



The Affair of the Veiled Murderess: An Antebellum Scandal and Mystery (Excelsior Editions)

Jeanne Winston Adler

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An account of a mysterious murder committed in nineteenth-century Troy, New York, and the sensational trial that ensued.

Troy, New York, 1853. Two Irish immigrants—a man and a woman—die shortly after drinking beer poured by a neighbor. Was it poisoned? And if so, was their slayer the beautiful mistress of an important Democratic politician? Many Trojans soon answer yes to both questions, but others question the guilt of the glamorous accused. Rumored to be the once-respectable Miss Charlotte Wood, a former student at Emma Willard's elite Troy Female Seminary and the runaway wife of a British lord, her identity remains in doubt, and the air of mystery is only heightened by her decision to remain hidden behind a veil during her trial, which earns her the nickname "The Veiled Murderess." As the affair widens to include the antebellum social and political worlds of Troy and Albany, the blossoming scandal threatens important people on both sides of the Atlantic.

Drawing on newspapers, court documents, and other records of the time, Jeanne Winston Adler attempts to come to an understanding of the truth behind the strange affair of the veiled murderess. In the process, she addresses a number of topics important to our understanding of nineteenth-century life in New York State, including the changing roles of women, the marginal position of the Irish, and the contentious political firmament of the time.

"Adler's painstaking research demonstrates that Robinson's murder trial is more than a sensational historical tale ... this remains a fascinating story, one that will be of interest to scholars of urban life, crime, politics, and gender in nineteenth-century America." — *New York History*

"Adler deftly navigates an abundance of primary source material to recreate the facts of Robinson's sensational murder trial in this enjoyable page-turner. *The Affair of the Veiled Murderess* is an ... excellent entry to the subject for the general reader." — *H-Net Reviews, H-Law*

"...a must-read for mystery fans or anyone who enjoys the culture of mid-nineteenth century New York." — *Hudson River Valley Review*

"*The Affair of the Veiled Murderess* is the riveting account of a previously unsolved murder committed in Troy, New York, in the nineteenth century. The author has captured the city of Troy such as to make of it one of the characters. She goes step by step through the process of detection until she has solved this real-life murder mystery to the reader's complete satisfaction. I recommend it highly." — Richard Selzer, author of *Down From Troy* and *Knife Song Korea*

"To me it's an excellent book. Fascinating in its discussion and scholarship on nineteenth-century Hudson Valley and State politics, plus the sleuthery regarding the murderess." — Ed Sanders, author of *America: A History in Verse, Vol. 1: 1900–1939*

Jeanne Winston Adler is the author of *Early Days in the Adirondacks: The Photographs of Seneca Ray*

Stoddard and the editor of *In the Path of War: Children of the American Revolution* and *Chainbreaker's War: A Seneca Chief Remembers the American Revolution*. She lives in Salem, New York.

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