

The French quarter;: An informal history of the New Orleans underworld

Herbert Asbury

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#4453161 in Books 1938 #File Name: B000858FSG462 pages | File size: 57.Mb

Herbert Asbury : The French quarter;: An informal history of the New Orleans underworld before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The French quarter;: An informal history of the New Orleans underworld:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating history on New OrleansBy Chris"Times are not good here. The city is crumbling into ashes. It has been buried under a lava flood of taxes and frauds and maladministrations so that it has become only a study for archaeologists. Its condition is so bad that when I write about it, as I intend to do soon, nobody will believe I am telling the truth. But it is better to live here in sackcloth and ashes, than to own the whole state of Ohio."-Lafcadio Hearn, 1879.Readers of Herbert Asbury's book will understand what prompted the sentiment of the comments by Hearn about New Orleans. Asbury makes the story of New Orleans a very involving one. I loved the descriptions of New Orleans in the 18th and 19th centuries. In Asbury's book many historical characters walk through such as Jean Lafitte and Andrew Jackson. You will read about the administration of Ben Butler during the Civil War and also the practice of dueling. Asbury is also not afraid to explore the seamy underside of this incredible city. A reader will not believe how colorful of a place New Orleans was. All of it is here: Voodoo, the slaves, filibustering soldiers, and Storyville. There are incredible stories from the 1850s of opposing political forces squaring off as heavily armed forces. You will read about the incredible hardships that the city suffered when hit by Yellow fever various times and how the death toll from that dwarfed even the awful death toll of Hurricane Katrina. A reader will understand that this city has seen hardship before and still will continue on. That Hurricanes, the

British, Crime, Corrupt politicians or Yellow Fever will never stop it. I recommend this book highly and think that it is definitely in the league of the author's 'The Gangs of New York'. A+1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Well Researched, Entertaining History Book. By Lee Childers "The French Quarter; An Informal History of the New Orleans Underworld" is an extremely detailed, well documented history running from the founding of New Orleans in the early 1700's until the late 1930's when the book was written. The author, Herbert Asbury, specialized in this type of history. He also wrote "Gangs of New York" (later a movie) and "The Barbary Coast." The book is chock full of names and dates of all the crooks, prostitutes, and scandals that formed the history and somewhat notorious reputation of the legendary city. Slavery, voodoo, gambling, murdering, arson -- they are all there in intricate detail. It is a long sometimes fascinating, frequently confusing account which helpfully, carefully locates each atrocity and house of gambling and/or prostitution geographically on the streets of the city. It could literally be used as an aid in a walking tour of the sinful history of New Orleans, especially the French Quarter. I enjoyed reading it very much, but it is a little bit like going to school, if they taught such scandalous material. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Dark Side By An Observer I love "The City", and particularly its French Quarter. NOLA's history is incredible in the annals of our Country's early development. Asbury does an excellent job of detailing its darker side of that history and truly, it is interesting. My main fault is that this book seemed a bit ponderous read and one that required quite a time to complete. That said, his book seems well researched, factual and for a student of history, particularly the darker side of early New Orleans, well worth the considerable investment of time to learn of and understand it.

Home to the notorious "Blue Book," which listed the names and addresses of every prostitute living in the city, New Orleans's infamous red-light district gained a reputation as one of the most raucous in the world. But the New Orleans underworld consisted of much more than the local bordellos. It was also well known as the early gambling capital of the United States, and sported one of the most violent records of street crime in the country. In *The French Quarter*, Herbert Asbury, author of *The Gangs of New York*, chronicles this rather immense underbelly of "The Big Easy." From the murderous exploits of Mary Jane "Bricktop" Jackson and Bridget Fury, two prostitutes who became famous after murdering a number of their associates, to the faux-revolutionary "filibusters" who, backed by hundreds of thousands of dollars of public support though without official governmental approval undertook military missions to take over the bordering Spanish regions in Texas, the French Quarter had it all. Once again, Asbury takes the reader on an intriguing, photograph-filled journey through a unique version of the American underworld.

"For any true-crime collection." -- Library Journal, July 2003