

A Story of New York City When Robber Barons Were Kings



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Mark Twain christened the years between 1877 - 1900 the Gilded Age. Through business enterprises such as, railroads, oil and real estate, families were able to amass enormous personal fortunes. This book is the story of a daughter and a son of two of these wealthy New York families, the Minturns and the Stokes.

Edith Minturn and Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes were childhood friends. At age 28 Isaac convinced Edith to marry him. Neither one was particularly interested in wealth and making money. She worked as a social reformer. Isaac trained as an architect but was more interested in history especially New York City history. They were products of their time and environment and when the stock market crashed in 1929, they crashed with it.

This book is as much a history of New York City and it's downtown/Manhattan Island area as it is about Edith and Isaac. It sent me to Google Images many times to see the buildings, paintings and people the author writes about. For example, Edith was the model for the statue that greeted visitors to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Some of their mansions are still standing, as are some of the buildings that Isaac designed.

A fascinating study of how the other half lived in late 19th century New York. Forget Trump Towers, these families built Central Park, art galleries and libraries.

Posted by Luann D. on May 2, 2013

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