very interesting insight to a world not known to many people. What was purchased originally as a gift is now a permanent part of my library. Thank you Ms Holton

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