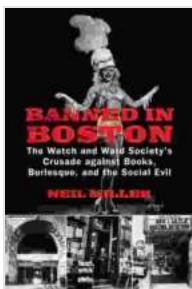


The Watch And Ward Society Crusade Against Burlesque And The Social Evil: An Uncovering of the Victorian Morality Crusade

During the Victorian era, a wave of moral fervor swept across the United States, igniting a crusade against perceived societal ills. Among the most targeted forms of entertainment was burlesque, a theatrical genre that combined humor, satire, and scantily clad performers. At the forefront of this anti-burlesque movement stood the Watch and Ward Society, a powerful and influential organization dedicated to upholding moral standards.

Origins of the Watch and Ward Society

The Watch and Ward Society emerged in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1878 as a response to growing concerns about the moral decay of the city. Initially focused on combating public drinking and gambling, the society's scope soon expanded to include the suppression of vice, including burlesque. Its members hailed from Boston's upper classes, including prominent businessmen, clergymen, and politicians.



Banned in Boston: The Watch and Ward Society's Crusade against Books, Burlesque, and the Social Evil

by Neil Miller

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 697 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting: Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 225 pages

X-Ray for textbooks : Enabled



Burlesque as a Symbol of Moral Decay

In the eyes of the Watch and Ward Society, burlesque represented a grave threat to Victorian morality. They saw the genre as promoting sexual promiscuity, encouraging disrespect for authority, and undermining the institution of marriage. The society's leaders believed that by suppressing burlesque, they could protect the city's youth and preserve the sanctity of traditional values.

The Crusade Against Burlesque

The Watch and Ward Society launched a relentless crusade against burlesque, using a variety of tactics to achieve its goals. They pressured theater owners to cancel performances and harassed performers. They lobbied for legislation that would restrict or ban burlesque. They even resorted to violence, raiding theaters and arresting performers.

The "Social Evil"

The Watch and Ward Society's crusade against burlesque was part of a broader effort to combat the so-called "social evil." This term referred to a range of perceived moral problems, including prostitution, drug use, and alcohol consumption. The society believed that burlesque was a gateway to these evils, and that by suppressing it, they could improve the moral health of the city.

Impact and Legacy

The Watch and Ward Society's crusade had a significant impact on burlesque in Boston. Numerous theaters were forced to close, and many performers were driven out of the city. The genre went into decline, losing its popularity and influence. The society's efforts also contributed to a broader atmosphere of censorship and moral repression in Boston.

However, the Watch and Ward Society's crusade ultimately faced its own challenges. As the 20th century approached, Victorian values began to erode, and public opinion turned against censorship. Burlesque experienced a revival, and the society's influence waned.

Beyond Boston: The National Campaign

The Watch and Ward Society's campaign against burlesque extended beyond Boston. Inspired by their success, similar organizations sprang up in other cities across the United States. Together, these groups formed a national network dedicated to suppressing vice and promoting morality. Their efforts contributed to a wave of anti-vice legislation and a widespread decline in burlesque.

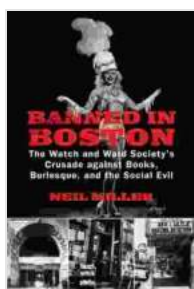
Social Context and Historical Significance

The Watch and Ward Society's crusade against burlesque was a reflection of the social and cultural anxieties of the Victorian era. It represented a clash between traditional and modern values, and a desire to preserve the established social order. The society's efforts had a lasting impact on the development of American popular culture, shaping the ways in which people entertained themselves and expressed themselves.

The Watch and Ward Society's crusade against burlesque was a fascinating and complex chapter in American history. It offers insights into the moral values and social concerns of the Victorian era, and highlights the power of organizations to shape public opinion and influence cultural trends. While the society's efforts ultimately failed to eradicate burlesque, they left an enduring legacy on the development of American popular culture.

Call to Action

If you are interested in learning more about the Watch and Ward Society's crusade against burlesque, I encourage you to Free Download a copy of my book, "The Watch And Ward Society Crusade Against Burlesque And The Social Evil." This comprehensive account provides a detailed examination of the society's origins, tactics, and impact. It is a valuable resource for historians, cultural critics, and anyone interested in the history of American morality and entertainment.



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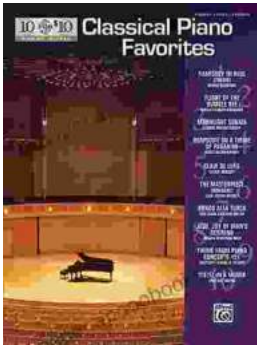
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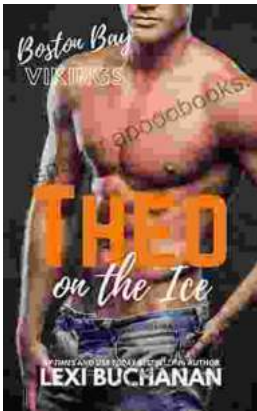
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