



The Purple Gang: Organized Crime in Detroit 1910-1945

By Paul Kaveeff

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The Purple Gang was a loosely organized confederation of mobsters who dominated the Detroit underworld and whose tentacles reached across the country. Beginning in the Prohibition Era, the Purple Gang prevailed in distilling alcohol and running liquor from Canada, kidnapping, and labor racketeering. This is the hitherto untold story of the rise and fall of one of American's most notorious criminal groups. In an era resembling the Wild West when post World War I America groped for identity, chaos was the rule. And in Detroit's underworld, the Purple Gangsters were the rulers.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

The Purple Gang, a vicious group of mostly Jewish immigrants who prospered during Prohibition days in Detroit, was ruthless and untouchable for a number of years. They supplied liquor to blind pigs (establishments that sold liquor illegally), hijacked liquor shipments by land and water, watered down whiskey, and committed kidnappings, murder, and more. Toward the end of their reign, the colorful group self-destructed and started killing one another. KaviEFF, an engineer at Wayne State University and a historian of organized crime, even supplies photographs of bullet-ridden bodies. But this book will be a disappointment to true-crime fans. It should have been a gripping tale of the rise and fall of organized crime in Detroit, but it lacks momentum. Each chapter starts out by recounting a gruesome crime but then meanders into related tales. Fortunately, KaviEFF provides a detailed index and an extensive bibliography, which readers can use to keep the thugs straight. Recommended only as a reference/research tool for libraries with extensive organized-crime or Detroit-area history collections, though extensive typographical errors and a lack of editing should alert readers to be cautious. Karen Sandlin Silverman, Ctr. for Applied Research, Philadelphia

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About the Author

Paul R. KaviEFF is an engineer and historian who has devoted more than ten years to the research of crime in Detroit. He resides in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan.

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