

The Birth, High Times, and Corruption of Atlantic City: A Captivating History



Boardwalk Empire: The Birth, High Times, and Corruption of Atlantic City HBO Series Tie-In Edition

by Nelson Johnson

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Atlantic City, once a thriving seaside resort and gambling mecca, has a rich and captivating history filled with glamour, corruption, and intrigue. In "The Birth, High Times, and Corruption of Atlantic City," author and historian John Smith takes readers on a journey through the city's rise and fall, from its humble beginnings to its heyday as a playground for the rich and famous, and its eventual decline into a symbol of urban decay.

The Birth of a Resort

Atlantic City's story begins in the mid-19th century, when it was a small fishing village known as Absecon Island. In the 1850s, a group of investors recognized the island's potential as a summer resort and built the first hotel, the United States Hotel. The hotel's success attracted other investors and developers, and soon Atlantic City was transformed into a thriving resort town.

By the turn of the 20th century, Atlantic City had become one of the most popular vacation destinations in the United States. Its beautiful beaches, grand hotels, and lively nightlife attracted visitors from all over the country. The city's reputation as a playground for the rich and famous was cemented when it became a favorite haunt of the Vanderbilts, Astors, and other members of New York's high society.

The High Times

Atlantic City's golden age continued through the early 20th century. The city's casinos, which had been legalized in 1920, flourished during Prohibition, when they became a haven for gamblers and bootleggers. The

city's hotels and nightclubs were also booming, and Atlantic City became known as the "Playground of the World."

During the 1950s and 1960s, Atlantic City continued to thrive. The city's casinos were modernized and expanded, and new hotels and attractions were built. The city's reputation as a gambling mecca was further enhanced when it became the home of the Miss America pageant in 1921.

The Seeds of Corruption

Beneath the glitz and glamour, however, Atlantic City was also plagued by corruption. The city's political machine was controlled by a group of corrupt politicians and businessmen who profited from the city's gambling industry. The police were often in cahoots with the criminals, and the city's courts were known for their lenient treatment of organized crime figures.

The seeds of Atlantic City's decline were sown in the 1970s, when the city's casinos began to face competition from other gambling destinations, such as Las Vegas and Reno. The city's economy also suffered from the decline of the manufacturing industry, which had been a major employer in the area.

Decline and Fall

By the 1980s, Atlantic City was in a state of decline. The city's casinos were struggling, and many of its hotels and businesses had closed. The city's unemployment rate was high, and crime was rampant.

In an effort to revive the city, the state of New Jersey legalized casino gambling in Atlantic City in 1976. The new casinos brought in much-needed revenue, but they also exacerbated the city's problems. The casinos

attracted organized crime figures, and the city's political corruption worsened.

By the 21st century, Atlantic City was a shadow of its former self. The city's casinos were struggling, and many of its hotels and businesses had closed. The city's unemployment rate was high, and crime was rampant. In 2014, four of Atlantic City's casinos closed, and the city entered a state of bankruptcy.

A New Beginning?

In recent years, there have been some signs of a revival in Atlantic City. The city has invested in new development projects, and some of its casinos have been renovated. The city's unemployment rate has also declined. Whether Atlantic City can regain its former glory remains to be seen, but the city's rich history and enduring spirit give hope for a brighter future.

"The Birth, High Times, and Corruption of Atlantic City" is a fascinating and informative account of the city's rise and fall. Author John Smith has done a masterful job of weaving together the threads of Atlantic City's history to create a compelling narrative that is both entertaining and thought-provoking. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of Atlantic City, organized crime, or American history in general.

The book is also available as an HBO tie-in edition, which includes exclusive behind-the-scenes footage from the HBO series "Boardwalk Empire," which is set in Atlantic City during the Prohibition era.

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