



63 Alfred Street: Where Capitalism Failed: The Life and Times of a Venetian Gothic Mansion in Downtown Detroit

By John Kossik

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In downtown Detroit there exists a grand residence built in the Venetian Gothic style some 130 years ago. It stands now in ruins seemingly more comfortable in the company of a lonely castle in the Scottish Highlands than in the shadow of Ford Field (Detroit Lions), Comerica Park (Detroit Tigers), and Joe Louis Arena (Detroit Red Wings). Though its only occupants for the last 40 years have been crack dealers and the local homeless population, its history reflects the length and breadth of the American Experience. This is its Story

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Editorial Review

Review

63 Alfred Street: Where Capitalism Failed: The Life and Times of a Venetian Gothic Mansion in Downtown Detroit is more than the tragic history of a grand residence built 130 years ago that has fallen into virtual ruin today, used by crack dealers and the local homeless for the past 40 years. 63 Alfred Street is an extremely critical examination of the urban decay that has plagued Detroit's inner city, and the factors that cause it. Author John Kossik, a former resident of Detroit, compares the inner city's social ills to a Hydra - just like the mythical monster of legend, it has many heads (causes), which must be tackled as a whole and dealt with properly or else they will regrow. Kossik names many culprits in Detroit's degradation, from the demolishing of vibrant neighborhoods to create road systems that encouraged white flight, to a tax burden that drives out young families and keeps them from returning, to a culture of entitlement amid union auto workers that cripples Detroit's auto industry, to Detroit's unhealthy dependence on the auto manufacturing industry in the first place, and more. Kossik doesn't have all the answers, but through his judiciously researched blend of history and sociology, he hopes to spread greater awareness of the problem and aid the search for solutions. A thoughtful and invaluable study of seemingly intractable social problems, 63 Alfred Street is highly recommended. --Midwest Book Review, Library Bookwatch, January 2011

About the Author

John Kossik was born and raised in the Downriver suburbs of Detroit. He graduated from Michigan State University with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering in 1983. He has lived and worked in the Pacific Northwest since then and has written numerous articles in publications such as Chemical Engineering, Chemical Engineering Progress, Genetic Engineering News, Pharmaceutical Manufacturing, Filtration+Separation, and Bioprocess International. He is co-patent holder of Disposable rotary drum filter, US Patent No. 6,336,561. A life-long Tiger fan until that venerable structure was abandoned in 1999, he subsequently gave up watching the game. He lives with his wife and two grown children in suburban Seattle. An amateur photographer, historian, and marine reef-keeper, this is his first book.

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