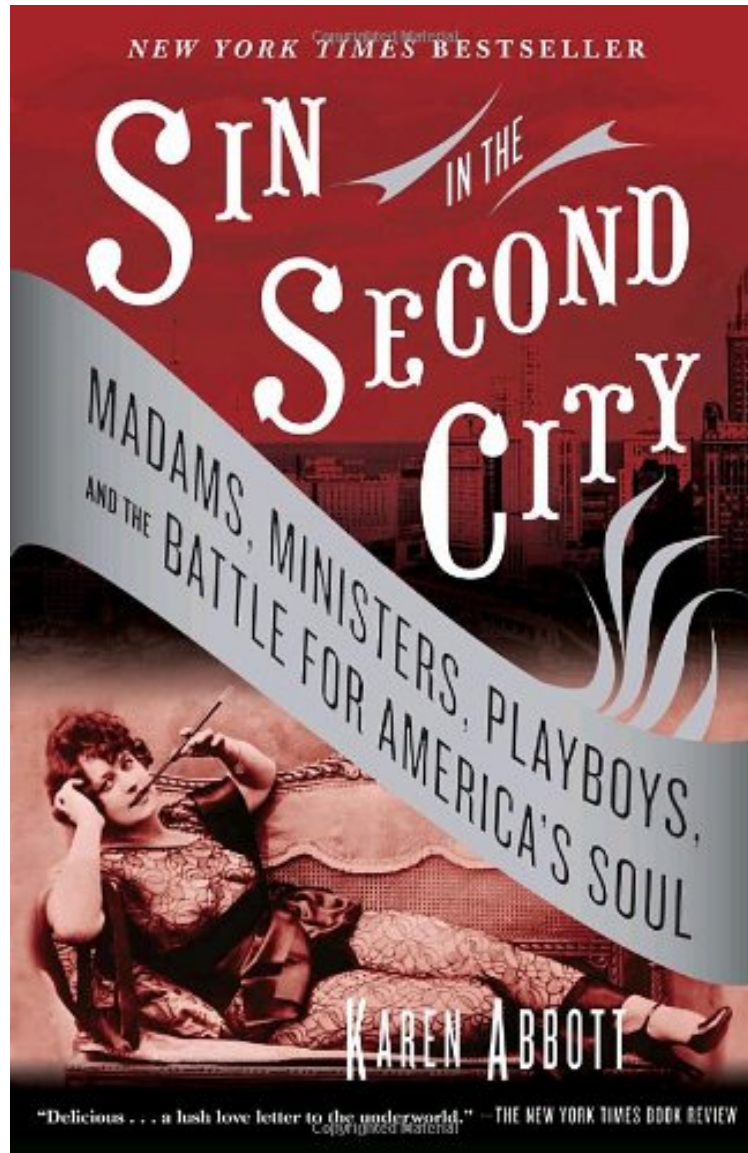


Sin in the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for America's Soul

Karen Abbott

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#39320 in Books Karen Abbott 2008-06-10 2008-06-10 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.98 x .81 x 5.151, .64 #File Name: 0812975995400 pages Sin in the Second City Madams Ministers Playboys and the Battle for America s Soul | File size: 75.Mb

Karen Abbott : Sin in the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for America's Soul before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sin in the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for America's Soul:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. fascinating look at early 20th century ChicagoBy lindapanzoThe subtitle: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for the American Soul pretty much says it all. This book talks primarily about the Everleigh Club, an upscale brothel in Chicago from 1900 to 1911. It was run by two sisters, Ada and Minna Everleigh, and counted among its clientele most of the rich and famous in the city and elsewhere, including John Barrymore, Theodore Dreiser, and many others. Mobster, such as Big Jim Colosimo, and politicians such as Bathhouse John Coughlin and Hinky Dink Kenna, are colorfully portrayed. Besides the interesting facts about Chicago's red light district, the Levee, the most interesting parts of the book involved early 20th century Chicago. I'm fascinated by Chicago history so I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The sinners in this book were more interesting to read about than the saints, the various people and groups that tried to close down the brothels. During the story, once the Everleigh Club was closed, the book seemed to fizzle out. Overall, very good book though this is one book that was better early. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Look into the LeveeBy J. DuffyGrowing up in Chicago, I had heard of but never regarded the reputation of the Chicago levee district. This was such a great account of the infamous Sin City when harlots and pimps reigned and entertained the scions of Chicago's social and industrial populations. Excellent tale of Chicago's "sinful" past. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The Other Chicago FireBy Kathleen M. HollandHow about taking a trip back in time to the Chicago of a century ago? Interested in the city within the city...which was the home of what I find myself thinking of as the "other fire"...that of political corruption, widespread vice, and attempted religious reformation? It's all here, in Karen Abbott's singular offering, "Sin In The Second City". This is the story of the world-famous Everleigh Club, the most opulent and unusual bordello in U.S. history, and the sisters who designed, created, and ran it to a fascinating standard unseen anywhere else in the world of organized prostitution in its time. You'll not only learn the rich history of old-time Chicago. You'll also get an inside look at the dichotomy in its morality, and how enormous fortunes were made out of the whims and practices of Chicago's elite....odd as many of those whims were. Ms. Abbott's book also presents the world of the sex trade in all its viciousness and danger...and tells us how that has really not changed with time....and how the Everleigh Club brilliantly broke the rules for bordellos everywhere. This is a not-to-be missed offering for anyone who is interested in social history, the history of the sex trade, and the political system rampant in the Chicago of the turn of the 20th century. Ms. Abbott's "Sin In The Second City" is not to be missed!

Step into the perfumed parlors of the Everleigh Club, the most famous brothel in American history—and the catalyst for a culture war that rocked the nation. Operating in Chicago's notorious Levee district at the dawn of the last century, the Club's proprietors, two aristocratic sisters named Minna and Ada Everleigh, welcomed moguls and actors, senators and athletes, foreign dignitaries and literary icons, into their stately double mansion, where thirty stunning Everleigh "butterflies" awaited their arrival. Courtesans named Doll, Suzy Poon Tang, and Brick Top devoured raw meat to the delight of Prince Henry of Prussia and recited poetry for Theodore Dreiser. Whereas lesser madams pocketed most of a harlot's earnings and kept a "whipper" on staff to mete out discipline, the Everleighs made sure their girls dined on gourmet food, were examined by an honest physician, and even tutored in the literature of Balzac. Not everyone appreciated the sisters' attempts to elevate the industry. Rival Levee madams hatched numerous schemes to ruin the Everleighs, including an attempt to frame them for the death of department store heir Marshall Field, Jr. But the sisters' most daunting foes were the Progressive Era reformers, who sent the entire country into a frenzy with lurid tales of "white slavery"—the allegedly rampant practice of kidnapping young girls and forcing them into brothels. This furor shaped America's sexual culture and had repercussions all the way to the White House, including the formation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. With a cast of characters that includes Jack Johnson, John Barrymore, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., William Howard Taft, "Hinky Dink" Kenna, and Al Capone, *Sin in the Second City* is Karen Abbott's colorful, nuanced portrait of the iconic Everleigh sisters, their world-famous Club, and the perennial clash between our nation's hedonistic impulses and Puritanical roots. Culminating in a dramatic last stand between brothel keepers and crusading reformers, *Sin in the Second City* offers a vivid snapshot of America's journey from Victorian-era propriety to twentieth-century modernity. Visit www.sininthesecondcity.com to learn more! "Delicious... Abbott describes the Levee's characters in such detail that it's easy to mistake this meticulously researched history for literary fiction." — New York Times Book Review "Described with scrupulous concern for historical accuracy...an immensely readable book." — Joseph Epstein, *The Wall Street Journal* "Assiduously researched... even this book's minutiae makes for good storytelling." — Janet Maslin, *The New York Times* "Karen Abbott has pioneered sizzle history in this satisfyingly lurid tale. Change the hemlines, add 100 years, and the book could be filed under current affairs." — USA Today "A rousingly racy yarn." — Chicago Tribune "A colorful history of old Chicago that reads like a novel... a compelling and eloquent story." — The Atlanta Journal-Constitution "Gorgeously detailed" — New York Daily News "At last, a history book you can bring to the beach." — The Philadelphia Inquirer "Once upon a time, Chicago had a world class bordello called The Everleigh Club. Author Karen Abbott brings the opulent place and its raunchy era alive in a book that just might become this year's 'The Devil In the White City.'" — Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine (cover story) "As Abbott's delicious and exhaustively researched book makes vividly clear, the Everleigh Club was the Taj Mahal of bordellos." — Chicago Sun Times

“The book is rich with details about a fast-and-loose Chicago of the early 20th century... Sin explores this world with gusto, throwing light on a booming city and exposing its shadows.” — Time Out Chicago “[Abbott’s] research enables the kind of vivid description à la fellow journalist Erik Larson’s *The Devil in the White City* that make what could be a dry historic account an intriguing read.” — Seattle Times “Abbott tells her story with just the right mix of relish and restraint, providing a piquant guide to a world of sexuality” — The Atlantic “A rollicking tale from a more vibrant time: history to a ragtime beat.” — Kirkus Reviews “With gleaming prose and authoritative knowledge Abbott elucidates one of the most colorful periods in American history, and the result reads like the very best fiction. Sex, opulence, murder — What’s not to love?” — Sara Gruen, author of *Water for Elephants* “A detailed and intimate portrait of the Ritz of brothels, the famed Everleigh Club of turn-of-the-century Chicago. Sisters Minna and Ada attracted the elites of the world to such glamorous chambers as the Room of 1,000 Mirrors, complete with a reflective floor. And isn’t Minna’s advice to her resident prostitutes worthy advice for us all: “Give, but give interestingly and with mystery.”” — Erik Larson, author of *The Devil in the White City* “Karen Abbott has combined bodice-ripping salaciousness with top-notch scholarship to produce a work more vivid than a Hollywood movie.” — Melissa Fay Greene, author of *There is No Me Without You* “Sin in the Second City is a masterful history lesson, a harrowing biography, and - best of all - a superfun read. The Everleigh story closely follows the turns of American history like a little sister. I can’t recommend this book loudly enough.” — Darin Strauss, author of *Chang and Eng* “This is a story of debauchery and corruption, but it is also a story of sisterhood, and unerring devotion. Meticulously researched, and beautifully crafted, *Sin in the Second City* is an utterly captivating piece of history.” — Julian Rubinstein, author of *Ballad of the Whiskey Robber*

From Publishers Weekly
 Freelance journalist Abbott’s vibrant first book probes the titillating milieu of the posh, world-famous Everleigh Club brothel that operated from 1900 to 1911 on Chicago’s Near South Side. The madams, Ada and Minna Everleigh, were sisters whose shifting identities had them as traveling actors, Edgar Allan Poe’s relatives, Kentucky debutantes fleeing violent husbands and daughters of a once-wealthy Virginia lawyer crushed by the Civil War. While lesser whorehouses specialized in deflowering virgins, beatings and bondage, the Everleighs spoiled their whores with couture gowns, gourmet meals and extraordinary salaries. The bordello—which boasted three stringed orchestras and a room of 1,000 mirrors—attracted such patrons as Theodore Dreiser, John Barrymore and Prussian Prince Henry. But the successful cathouse was implicated in the 1905 shooting of department store heir Marshall Field Jr. and inevitably became the target of rivals and reformers alike. Madam Vic Shaw tried to frame the Everleighs for a millionaire playboy’s drug overdose, Rev. Ernest Bell preached nightly outside the club and ambitious Chicago state’s attorney Clifford Roe built his career on the promise of obliterating white slavery. With colorful characters, this is an entertaining, well-researched slice of Windy City history. Photos. (July) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
 From Booklist
 Chicago, the saying goes, ain’t ready for reform. It certainly wasn’t in 1899, when sisters Ada and Minna “Everleigh” (real name: Simms) opened their brothel. As Abbott’s jaunty history relates, their whorehouse was not a tawdry bang barn for johns with a nickel but a glitzy palace of paid pleasure for plutocrats. Ada and Minna’s Everleigh Club prospered, protected by payoffs to Chicago’s legendary political crooks “Bathhouse” Coughlin and “Hinky Dink” Kenna, but the bordello’s brazenness mobilized moralists alarmed by vice, so-called white slavery in particular. An entertaining read, by turns bawdy and sad, as when a courtesan ends up dead, Abbott’s account extends beyond local history because the campaign against Ada and Minna had lasting national effects: the closure of urban red-light districts and the passage of the federal Mann Act concerning prostitution. Abbott adroitly evokes the cathouse atmosphere, but it is the rapier-sharp character sketches of the cast that best show off her authorial skills and will keep readers continually bemused as they learn about the lives and times of two madams. Taylor, Gilbert “Delicious... Abbott describes the Levee’s characters in such detail that it’s easy to mistake this meticulously researched history for literary fiction.” — New York Times Book “Described with scrupulous concern for historical accuracy...an immensely readable book.” — Joseph Epstein, *The Wall Street Journal* “Assiduously researched... even this book’s minutiae makes for good storytelling.” — Janet Maslin, *The New York Times* “Karen Abbott has pioneered sizzle history in this satisfyingly lurid tale. Change the hemlines, add 100 years, and the book could be filed under current affairs.” — USA Today “A rousingly racy yarn.” — Chicago Tribune “A colorful history of old Chicago that reads like a novel... a compelling and eloquent story.” — The Atlanta Journal-Constitution “Gorgeously detailed” — New York Daily News “At last, a history book you can bring to the beach.” — The Philadelphia Inquirer “Once upon a time, Chicago had a world class bordello called The Everleigh Club. Author Karen Abbott brings the opulent place and its raunchy era alive in a book that just might become this year’s “*The Devil In the White City*.” — Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine (cover story) “As Abbott’s delicious and exhaustively researched book makes vividly clear, the Everleigh Club was the Taj Mahal of bordellos.” — Chicago Sun Times “The book is rich with details about a fast-and-loose Chicago of the early 20th century... Sin explores this world with gusto, throwing light on a booming city and exposing its shadows.” — Time Out Chicago “[Abbott’s] research enables the kind of vivid description à la fellow journalist Erik Larson’s *The Devil in the White City* that make what could be a dry historic account an intriguing read.” — Seattle Times “Abbott tells her story with just

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