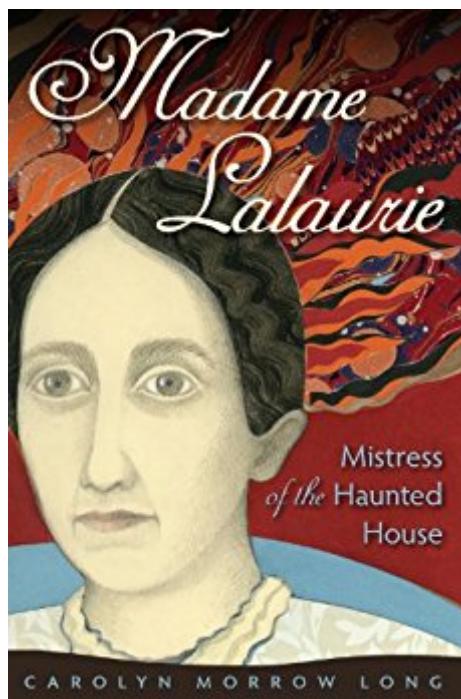


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Madame Lalaurie, Mistress Of The Haunted House



Synopsis

The legend of Madame Delphine LaLaurie, a wealthy society matron, has haunted the city of New Orleans for nearly two hundred years. When fire destroyed part of her home in 1834, the public was outraged to learn that behind closed doors LaLaurie routinely bound, starved, and tortured her slaves. Forced to flee the city, her guilt was unquestioned, and tales of her actions have become increasingly fanciful and grotesque over the decades. Even today, the LaLaurie house is described as the city's "most haunted" during ghost tours. Carolyn Long, a meticulous researcher of New Orleans history, disentangles the threads of fact and legend that have intertwined over the decades. Was Madame LaLaurie a sadistic abuser? Mentally ill? Or merely the victim of an unfair and sensationalist press? Using carefully documented eyewitness testimony, archival documents, and family letters, Long recounts LaLaurie's life from legal troubles before the fire and scandal through her exile to France and death in Paris in 1849. Themes of mental illness, wealth, power, and questions of morality in a society that condoned the purchase and ownership of other human beings pervade the book, lending it an appeal to anyone interested in antebellum history. Long's ability to tease the truth from the knots of sensationalism is uncanny as she draws the facts from the legend of Madame LaLaurie's haunted house.

Book Information

File Size: 7242 KB

Print Length: 272 pages

Publisher: University Press of Florida (March 4, 2012)

Publication Date: March 4, 2012

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B008DM2PVO

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #303,430 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #242

in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Regional U.S. > South #252 in Kindle Store > Kindle

eBooks > History > Americas > United States > State & Local > South #496 in Kindle Store >

Customer Reviews

After reading the author's wonderfully written biography on the life of Marie Laveau, I counted the days until this work was released. It is absolutely one of the best and most intriguing biographies I have read. This was a scholarly and suspenseful page turner. With each chapter, Carolyn Morrow Long delves deeper into what is the mystery of Delphine Macarty Lalaure to lay her deeds bare to all. I have been fascinated with this old tale of the Haunted House on Royal Street since I was a small child. Though these tales enthralled me as a kid I am now far more interested in truth than tall tale. Carolyn Morrow Long delivers truth in a way that makes you spend hours reading this book as if it were a carefully crafted mystery novel with a new clue on each page.

If you're at all interested in one of the most famous ghost stories in New Orleans, you need to pick up this book. Long does a phenomenal job of separating fact from fiction, which is not an easy task under any circumstances, but especially difficult when the event you're describing took place in 1834. Her search for truth takes her from the heart of the French Quarter all the way to the suburbs of Paris, France. Learn the true story, the one that the tour guides mangle and other authors have failed to tell adequately. At times it is a tad technical and dry, but it nonetheless does a wonderful job of dispelling the myths surrounding Madame Lalaure, supposed murderess and quite possibly the most reviled New Orleanian in history.

I have finished the book, and cannot praise it highly enough! What the author has accomplished is extraordinary, from a writer's standpoint, managing to maintain a scholarly meticulousness, while presenting it in a popular, compelling fashion. I have recently returned from Paris, where -- so detailed and thorough was Ms. Long's research -- I was able even to visit and view the cemetery in which Madame Lalaure's body was temporarily interred before its removal back to New Orleans for burial. From an editor's standpoint, the layout and aesthetic production of the book are free from annoyance, as well, with nary a misplaced jot or tittle. Her biography on the New Orleans voodoo maven Marie Laveau will surely be the very next book I buy, and I will surely recommend the Lalaure biography to any who will listen. -- Jennifer Reeser, poet, translator and former editor

I read *Mad Madame Lalaure* by Victoria Cosner and Lorelei Shannon a couple of years ago and I was disappointed by their speculative, poorly written and executed work. So much so that I did not

finish the book (a rarity for me). Having read and recommended Morrow-Long's, *A New Orleans Voodoo Priestess*, I knew that she would let her meticulous research inform the reader instead of conjecture. Let me just say - I have been glued to this book for the past few days! If you've been to New Orleans, you've been to the house on the corner of Royal and wondered if the macabre stories bear any validity. I now have an answer - and the truth, in this case, is scarier than fiction.

Being that I have the only known screenplay that documents the legend of Delphine LaLaurie, I had so much research to do in order to do the story and the victims true justice. This book uncovers where all the elements of the legend originated from via newspaper articles, tour guides, and internet sites, and gets to be real truth of what happened the morning of April 10th, 1834. Utilizing New Orleans and Missouri public records as well as family letters and genealogists in France to find the descendants of the family while she also tracks what happened to the slaves that were present at the time. I have spent 20+ hours interviewing New Orleans tour guides, reviewing maps of the home and neighborhood, and reading more than 10+ books on the subject; all of which were shallow in comparison to the facts that Long reveals in this book. For anyone that is truly interested in Delphine LaLaurie, let this be the first place that you go to for information.

very interesting book. I only knew about this Madame LaLaurie because of the American Horror Story plot last season. So creepy that she actually existed and horrific crimes she committed but definitely a good read.

The subject, subtitle and cover art made me expect kind of a tabloid approach, but this is a scholarly, well-written, heavily footnoted book. Indeed 184pp of text get 50pp of endnotes. I found it kind of slow moving, and the massive cast of characters she examines can be confusing. But it was a very good window into New Orleans French society, race, etc. Long takes nothing for granted, but patiently hunts down each rumor and legend, and examines them carefully with reference to the best sources. She is sober in her judgments and very balances. The famous house of Ms. LaLaurie is a cornerstone of every French Quarter ghost tour. Its romance drew Nicholas Cage to buy (and sell) it a few years ago. But the real story is a whole lot bigger, and more interesting than that.

Finally - the truth about Madame LaLaurie. A wonderful piece of scholarship. The author has thoroughly researched the events in the life of Delphine Macarty and has put to rest all of the nonsense written over the years. Captivating reading, hard to put down. The title belies the author's

serious scholarship. .

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