

A Short History Of Brothels

[**Important Disclaimer:** No, I did not pick up any of these first hand!]

...A category known by any number of different names...all best left unsaid. Well, it *is* the oldest profession in the world, so I suppose Brothels must go back pretty far.

“The first brothels proper seem to have been in ancient Egypt...But certainly it was the Greeks who first put the brothel on an official footing. The celebrated Athenian lawmaker and lyric poet Solon founded state brothels and taxed prostitutes on their earnings in the 5th century BC.” [<http://www.atrium-media.com>]

But, we're not likely to find any covers from the Ancient World, or even the Middle Ages, so let's just skip up to the founding of America. Interestingly enough, prostitution and the resulting brothels seem to have been the products of civilization, as there are no recorded anthropological references to prostitution being found in primitive societies [*Isn't that interesting!*]. Thus, it was that Europeans who introduced such to the New World, and it was certainly in evidence with the armies of the American Revolution even before the formal establishment of this country. One hundred years later, brothels were common all across the country [*Capitalism as work!*].

During the first half of the 20th century, France and Italy were famous for their brothels. Some Paris establishments, such as le Chabanais and le Sphinx, were internationally known for the luxury they provided. In most European countries, brothels were made illegal after World War II. France outlawed brothels in 1946 and Italy made them illegal in 1959.



Today, in Europe, brothels are legal in Belgium, Holland, Czech Republic and Germany. The largest brothel in Europe (the Pascha) is situated in Cologne, Germany. [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brothel>]

Originally, prostitution was widely legal in the United States. Prostitution was made illegal in almost all states between 1910 and 1915 largely due to the influence of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which was influential in the banning of drug use and was a major force in the prohibition of alcohol. In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson wanted all prostitution ended near any military and naval base as America prepared to enter World War I.

Beginning in the late 1980s, many states in the US increased the penalties for prostitution in cases where the prostitute is knowingly HIV-positive. These laws, often known as felony prostitution laws, require anyone arrested for prostitution to be tested for HIV, and if the test comes back positive, the suspect is then informed that any future arrest for prostitution will be a felony instead of a misdemeanor. Penalties for felony prostitution vary in the states that have such laws, with maximum sentences of typically 10 to 15 years in prison. [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prostitution>]

With the exception of some rural counties from Nevada, brothels are currently illegal everywhere in the US. However, many "massage parlors", "saunas", "spas" and similar establishments are fronts for prostitution, especially in big cities, and in actual practice, the authorities seem to turn pretty much of a blind eye to local prostitution as long as home owners, businesses, etc. don't raise specific complaints about such transactions being conducted in their neighborhoods. In business from 1890 to 1982, the Dumas Brothel in Montana was America's longest-running brothel. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prostitution_in_the_United_States#Brothel_prostitution]

Jim Moffett, CA, reported having 296 in his collection as of October 1990.

