

mythic past, and presented their interpretation of black spirituals to receptive audiences in northern cities. Through their efforts in historic preservation, painting, literature, and music, they gave material expression to a version of Charleston history that emphasized the continuity of tradition and racial deference.

As Yuhl ably demonstrates, the Charleston elite may have been conservative in outlook, but they were astute promoters of their vision of the city and resorted to means that would have seemed progressive in other parts of the country. The 1931 zoning ordinance, for example, strictly curtailed individual property rights, an idea that would have been anathema to most Charlestonians in any other context. In order to clean up the city and make it more appealing to tourists, officials took federal money to build low-income housing, which led to the segregation of historic neighborhoods. They also built modern bridges across the Ashley and Cooper rivers, established festivals to celebrate the unique qualities of the place, and welcomed an increasing number of visitors who avidly accepted this selective view of the past. If anything, this view has become even more entrenched in the revival of the city's fortunes in the past twenty-five years. The myth endures.

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Pursuing Johns: Criminal Law Reform, Defending Character, and New York City's Committee of Fourteen, 1920–1930. By Thomas C. Mackey. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005. x, 297 pp. \$63.95, ISBN 0-8142-0988-2.)

This is a microstudy that takes on some big issues. Thomas C. Mackey's gaze is on a failed campaign in the 1920s to punish men who visited prostitutes, but his mind is on concerns prominent in today's conservative movement: the collapse of morality in modern America, the excesses of feminism, and the folly of social engineering. Sympathizing with the reformers' goal of strengthening moral character, Mackey nonetheless warns against "envisioning the criminal law as the

primary vehicle for the reform of private morals" (p. 207). He argues that the reformers erred in favoring legal compulsion over public persuasion. *Pursuing Johns* is thus a cautionary tale for those seeking to reverse the supposed debasement of American culture and for any advocate of social change.

The bulk of the book is a dense narrative about the work of the Committee of Fourteen, an advocacy group that aimed at suppressing prostitution in New York City from 1905 to 1932. Proud of their contributions to closing brothels in the 1910s, committee members sought to further enhance New York's character by demanding the prosecution of customers as well as the prostitutes arrested in vice raids. Losing an important test case in 1921, the committee proposed amending state law to punish both parties engaged in commercial sex. This amendment was unexpectedly supported by members of the National Woman's Party, who saw a chance to challenge the double standard of sexual morality. It was thwarted in part by arguments that the amended law would be unenforceable and counterproductive. The reformers ultimately failed because "the customer amendment proved to be out of step with the accepted norms, values, and traditions of mainstream Americans during the 1920s" (p. 37).

The study is packed with details drawn from Committee of Fourteen records. These details are occasionally titillating, as when Mackey provides graphic sexual anecdotes from investigatory reports. More often they are tedious and repetitious, as when he recounts meetings of committee directors. Either way, the emphasis on a single body of evidence comes at the expense of broader analysis. The author alludes repeatedly to changes in gender relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—changes he links to the ripple effects of the Nineteenth Amendment and to the "general criminalization of men" during this time (pp. 79, 14). Unfortunately, he devotes cursory attention to how gender and sexuality were understood in the world outside the Committee of Fourteen; he neglects the experience of other localities that did prosecute "johns"; and he ends his story with the folding of the committee. Thus he leaves some of his most significant arguments incompletely developed.

Pursuing Johns is a useful contribution to the literature of antiprostitution reform, raising new questions and providing a fresh look at a neglected period. Its success comes on the narrow ground of a scholarly monograph. Despite Mackey's occasional digs at radical feminists and other conservative bugaboos, the book does little to advance the broader ideological arguments to which it aspires.

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Crimes against Children: Sexual Violence and Legal Culture in New York City, 1880–1960. By Stephen Robertson. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. xiv, 337 pp. Cloth, \$59.95, ISBN 0-8078-2932-3. Paper, \$22.50, ISBN 0-8078-5596-0.)

Stephen Robertson has written a complex analysis of what is sometimes mistakenly viewed as a simple subject. Commentators may speak generally of sex crimes against children as though they belong to a single, homogeneous category, but societal reactions are more complicated. Robertson makes this complexity apparent through a careful examination of New York County district attorney case files drawn at five-year intervals (his sample includes both cases dismissed by grand juries and those that went to court). It is important that these files include reports from New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPPC) agents, who were charged with investigating and advising appropriate action in cases involving child victims.

Creating a case involved translating reports of behavior into legally relevant terms; NYSPCC agents and assistant district attorneys interviewed the children but also parents, witnesses, and the alleged offenders. These sources undoubtedly offered all manner of information, but Robertson shows how the files were crafted to contain what was seen as the relevant material. Thus, in order to present prepubescent female victims as the innocents that late nineteenth-century culture idealized them as being, files emphasized the victim's lack of resistance (putting up a fight might suggest that the girl was aware of what was happening and

therefore not innocent) and use of immature euphemisms. In contrast, it was important to demonstrate that adolescent females had resisted (lest they be suspected of having willingly cooperated).

Robertson finds many such patterns. All sorts of information might be relevant: different combinations of the age, class, ethnicity, gender, and behavior of both the child and the accused could lead to very different evaluations. In addition, widely accepted views of childhood shifted away from idealized innocence toward a model of psychological development in which children were understood to have age-appropriate attitudes toward sex. These shifting understandings were reflected in changes in the formal law but also in the ways the NYSPCC's reformers, social workers, and others tried to shape policy toward child victims. Moreover, the public—as represented by jurors—often demonstrated its own understandings by rendering verdicts that reflected their sense of justice over legality. What was portrayed as progress, Robertson argues, could lead to less protection for child victims.

While this sort of intricate analysis can reveal how different considerations shaped case outcomes, the complexity becomes a burden for the reader. Robertson appends several elaborate tables classifying the cases, but these data are not well integrated with the text. While there are many sentences that refer to, say, the percentage of a particular sort of case that had a specific outcome, the reader who wants to place this number in context must struggle to find the correct table within which the figure is embedded. A decision to explore complexity creates a need for exceptional clarity.

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Gateway to Justice: The Juvenile Court and Progressive Child Welfare in a Southern City. By Jennifer Trost. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005. xiv, 209 pp. Cloth, \$49.95, ISBN 0-8203-2664-X. Paper, \$19.95, ISBN 0-8203-2671-2.)

Most historical monographs about juvenile delinquency have examined nonsouthern ur-