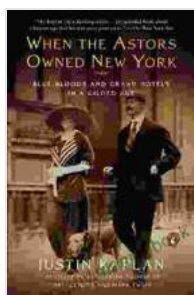


When the Astors Owned New York: A Gilded Age Dynasty

The Astors were one of the wealthiest and most powerful families in New York City's history. For generations, they shaped the city's skyline, culture, and social life. This article explores the rise and fall of the Astor dynasty, from their humble beginnings to their lavish lifestyle and the legacy they left behind.



When the Astors Owned New York: Blue Bloods and Grand Hotels in a Gilded Age by Justin Kaplan

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 16749 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
X-Ray : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 207 pages



The Early Years

The Astor family's roots can be traced back to the early 18th century, when Johann Jacob Astor, a German immigrant, arrived in New York City. He started out as a fur trader, but soon branched out into other businesses, including real estate and banking. His son, William Backhouse Astor, continued to expand the family fortune, becoming one of the richest men in America.

The Astors' wealth and power gave them a prominent role in New York society. They were members of the city's elite, and their homes were often the setting for lavish parties and social events. The Astors also played a major role in philanthropy, supporting a variety of causes, including education, healthcare, and the arts.

The Gilded Age

The Astors' influence reached its peak during the Gilded Age, a period of rapid economic growth and industrialization in the late 19th century. The family's vast wealth allowed them to build some of the most opulent mansions in the city, including the Astor House on Fifth Avenue and the Brevoort House on Broadway.

The Astors were also major patrons of the arts. They supported the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New York Public Library, and the American Museum of Natural History. They also founded the prestigious Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, which quickly became a symbol of New York City's luxury and glamour.

The Decline of the Dynasty

The Astor family's power and influence began to decline in the early 20th century. The rise of new fortunes, such as those of the Vanderbilts and Rockefellers, overshadowed the Astors' wealth. The family also faced a series of financial setbacks, including the Great Depression of the 1930s.

In the years that followed, the Astors gradually sold off their vast holdings. Many of their mansions were demolished, and their influence in New York City diminished. However, the Astor family's legacy continues to live on in the many buildings and institutions they helped to create.

The Astor Legacy

The Astors were a major force in the development of New York City. Their wealth and power allowed them to shape the city's skyline, culture, and social life. The family's legacy can still be seen today in the many buildings and institutions they helped to create.

Some of the most notable Astor landmarks include:

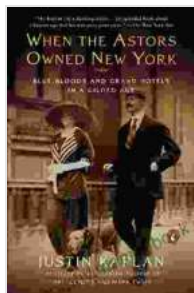
- The Astor House on Fifth Avenue
- The Brevoort House on Broadway
- The Waldorf-Astoria Hotel
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- The New York Public Library
- The American Museum of Natural History

The Astors were also major patrons of the arts, supporting a variety of causes, including education, healthcare, and the arts. They were also known for their lavish lifestyle and their role in shaping New York City's social scene.

The Astor family's legacy is a complex one. They were a wealthy and powerful family who played a major role in the development of New York City. However, they were also known for their lavish lifestyle and their sometimes controversial role in society.

Despite their decline in the 20th century, the Astors remain one of the most iconic families in New York history. Their legacy can still be seen today in

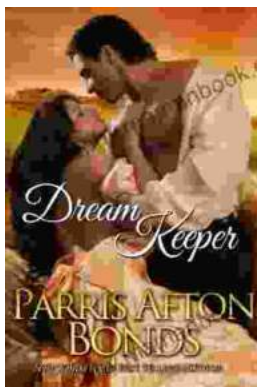
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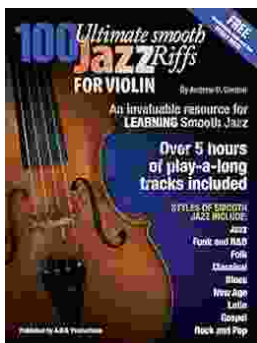
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