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Secrets Of The Congdon Mansion: The Unofficial Guide To Glensheen And The Congdon Murders (Minnesota)



Synopsis

An inside look at Minnesota's most infamous murders. Elisabeth Congdon, an 83-year-old heiress, and her nurse, Velma Pietila, were brutally murdered in the 39-room Congdon mansion on the shores of Lake Superior in Duluth. Accused were Congdon's adopted daughter and new son-in-law. The motive: greed, speeding up an \$8 million inheritance. The son-in-law was convicted, but a jury found the daughter not guilty of planning the crime. In the mind-boggling aftermath, the killer was freed, the daughter accused of bigamy and convicted of arson in two states. And she's been investigated in other deaths. Guides on the popular tours at Glensheen won't say much about the murders, so the book helps guide visitors understand the crime as they go through the mansion.

Book Information

Series: Minnesota

Paperback: 104 pages

Publisher: Jaykay Pub; Expanded 40th Year Edition edition (May 1, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0961377828

ISBN-13: 978-0961377823

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 0.3 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars 44 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #482,005 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #154 in [Books > Travel > United States > Central](#) #166 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Regional U.S. > Midwest](#) #1927 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > True Crime > Murder & Mayhem](#)

Customer Reviews

Joe Kimball is the newspaper reporter who covered the Congdon murder case from the initial investigation and two sensational murder trials, to the continuing mayhem caused by Marjorie Congdon LeRoy Caldwell Hagen, even after her murder acquittal. Kimball has written hundreds of articles about the case for the Star Tribune newspaper, magazines and online. When the Congdon Mansion opened for tours, and the guides refused to talk about the murder case (preferring instead to focus on the architecture and family legacy), he wrote his book to give perspective to the case and help those taking the tours understand the gruesome events of June 27, 1977, and the on-going tale of felonies and misdemeanors that's followed. He updates the book regularly to keep up with the continuing developments.

The book is very accurate, but limited in its scope. Very solid, no extra side stuff. I was one of the Duluth News-tribune reporters who worked on the story, and I interviewed Marjorie Caldwell, as well as David Caldwell, Roger's brother. I was under subpoena to testify at her trial in regard to what she told me, but the prosecutor changed his mind. The title is a bit misleading, as there were other things that happened on the mansion property. There was a burglar who was shot and killed by a woman who was living in a smaller building on the property. At the time of the Congdon murder, one of the ushers from Marjorie's first wedding was on the lam from federal charges involving interstate transport of stolen model trains and theft of securities from a retired school teacher who was missing and never found. And there were some things that happened around town with the Hollywood types during the filming of "You'll Like My Mother." Locals, including some of the newspaper staff, had tales of Marjorie's activities while she was growing up. If you like this book, you will like "Will to Murder" even more.

This was a very insightful book on the Congdon Mansion by a reporter who was in the right place at the right time. It is a quick read and does have some duplication of information from the book Glensheen's Daughter, The Marjorie Congdon Caldwell story. Was interesting as I had visited the mansion many years ago and they did not tell you much about where Elizabeth Congdon or the night nurse were killed or what rooms they were in.

She moved into the mobil home park that I live in about a year ago, & she is still causing problems here!! That woman is EVIL I did not remember hearing about the murders before she moved here. When I found out about her, I bought the books to read. The other two books about her life have a lot more info in them & they fit her to a T. IF everything in the books the Authors wrote is true. How did she get away with SO much?? I am afraid of her, she gets everything she wants & acts like the world owes her a living. She is cunning, manipulating, etc, etc.

I live near Brainerd, and we were inundated with coverage of Roger's trial. I had always wanted to visit "the Scene of the Crime" (the jury did,) but never got around to scratching it off my Bucket List until yesterday. And what Joe says is true: if you don't know what you're looking for, you won't be any the wiser after the tour. The collegiate (the mansion & grounds were willed to the University of Minnesota, Duluth) tour guides follow their orders to eradicate any mention of foul play. (The nice retired lady selling tour tickets did confirm that my particular tour would include the Billiard Room

and Elizabeth's bedroom - and the tour guide did confirm - when I asked - that the bedroom we were in that her canned script consistently refers to as Helen's was Elizabeth's later on in her life.) If you familiarize yourself with this book's murder maps before the tour - so you know what to ask - all will be illuminated :-)

Author Joe Kimball was the first Star/Tribune reporter on the scene back on the morning after the murders, and he stayed with it. He shares personal updates and anecdotes of all the characters involved. BUT this is NOT a be-all/end-all exposition of the case/trials/aftermath. For that, you should first read the also excellent for what it is *Will to Murder: The True Story Behind the Crimes and Trials Surrounding the Glensheen Killings*

Written so it makes a tour of the bldg. come alive. Easy writing style, newspaper style.

This was a good book to get into the subject of the Glensheen murders but it is a newspaperman's account of the topic and written as such.

Good read, to prepare for a visit to the mansion. Cannot wait to visit the mansion in two weeks! Yay!

if you are planning a visit to duluth I would try to read this book first. we were at the mansion, last week and if I had read this book first, I would have noticed a lot more of the areas in the house involved with the murder. I would have also been able to ask better questions. our guide said, "I can't tell you certain things but I can answer your questions" if you are looking for a "story" from start to finish, this book is not for you.

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