



The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans, 1865--1920

Alecia P. Long

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With a well-earned reputation for tolerance of both prostitution and miscegenation, New Orleans became known as the Great Southern Babylon in antebellum times. Following the Civil War, a profound alteration in social and economic conditions gradually reshaped the city's sexual culture and erotic commerce. Historian Alecia P. Long traces sex in the Crescent City over fifty years, drawing from Louisiana Supreme Court case testimony to relate intriguing tales of people both obscure and famous whose relationships and actions exemplify the era.

Long uncovers a connection between the geographical segregation of prostitution and the rising tide of racial segregation. She offers a compelling explanation of how New Orleans's lucrative sex trade drew tourists from the Bible Belt and beyond even as a nationwide trend toward the commercialization of sex emerged. And she dispels the romanticized smoke and perfume surrounding Storyville to reveal in the reasons for its rise and fall a fascinating corner of southern history. The Great Southern Babylon portrays the complex mosaic of race, gender, sexuality, social class, and commerce in turn-of-the-twentieth-century New Orleans.

"Long brilliantly charts the historical roots and evolution of the culture of commercial sexuality in New Orleans.... The result is a landmark book all should read." -- Darlene Clark Hine, coauthor of *A Shining Thread of Hope: The History of Black Women in America*

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