



Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture

Kathy Peiss



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How did powder and paint, once scorned as immoral, become indispensable to millions of respectable women? How did a "kitchen physic," as homemade cosmetics were once called, become a multibillion-dollar industry? And how did men finally take over that rarest of institutions, a woman's business?

In *Hope in a Jar*, historian Kathy Peiss gives us the first full-scale social history of America's beauty culture, from the buttermilk and rice powder recommended by Victorian recipe books to the mass-produced products of our contemporary consumer age. She shows how women, far from being pawns and victims, used makeup to declare their freedom, identity, and sexual allure as they flocked to enter public life. And she highlights the leading role of white and black women—Helena Rubenstein and Annie Turnbo Malone, Elizabeth Arden and Madame C. J. Walker—in shaping a unique industry that relied less on advertising than on women's customs of visiting and conversation. Replete with the voices and experiences of ordinary women, *Hope in a Jar* is a richly textured account of the ways women created the cosmetics industry and cosmetics created the modern woman.



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