



# Heaven's Bride: The Unprintable Life of Ida C. Craddock, American Mystic, Scholar, Sexologist, Martyr, and Madwoman

*Leigh Eric Schmidt*

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The nineteenth-century eccentric Ida C. Craddock was by turns a secular freethinker, a religious visionary, a civil-liberties advocate, and a resolute defender of belly-dancing. Arrested and tried repeatedly on obscenity charges, she was deemed a danger to public morality for her candor about sexuality. By the end of her life Craddock, the nemesis of the notorious vice crusader Anthony Comstock, had become a favorite of free-speech defenders and women's rights activists. She soon became as well the case-history darling of one of America's earliest and most determined Freudians.

In *Heaven's Bride*, prize-winning historian Leigh Eric Schmidt offers a rich biography of this forgotten mystic, who occupied the seemingly incongruous roles of yoga priestess, suppressed sexologist, and suspected madwoman. In Schmidt's evocative telling, Craddock's story reveals the beginning of the end of Christian America, a harbinger of spiritual variety and sexual revolution.

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