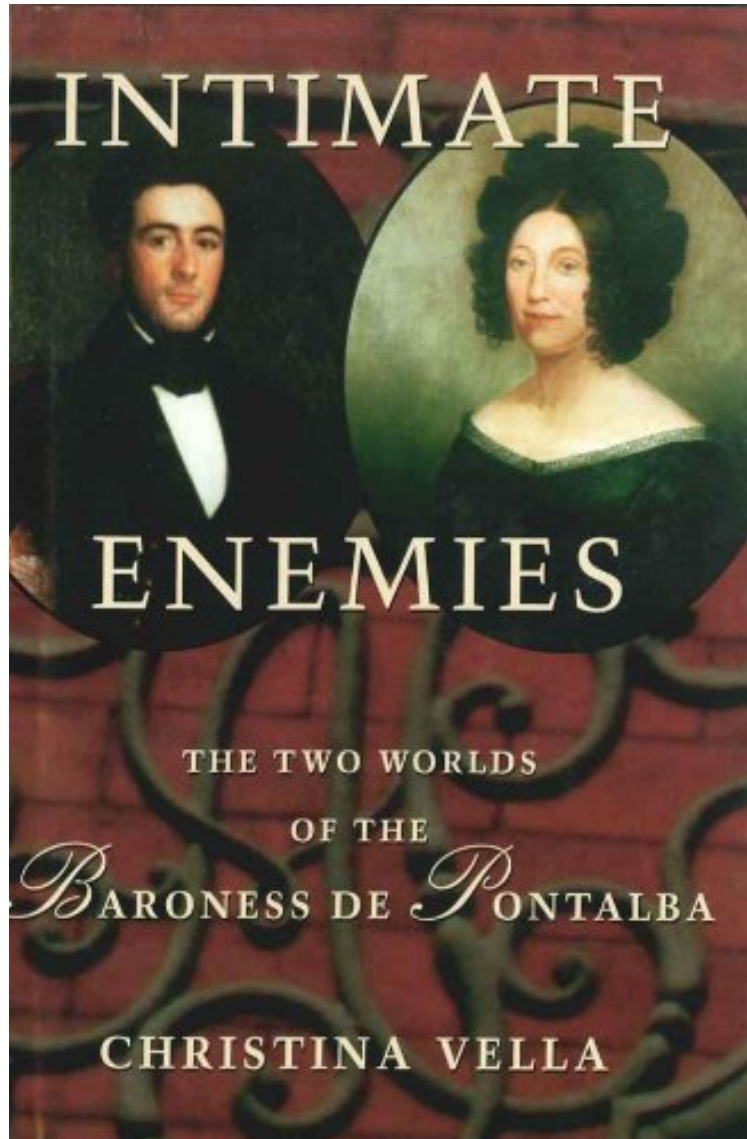


[Read free ebook] Intimate Enemies: The Two Worlds of Baroness de Pontalba

Intimate Enemies: The Two Worlds of Baroness de Pontalba

Von Christina Vella

ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

Produktinformation -Verkaufsrang: #1214845 in eBooksVerffentlicht am: 1997-07-01Erscheinungsdatum: 1997-07-01File Name: B007FRAZPG | File size: 17.Mb

Von Christina Vella : Intimate Enemies: The Two Worlds of Baroness de Pontalba before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Intimate Enemies: The Two Worlds of Baroness de Pontalba:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A book in which 19th century New Orleans comes alive!Von Ein KundeGrowing up in New Orleans, I was always familiar with the name Pontalba and the row apartments flanking Jackson Square that bore the name. Pontalba, Almanester, de

la Ronde, Miro, Pere Antoine: these were names that every student in New Orleans schools learn. Yet, now I feel as if I know each of them on a personal basis, as if I have actually met them. In the process, I have come to know the city of New Orleans in the 19th century, the same city which I have always known and loved in the 20th. Christina Vella brings to life people who have been dead and gone for over a hundred years. Only through the meticulous research that she has done can these ghosts be brought back to life. Vella has done a superb job in this endeavor. With her vivid descriptions of the city in mind, you can walk through the French Quarter today and literally see the muddy, murky streets of the previous century. You can see the ships on the river carrying the young bride and bridegroom to France. You can see the beloved cathedral as it looked back then. Read *Intimate Enemies* to learn about the people Vella is describing, but read it also to learn about the city which was their home, about the country that became their nation. Vella has done exactly what every historian strives to do: to bring the past to life in such a way that it is understood and therefore clearly explains why things are the way they are today.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An intimate portrayal of an era and a remarkable woman

Von Ein Kunde

Too often history books are dry and historical fiction is not accurate. How refreshing it is, then, to find a book by a professional historian that reads like a novel and yet is meticulously researched and beautifully written. *Intimate Enemies* is a true story but the kind of story of which novels are made. It details the life, travails and (eventually) triumph of a remarkable woman, Micaela Almonester, Baroness de Pontalba. In tracing Micaela's troubled life from her birth in New Orleans, in 1795, to her death in Paris, in 1874, Christina Vella provides a rich historical mosaic of the times. One learns in detail about antebellum New Orleans in all its glory and squalor and about France in the first three quarters of the 19th century. We learn of inheritance laws, the treatment of dowries, and the rights of wives vis-a-vis husbands, in both France and Louisiana. And we see Micaela changing from a pliant, obedient wife to an astute woman, aware that her assets are being exploited by a money-grubbing husband and father-in-law. Much in the manner of Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror*, and Sheehan's *A Bright, Shining Lie*, Vella uses a single person to reflect the times, drawing the reader into a living, three-dimensional world. Indeed, one of the great virtues of this book is its corpus of notes, which provide the interested reader with additional subjects to explore. The author has even provided a list of New Orleans streets named for acquaintances of the Baroness! Micaela Almonester was an incredible woman, who survived poverty, illness, and attempted assassination by a father-in-law unable to bend her to his will. Vella has brought her to life in a way that makes the reader sorry to see the old woman die and the book end. It is almost too much to expect Vella to provide us with an encore but we may hope!

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A fantastic read

Von S. N. Kras

This book has been recommended to me by a tour guide while I was paying New Orleans a short visit. I bought it together with Gwendolyn Midlo Hall's excellent "Africans in Louisiana", and, read one after another, starting with Hall, the books give a pretty cool picture of what New Orleans (and Louisiana, for the matter) were about during the 18th century. Although Gwendolyn Hall is by no means a bad writer (on the contrary), Christina Vella definitely is the more compelling read. Her first few chapters rock, especially the ones about the old Almonester and his fights with the Cabildo, followed by the biography of the old Pontalba. Those are the best chapters of the entire book. Vella did a fantastic job with placing those characters in a broader historical setting. Beautifully written, she doesn't hesitate to give psychological explanations to those men's actions, and does so convincingly. Vella even allows herself to comment ironically on certain developments, or (dis)approve of the actions of her characters, which is pretty rare in modern historical scholarship. (Why?) The scene then shifts from New Orleans to France, and the story becomes one of a superweird triangle relationship between Micael, Celestin, and Celestin's father, with a pretty dramatic ending. The broader historical perspective shifts accordingly, from the organization of a colonial society to a gender study of early 18th century France. What were the (im)possibilities of a unhappily married woman in this society? Micael, by her extraordinary personality, pushes the boundaries of the possible to the extreme. The last few chapters of "Intimate enemies", where Christina Vella retraces the building activities of Micael in Paris and New Orleans, are the weakest. The organization of those chapters is sometimes sloppy and unfocused, and although much space is devoted to details regarding the architecture and construction of the Hotel Pontalba and the New Orleans buildings, one senses that Vella doesn't master these themes enough to present them to the reader in a comprehensive fashion. Also, the emphasis on the architecture unfortunately took away some of the focus from the biographical stuff, that in the later years doesn't get less interesting. After having given Micael's father a chapter, her sons would have deserved one as well, especially Celestin Jr. since he became quite an important public figure, but also the other two (How exactly did Micael's sons get in touch with their spouses? How did they relate to Micael after marriage? Why did Gaston remain single his whole life? Was he gay? etc.). Notwithstanding, this book was a pleasant and thoughtprovoking journey. I'm recommending it to all my friends.

Kurzbeschreibung Born into wealth in New Orleans in 1795 and married into misery fifteen years later, the Baroness Micaela Almonester de Pontalba led a life ripe for novelization. *Intimate Enemies*, however, is the spellbinding true account of this resilient woman's life and the three men who most affected its course. Immediately upon marrying

Clestin de Pontalba, Micaela was removed to his familys estate in France. For twenty years her father-in-law attempted to drive her to abandon Clestin; by law he could then seize control of her fortune. He tried dozens of strategies, including at one point instructing the entire Pontalba household to pretend she was invisible. Finally, in 1834, the despairing elder Pontalba trapped Micaela in a bedroom and shot her four times before turning his gun on himself. Miraculously, she survived. Five years later, after securing both a separation from Clestin and legal power over her wealth, Micaela focused her attention on building, following in the footsteps of her late, illustrious father, Andrs Almonester. Her Parisian mansion, the Htel Pontalba, is today the official residence of the American embassy in France; and her Pontalba Buildings, which flank Jacksons Square in New Orleans, form together with her fathers St. Louis Cathedral, Presbytere, and Cabildo one of the loveliest architectural complexes in America. As for Clestin, he eventually suffered a total physical and mental breakdown and begged Micaela to return. She did so, caring for him for the next twenty-three years until her death in 1874. In *Intimate Enemies*, Christina Vella embroiders the compelling story of the Almonester-Pontalba alliance against a richly woven background of the events and cultures of two centuries and two vivid societies. She provides a window into the yellow fever epidemics that raged in New Orleans; the rebuilding of Paris, the Paris Commune uprising, and the Second Empire of Napoleon III; European ideas of power, class, money, marriage, and love during the baroness lifetime and their inflection in the New World setting of New Orleans; medical treatments, legal procedures, imperial court life, banking practices, and much more. Combining the historians meticulous research with the biographers exacting knowledge of her subject and the novelists gift for narrative, Vella has crafted a rare cross-genre work that will capture the imagination and admiration of every reader. *Pressestimmen*"She has done a spectacular job of excavating the historical record." *Kurzbeschreibung* Born into wealth in New Orleans in 1795 and married into misery fifteen years later, the Baroness Micaela Almonester de Pontalba led a life ripe for novelization. *Intimate Enemies*, however, is the spellbinding true account of this resilient womans life and the three men who most affected its course. Immediately upon marrying Clestin de Pontalba, Micaela was removed to his familys estate in France. For twenty years her father-in-law attempted to drive her to abandon Clestin; by law he could then seize control of her fortune. He tried dozens of strategies, including at one point instructing the entire Pontalba household to pretend she was invisible. Finally, in 1834, the despairing elder Pontalba trapped Micaela in a bedroom and shot her four times before turning his gun on himself. Miraculously, she survived. Five years later, after securing both a separation from Clestin and legal power over her wealth, Micaela focused her attention on building, following in the footsteps of her late, illustrious father, Andrs Almonester. Her Parisian mansion, the Htel Pontalba, is today the official residence of the American embassy in France; and her Pontalba Buildings, which flank Jacksons Square in New Orleans, form together with her fathers St. Louis Cathedral, Presbytere, and Cabildo one of the loveliest architectural complexes in America. As for Clestin, he eventually suffered a total physical and mental breakdown and begged Micaela to return. She did so, caring for him for the next twenty-three years until her death in 1874. In *Intimate Enemies*, Christina Vella embroiders the compelling story of the Almonester-Pontalba alliance against a richly woven background of the events and cultures of two centuries and two vivid societies. She provides a window into the yellow fever epidemics that raged in New Orleans; the rebuilding of Paris, the Paris Commune uprising, and the Second Empire of Napoleon III; European ideas of power, class, money, marriage, and love during the baroness lifetime and their inflection in the New World setting of New Orleans; medical treatments, legal procedures, imperial court life, banking practices, and much more. Combining the historians meticulous research with the biographers exacting knowledge of her subject and the novelists gift for narrative, Vella has crafted a rare cross-genre work that will capture the imagination and admiration of every reader.