



The First Ward

Richard Sullivan

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Volume One of Richard Sullivan's **The First Ward** series is a sweeping historical saga of the Irish-American grab for power in booming Buffalo NY in the latter half of the 19th Century and the personalities involved: newspaper owners, politicians, policemen, murderers and innocents. Based heavily on the lives and crimes of the author's forebearers, many of the events are presented with thoroughly-researched historical accuracy.

Newlywed Sam Clemens, a.k.a. **Mark Twain**, was gifted a splendid home with servants, as well as a part ownership of the Buffalo Express newspaper, by his generous father-in-law -- yet the Great American Storyteller would find neither happiness nor success in this unruly city.

When First Ward dock-walloper **Fingy Conners'** family members all died "mysteriously" within a single year, he conveniently inherited everything, including his father's saloon. Using this tavern as the key, he set out to dominate labor contracting on Buffalo's docks. So overwhelming was his iron-fisted saloon-boss system that within a few years he controlled the entirety of shipping on America's Great Lakes, skyrocketing to enormous wealth and power in less than a decade, defrauding voters, installing his own puppet politicians, and dominating the entire Buffalo Police Department. By hiring, paying, feeding, watering and boarding laborers out of his chain of saloons, Conners entrapped thousands of families in Buffalo and other major Great Lakes cities in misery and hunger for over two decades.

The Sullivan brothers had grown up with Conners and maintained their troubled alliance with the saloon-boss throughout their lives. After being placed in an orphanage by their destitute mother following the death of their Union soldier father in the Civil War, poverty, insecurity and violence infected their existence. By age twenty-nine, **John P. Sullivan** had been installed in the office of city Alderman by Fingy Conners and held power there for a quarter century.

His brother Jim Sullivan's fortuitous encounter with Mark Twain as a boy, soon after the famous author moved to Buffalo to edit the Buffalo Express newspaper, and the friendship that was initiated, would have a remarkable influence on him for the rest of his life. As **Detective Sergeant James E. Sullivan** of the Buffalo Police Department, Jim lacked his brother's blind ambition, and often found himself caught up amid forces he could not surmount. He was compelled to follow the orders of his saloon-boss-controlled superiors and to rescue his politician sibling from the endless messes the Alderman created for himself.

Jack White, native Bostonian and secret murderer, was Buffalo's most powerful alderman ever. Posing as a Republican, White helped pave the way for the rise of corrupt Democrats. But once he'd served his purpose his former allies swiftly did away with him. In the middle of this maelstrom are caught the Sullivan wives; the Alderman's Annie, who is blinded to what's transpiring around her by the perks she enjoys due to her husband's status, and the Detective's Hannah, who is rewarded with little more an endless stream of grief, loss, and frustration for standing faithfully alongside her spouse.

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