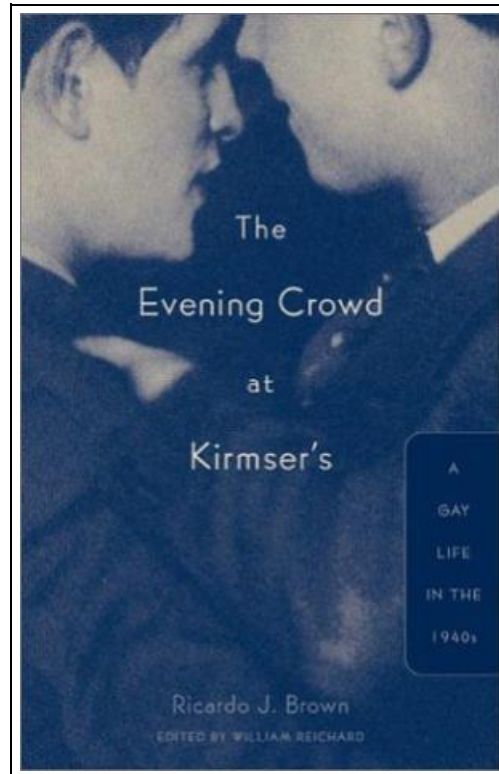


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University of Minnesota Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 176 pages. Dimensions: 8.0in. x 5.5in. x 0.4in. It is often difficult to imagine gay gathering places in the decades before the Stonewall riots of the 1960s, and nearly impossible to think of such communities outside the nations largest cities. Yet such places did exist, and their histories tell amazing stories of survival and the struggle for acceptance and self-respect. Kirmsers was such a place. In the 1940s, this bar in downtown St. Paul was popular with blue-collar customers during the day, then became an unofficial home to working-class gay men and lesbians at night. After Ricardo J. Brown was discharged from the navy for revealing his sexual orientation in 1945, he returned home to Minnesota and discovered in Kirmsers a space where he could develop his new self-awareness and fulfill his desire to find people like himself. The *Evening Crowd at Kirmsers* is Browns compelling memoir of his experiences as a young gay man in St. Paul. In an engaging and open writing style, and through stories both humorous and tragic, Brown introduces us to his family, companions, and friends, such as Flaming Youth, a homely, sardonic man who carried the nickname from his youth ironically into middle age; Dale, who suddenly loses his job of six years after an anonymous note informed his employer that he was gay; and Bud York, an attractive and confident man with a fondness for young boys. A lifelong journalist, Ricardo J. Brown (1926-1998) was born in Stillwater, Minnesota. During his long career, he worked for the *Alabama Journal*, the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* of Alaska, and as the Minneapolis bureau chief for Fairchild Publications. William Reichard is a poet and fiction writer, and author of *An Alchemy in the Bones* (1999) and *To Be Quietly...*

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