



# Milwaukee Mayhem: Murder and Mystery in the Cream City's First Century

*Matthew J. Prigge*

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From murder and matchstick men to all-consuming fires, painted women, and Great Lakes disasters--and the wide-eyed public who could not help but gawk at it all--"Milwaukee Mayhem" uncovers the little-remembered and rarely told history of the underbelly of a Midwestern metropolis. "Milwaukee Mayhem" offers a new perspective on Milwaukee's early years, forgoing the major historical signposts found in traditional histories and focusing instead on the strange and brutal tales of mystery, vice, murder, and disaster that were born of the city's transformation from lakeside settlement to American metropolis. Author Matthew J. Prigge presents these stories as they were recounted to the public in the newspapers of the era, using the vivid and often grim language of the times to create an engaging and occasionally chilling narrative of a forgotten Milwaukee.

Through his thoughtful introduction, Prigge gives the work context, eschewing assumptions about "simpler times" and highlighting the mayhem that the growth and rise of a city can bring about. These stories are the orphans of Milwaukee's history, too unusual to register in broad historic narratives, too strange to qualify as nostalgia, but nevertheless essential to our understanding of this American city.

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