

John Dillinger Slept Here: a Crook's Tour of Crime and Corruption in St. Paul, 1920-1936

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Alice Paul and the Congressional Union on page 82, but does not give a full description of them until page 129. Stuhler's explanations are always clear and her prose flows well, but this back-and-forth chronology could dizzy those unfamiliar with suffrage history.

The other flaw speaks to the difficulties of Stuhler's ambitious attempt to write a book that is part biography, part local history, and part national history. As she explores political developments on the suffrage front, Clara Ueland often disappears from the narrative. We learn a lot about the suffrage battle but much less about what Ueland thought about it and how she influenced it. The primary sources Stuhler used provide few clues about Ueland. We are also left with the impression that everybody loved and admired her, for Stuhler backs away from any potential criticism. She mentions that in 1910 Andreas Ueland registered a "modest complaint" about his wife's outside activities (73), but she does not explore whether this was isolated pique or if Clara's suffrage work was a matter of contention between the two. Such an investigation would help underscore the private, personal implications of suffrage as well as the political ones, and would have made this competent book even more illuminating.

John Dillinger Slept Here: A Crook's Tour of Crime and Corruption in St. Paul, 1920-1936, by Paul Maccabee. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995. xx, 362 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, biographies, chronology, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY DORSEY PHELPS, INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR, IOWA CITY, IOWA

The title of Paul Maccabee's book suggests that it might be an in-depth study of John Dillinger, a bank robber who was notorious for his elusiveness, named "Public Enemy Number One" by J. Edgar Hoover, hunted down and finally killed by federal agents in Chicago in July 1934. Instead, it is a series of sixty-seven vignettes involving a cast of more than seventy other equally unsavory characters (dubbed "Rogues" by Maccabee) who lived in the Twin Cities during the Prohibition Era. The crime stories Maccabee tells in a lively journalistic style are here associated with the specific local sites where they occurred, so that the book provides a kind of guide (or, as Maccabee suggests, "Crooks' Tour") to the Cities. It is not a scenic route. Indeed, even by 1990s standards, Maccabee's painstakingly researched tales of violence, arsenals of weapons (bombs, rifles, dynamite, machine guns, sawed-off pistols and shotguns, handguns), vengeance, corruption, official pettiness, payoffs, scandal, deception, betrayal, recidivism,

burglary, robbery, bribery, assassination, bootlegging, gambling, and kidnapping shock the reader.

The nature of the information Maccabee has chosen to provide makes the book read more like a series of stories in an extended civil war between crooks allied with city officials and a bumbling FBI than like a traditional guide book. At the first stop on the tour at "Dapper Dan" Hogan's home in 1928 St. Paul, for example, a bomb wired to the starter of his car explodes. According to Maccabee, the blast "rocketed" the car out of the garage and tore off Hogan's leg; he died nine hours later. Towards the conclusion of the book, J. Edgar Hoover, humiliated and frustrated by the ability of Dillinger and his gang to evade capture, orders his men, armed with automatic shotguns, rifles and machine guns, to "shoot to kill." Later, he states, "I am glad that Dillinger was taken dead. . . . The only good criminal is a dead criminal" (240). The police got to Homer Van Meter before the FBI, and his body was riddled with fifty bullets; "Babyface" Nelson was "perforated" by seventeen FBI bullets.

Maccabee's stories include detailed information about criminal activities in many states, including bank robberies in Iowa, South Dakota, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. He also introduces a half-dozen individuals he calls "Reformers," who were aware of police corruption and wanted to change the environment and reputation of the Twin Cities; however, it is not clear from the book how successful their efforts were in either the short or the long run.

In fact, Maccabee leaves his readers without a larger and longer political, social, and cultural context for the situation in Prohibition Era Minneapolis/St. Paul. He does not mention, for example, that Minneapolis was one of six cities featured in a series of articles about political corruption written by Lincoln Steffens for *McClure's Magazine* in 1903. What became of the modest beginnings of Progressive Era reform which Steffens identified? How could a state that had shown very progressive tendencies when it elected Republican Congressman Andrew J. Volstead offer so little support for his Prohibition Act and his efforts as head of Minnesota's Prohibition Bureau? What were Howard Kahn's politics? Was there a comparable struggle between local machine politicians and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in other cities in the country? What effect, if any, did the repeal of Prohibition have on gangsterism in the Twin Cities?

A meaningful historical context might justify the meticulous retelling of all these crime stories and could save them from being what amounts to a more accurate but equally sensationalist version of *Startling Detective Adventures* or *True Detective Mysteries*.

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