



Sucker's Progress: An Informal History of Gambling in America

Herbert Asbury

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Originally published in 1938, Sucker's Progress is a complete look at old-time gamesmanship in America. From Midwestern riverboats to East Coast racetracks, Asbury explores the legal, and illegal, history of gambling in pre-World War I America. With a keen eye and acerbic voice, Asbury defines the world of gambling as one of "sharper" and "sucker": those who excel at the games by cheating, and their victims. From notorious gambling havens like Chicago and New Orleans to lesser-known outposts in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Cincinnati, Ohio, Asbury examines the gambling houses, big and small, which peppered the American landscape. Also included are photographs and details of the lives of some of America's most famous gamblers, including Mike McDonald, John Morrissey, and Richard Canfield, as well as their infamous counterparts like "Canada Bill" and "Charley Black Eyes," who made their names as grifters and con men. Asbury also details the games these men played, describing the rules and origins of a number of dice and card games. From one-dollar lottery tickets to thousand-dollar poker antes, America's love of gambling thrives today, but it was during Asbury's era that gambling was established as an American passion.

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