

**SIN CITY KENTUCKY:
NEWPORT, KENTUCKY'S VICE HERITAGE AND
ITS LEGAL EXTINCTION, 1920-1991**

By

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A Thesis Approved on

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my father, David Williams, and my grandmother, Mae Nestheide, both of whom gave me outstanding role models and always reminded me to further my education.

I also dedicate this to the following:

Former Campbell County Attorney Paul Twehues and the members of his office, and the men and women of the Newport Police Department and the troopers of the “Thin Grey Line,” the Kentucky State Police, whose dedication to duty and willingness to sacrifice never ceased to amaze this former prosecutor. Their hard work at an often-thankless job on the front lines made Campbell County a better place to live.

Last, but by no means least, I dedicate this to my wife, Melissa Williams.

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got me into the program; Melissa's help, patience, sacrifices, and encouragement got me to finish it.

ABSTRACT

SIN CITY KENTUCKY: NEWPORT, KENTUCKY'S VICE HERITAGE AND ITS LEGAL EXTINCTION, 1920-1991

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This thesis is an examination and analysis of the role of law enforcement in the transformation of a city's downtown from one dominated by sleazy strip bars and prostitutes to one of family entertainment. The focus is on the police and prosecutors; however, a substantial portion of the thesis discusses the role of Newport, Kentucky's, City Commission. The thesis chronicles Newport's vice history from early Prohibition through the early 1990s and the impact of city government upon anti-vice efforts becomes evident, but law enforcement that paved the way.

The approach is chronological. Newport's transformation was an evolutionary process. Elected officials influenced the city's vice problems, but state legislative changes and United States Supreme Court cases also had a part in the course of anti-vice efforts. Changes in the law and court cases often gave city officials and law enforcement direction in the regulation and prosecution of illegal vices.

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¹ United States Constitution, Amendment I.

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