

## The Lost Sisterhood

The Lost Sisterhood

Prostitution in American 1900-1918

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### INTRODUCTION

“Occasionally, during periods of intense religious, social, or economic change, the uneasy truce between society and prostitution has been broken by outbursts of social indignation, providing historians with some evidence about the lives of usually invisible people. Such was the case in the United States at the turn of the century.

The American Progressive Era, 1900-18, was the setting for one of Western society’s most zealous and best-recorded campaigns against prostitution. What earlier Victorians had discreetly regarded as a “necessary evil,” turn-of-the-century Americans came to view as the “Social Evil,” a moral problem and a national menace.”

– *Page xi*

“The Progressive Era was a period of dramatic contradictions and conflicting trends.”

– *Page xi*

“Society publicly acknowledged the plight of impoverished urban dwellers, while reacting to each new wave of immigration with xenophobia and racism.”

– *Page xi*

“An urban working class culture, in which liquor and the saloon played an important part, grew alongside a campaign to legislate Prohibition.

Family life was changing rapidly as well. Working-class women were joining the labor force in large numbers, and middle-class women were challenging the Victorian definition of a separate woman’s sphere by creating a national network of clubs to initiate social reforms and agitate for women’s rights. Victorian ideals of gentility were being increasingly questioned. At the same time, social conservatives mourned the loss of the “traditional family,” upheld the values they associated with American rural life, and sought to restore women to their proper place.”

– *Page xi*

*The diverse activities and movements of the Prograssive Era represented Americans search for social order at a time when the nation was reeling from social and economic changes “brought about by unprecedented rapid industrialization, urbanization, and immigration.”*

– *Page xi*

“Moral reformers in the 1830s and social purity crusaders in the late nineteenth century had preceded them. Nevertheless, the early twentieth century represents a watershed in the history of American prostitution. Horrified by the large-scale commercialization and rationalization of prostitution by third-party agents (property owners, politicians, police, procurers, doctors, cabdrivers, and liquor interests, to name but a few), reformers succeeded by 1918 in enlisting the state to close down the previously tolerated red-light districts in most American cities.”

– Page xii

“The relative security of public brothels became increasingly replaced by the riskier, but less visible act of streetwalking.”

– Page xii

*As Judith Walkowitz’s superb study on Prostitution and Victorian Society has demonstrated*, “the subject of prostitution tends to illuminate a society’s social structure and cultural values. It can function as a kind of microscopic lens through which we gain a detailed magnification of a society’s organization of class and gender: the power arrangements between men and women; women’s economic and social status; the prevailing sexual ideology; the underlying class relations that govern different groups’ access to political and economic resources; the ways in which female erotic and procreative sexuality are channeled into specific institutional arrangements; and the cross-class alliances and antagonisms between reformers and prostitutes.”

– Page xii

“To middle-class reformers, prostitution became a cultural symbol of the birth of a modern industrial culture in which the cold, impersonal values of the marketplace could invade the most private areas of people’s lives.”

– Page xiii

“As women from all classes increasingly entered the public arena, either through their participation in the labor force or through their involvement in the middle-class social reform movements, they implicitly challenged the nineteenth century doctrine of separate male and female spheres.”

– Page xiii

For many women, prostitution represented the quintessential symbol of the sexual and economic exploitation of women in a patriarchal society. In challenging the sexual double standard, women entered the public sphere to proclaim their right to protect the purity of their private sphere in the home. For them, the eradication of prostitution presaged the elevation of the status of all women. Unfortunately, women reformers did not foresee the consequences of the public policy they supported.

– Page xiii

"The world of the prostitute was quite complex. Within the red-light district an entire subculture flourished, with its own values, class structure, political economy, folk culture, and social relations."

– Page xiv

"An inquiry on white slavery, on which reformers typically blamed most of prostitution, not only provides a study in cultural hysteria, but also constitutes an important and neglected chapter in the history of women. Although its incidence during the Progressive Era was highly exaggerated, white slavery does play a part in the story of prostitution.

The vast majority of women, however, entered prostitution more or less voluntarily, viewing the trade as an "easier" and more lucrative means of survival..." *than the other jobs open to them.*

– Page xiv

"The meaning and practice of prostitution has ranged from that of a sacred fertility ritual (in ancient Babylonia, Cyprus, Phoenicia, and India) to its more familiar role as a form of commercialized vice in modern complex societies.

Prostitution was also neglected as a topic because it concerned the most devalued female members of society."

– Page xv

"Like all historical records, these sources present problems..." *and the historian must tread carefully, using judgment based on extensive exposure to the period's attitudes, biases, and source materials.*

– Page xv

"The few prostitutes' memoirs in existence present another problem, similar to that of slave narratives. Most, in my opinion, were written by reformers, just as slave narratives were largely written by zealous abolitionists."

– Page xvi

NOTE WRITTEN: "Ms. Laura's Maid"

"The subject of prostitution on the Western frontier and in the relatively unindustrialized South has not been considered here."

– Page xvi

"Drawing from my own knowledge of women's past, I regard prostitution neither as the worst form of exploitation women have ever suffered, nor as a noble or liberating occupation, but rather as a dangerous and degrading occupation that, given the limited and unattractive alternatives, has enabled thousands of women to escape from even worse danger and deprivation."

– Page xvii

"All too often, a woman had to choose from an array of dehumanizing alternatives: to sell her body in a loveless marriage contracted solely for economic protection; to sell her body for starvation wages as an unskilled worker; or to sell her body as a "sporting woman." Whatever the choice, some form of prostitution was likely to be involved."

– Page xvii

## CHAPTER 1 FROM NECESSARY TO SOCIAL EVIL

### PAGE 1

*National in scope, urgent in tone, the antivice campaign that emerged between 1900-1918 became an offensive campaign waged against an internal domestic evil: the Social Evil.*

*... a new and dramatic goal had been set: to **eradicate** prostitution across the American urban landscape.*

"Americans lamented the loss of their national innocence."

*During the **colonial period**, religious leaders worried more about **adultery or fornication** than about the scattered cases of prostitution.*

"Calvinists had certainly inherited a harsh judgment of women in the "oldest profession"; but demographic and economic factors, along with religious sanctions, had mitigated against the growth of a professional class of prostitutes. The shortage of women and the acute need for domestic labor in the colonies helped guarantee most women the economic security and protection of family and community life. In the southern colonies as well, religious and demographic factors helped ensure an absence of professional prostitutes. To provide wives for colonial bachelors, the British sent shiploads of young women to Virginia. Here, too, women found easy access to marriage and family life."(1)

**NOTE WRITTEN: "ratio, commerce" (?)**

1. *(from appendix)*

Arthur Calhoun, *Social History of the American Family*, 1:135; C.F. Adams, "Some Phases of Sexual Morality," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 2d ser. 6 (1891):509-10; *Diary of a Cotton Mather* (1911; reprint ed., New York: F Ungar, 1957), p. 126. For a more detailed discussion of illicit sexual relations in the colonial era, see Emil Oberholzer, Jr., *Delinquent Saints* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), pp. 254-55.

"In public fights, the epithet *whore* was used as a form of insult. In some cases, the term *prostitution* referred merely to illicit sexual behavior. A white woman who engaged in sexual relations with a black man, or an Indian woman who engaged in sexual relations with a white

man, was called a prostitute. In other cases, the term referred to women who bartered sexual favors for food or goods, a form of exchange typical of preindustrial societies.

**NOTE WRITTEN: “words/linguishes”**

**END OF PAGE 1**

**BEGIN PAGE 2**

*(directly following the previous quote on the next page)* “Prostitution, however, was a personal, not a commercial vice; a temporary state of sin, rather than a permanent occupation or status.”

“The legal and systematic sexual exploitation of female indentured servants and black female slaves constituted one form of forced prostitution.

**NOTE WRITTEN: “rape”**

*By the late seventeenth century, local clergy had begun complaining about “lewd” and “licentious” women who roamed the streets. In New Amsterdam, Boston, and Philadelphia, prostitutes openly piled their trade, prompting legislation in 1699 that made streetwalking an offense. The first law against brothels, passed in 1672, indicated the troubling appearance of “bawdy” houses. By the middle of the eighteenth century, towns and cities were recording with dismay the increased visibility of “nightwalkers” and brothels.* <sup>^(6)</sup>

Benjamin Franklin remembered seeing women “who by throwing their head to the right or left of everyone who passed by them, came out with no other design than to revive the spirit of love in Disappointed Bachelors and expose themselves to sale at the highest bidder.” <sup>^(7)</sup> During the revolutionary war, large numbers of **camp followers** posed strategic and sanitary problems for an all-male army. <sup>^(8)</sup>

Prostitution had become a permanent feature of American life.

“As self-sufficient farms turned to the production and transportation of cash crops, market relations intruded upon the family’s traditional religious and patriarchal values in new and unexpected ways. Men bartered less and instead received cash for their agricultural labor. As early manufacturing transferred some of women’s work outside the home, women’s vital partnership in a traditional domestic economy began to diminish.

**END PAGE 2**

**BEGIN PAGE 3**

“As servants or milliners, poor single girls and women encountered a different world outside the family. Both wage discrimination and sexual exploitation shaped their working experiences. At best, most female employment offered subsistence wages. In addition, young women faced new difficulties with men. The sexual exploitation of domestic servants was a

common occurrence. Seduction and false promises of marriage frequently resulted in premarital sexual activity, which had been practiced in rural areas. Far from the family and community, however, the rules were different. When such relations resulted in pregnancy, neither the family nor the community was present to ensure the traditional enforcement of a proper marriage. Such abandoned women then face the shame of returning home with an illegitimate child; The Bleak Prospect of trying to support a child on substitute wages; and attempted abortion; or survival through prostitution.

“ In the second half of the nineteenth Century, rapid industrialization accelerated and intensified these changes and family life and contributed to the steady increase in prostitution. Most poor families had ceased to function as self-sufficient economic units. Instead they survived through the combined wages of individual family members. Drawn from poor native-born American families and successive waves of immigrant populations, unmarried women entered the industrial ranks or found work as domestic servants. As they left the social and economic protection of their families to encounter sexual exploitation and low wages, they became part of the potential supply of new prostitutes. Sometimes, they were unable to find any employment other than prostitution. Richard Evans, in his study of German prostitution, has convincingly argued that prostitution probably reaches its greatest heights during the second wave of industrialization, when heavy industry excludes women from participation in the labor force.

“Therefore it is likely, though no statistics are available, that the peak of women's engagement and prostitution took place between 1850 and 1900 rather than during the early years of the twentieth century, when, ironically, it assumed the status of a major social problem.”

**END PAGE 3**

**BEGIN PAGE 4**

“In the rapidly developing cities, prostitutes increasingly became attached to the saloons and vice districts that working men frequented.”

“First and cities on the northeastern Seaboard, but eventually Across the Nation, families came to face similar challenges to their structure and values. For women in the working classes, it was a question of when, not if, they would enter the marketplace unprotected by their families and by traditional social restraints. Prostitution was an inevitable result of the transformation of the family in the 19th century.”

**NOTE: “send <women> off.” (symbol of venus written in place of)**

“Before the Progressive Era, Americans condemned prostitution but did not classify it as a criminal offense. Social disapproval of prostitution was expressed through sporadic and unofficial harassment.”

“The gangs and rowdy clubs that acted as a kind of informal police in most cities punished prostitution as they punished other violations of community standards, by mob attacks.”

“As early as 1734, crowds demolished several houses of prostitution in Boston.”

“In 1825, two thousand rioters tore up brothels and fought police in Lenox, Pennsylvania.”

“In 1857, indignant Chicago citizens—joined by the mayor—burned down an entire row of brothels, then self righteously proclaimed that they had restored order to their community.”

**NOTE: “hide raust(?)”**

“Prostitutes, madams, and procurers could be arrested, at the discretion of police, on charges of “lewdness,” vagrancy, or keeping a “disorderly house.” In “respectable” neighborhoods, prostitution existed only in the most discreet high-class houses catering to a wealthy clientele. There, immunity from raids could be bought by madams’ silence about their patrons or by payment of “fines” to the police. All other prostitution was deliberately limited to urban slums, where genteel Society could ignore its existence. The professionalization of the police helped to create the red-light districts that sprang up in many American cities during the second half of the nineteenth century. In these areas, houses of prostitution were quietly allowed to carry out their business, except when they failed to pay off local police or when the political climate demanded a raid to demonstrate elected officials’ implacable hostility to vice. When arrested, prostitutes generally received fines rather than jail sentences.”  
(split between pg 4)

**END PAGE 4**

**BEGIN PAGE 5**

Excerpt from 1892 newspaper:

“Like gambling, it [prostitution] is ineradicable, yet—if it is handled properly, it can be curtailed. Against houses of illfame, the *Mascot* makes no crusade, so long as they are not located in respectable neighborhoods, for they are a necessary evil. The subject is a delicate one to handle, but it must be admitted that such places are necessary in ministering to the passions of men who otherwise would be tempted to seduce young ladies of their acquaintance.

Excerpt from 1916 Bridgeport, Connecticut, Vice Report:

"Vice is one of the weaknesses of men; it cannot be extirpated; if we're pressed unduly at one point, it will break out more violently and bafflingly elsewhere; a segregated district is really a protection to the morality of the women hood of the city, for without it rape would be common and clandestine immorality would increase."

**NOTE: "vice = weakness of [men] and "natural"**

"The prostitute thus functioned as the "protector of the home," a doctrine best articulated by William Edward Hartpole Lecky.

**END PAGE 5**

**BEGIN PAGE 6**

"No one without experience," explained a prison chaplain, "can tell the obduracy of the female heart when hardened and lost in sin. As woman falls from a higher point of perfection so she sinks to a profounder depth of misery than man."

"As one male speaker in 1837 asserted, "in the female character, there is no mid-region; it must exist in spotless innocence or else in hopeless vice."

"Conveniently, the large numbers of lower class and immigrant women in prostitution could be explained by those women's alleged tendencies to be less moral, more animalistic, and less sheltered by upbringing and education from corrupting influences. Lower class women were thus especially fitted for an occupation that deflected men sex drives from upper-class women. In the South, white slave-owners similarly argued that the forced prostitution of black female slaves, both on plantations and in brothels, constituted a necessary evil in that it provided an outlet for male sex drives that would otherwise pollute white womanhood; and in California, certain whites argued that Chinese prostitutes protected white womanhood. **The "protection" of non-white women was not considered.**"

"The singling out of a caste of degraded women served as an object lesson and **a threat** to other women. The specter of the whore was always before them as a reminder of what they might become or how they might be treated if they failed to live up to the angel image or lived outside of male protection. 4 men, prostitution upheld the double standard, the polarized images of women as Angelic or monstrous, but in neither case fully human, and the ideology that women existed to serve men. The association of **prostitution with lower-class, immigrant, and non-white population served to divide women from one another.**"

**NOTE: "why prost. Important → economical"**

**END PAGE 6**

**BEGIN PAGE 7**



“This statistic, they added, caused the “blood to chill within the veins; and each particular hair to stand erect, like quills upon the fretted porcupine.”

“Women did in fact take the lead, and their predominance was reflected in the movements two major goals: “rescuing” prostitutes and reforming the sexual conduct of men. As Barbara Berg points out in her study of women's voluntary associations during the antebellum period, male reformers tended to portray prostitutes as women “so totally bereft of shame that they [were] . . . beyond the possibility of reform.”  
(quote split 7/8)

**END PAGE 7**

**BEGIN PAGE 8**

“Eventually, in the 1840s and the 1850s, female moral reformers began to urge the opening of male occupations to women and to advocate higher wages and even unions for working women.”

**END PAGE 8**

**BEGIN PAGE 9**

“ The second wave of moral reform began in the 1870s as a response to a growing campaign to regulate prostitution.”

“Regulationists articulated the private belief of most nineteenth-century Americans that prostitution, though evil, was necessary to accommodate men and preserve the purity of the home.”

**NOTE: “reg”**

“One of the main Works they cited was William Sanger’s *History of Prostitution: Its Extent, Causes, and Effects Through the World*, published in 1858. As a resident physician on Blackwell’s Island in New York, Sanger had interviewed several thousand prostitutes for his study; he had drawn on numerous medical and historical sources as well. His data and conclusions on the persistence of prostitution throughout history, the extent of prostitution in the United States, and the connection between unregulated prostitution and epidemic of venereal disease gave strong support to regulationist position.”

**END PAGE 9**

**BEGIN PAGE 10**

“In addition, regulationist advocacy of state intervention in sexual matters went against the grain of American individualism.”

NOTE: “reg = anti - I / Freedom”

**END PAGE 10**

**BEGIN PAGE 11**

“...social purity.”

**END PAGE 11**

**BEGIN PAGE 12**

“Female social purity advocates condemned men’s “excessive” sex drive that led them to buy sex or force it on their wives without their consent.”

“Now, however, the double standard would be replaced by a “**single standard**” of purity, to which men would and *could* conform.”

**END PAGE 12**

**BEGIN PAGE 13**

“By publicizing studies on venereal disease, they had helped to break the conspiracy of Silence surrounding prostitution and to alert the American public to dangers posed by uncontrolled infection.”

**END PAGE 13**

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE PROGRESSIVE REACTION**

**BEGIN PAGE 14**

**NOTE: “The Social Evil”**

“In 1890, social Purity reformers, alarmed by what they perceived as an enormous increase in prostitution and venereal disease, called upon Congress to form a national crime commission to investigate the causes and extent of the social evil. When Congress ignored their request reformers decided to create their own municipal vice commissions.”

“...Vice reports ostensibly presented an objective picture of the nature and extent of urban prostitution. In most cases cities published at least a portion of their vice commission's report.”

**END PAGE 14**

**BEGIN PAGE 15**

**NOTE: “attaching “purity” w/ sex”**

“Such information could and would be used to oust political enemies from office.”

**NOTE: “NYC, 1892”**

“The growing hysteria over white slavery greatly contributed to the momentum of the antivice movement. In 1909, the famous muckraking journalist George Kibbe Turner published his controversial exposé of the political connection between white slavery and Tammany Hall, titled “The Daughters of the Poor.” A year later, a New York grand jury substantiated some aspects of the white slavery trade. Meanwhile in 1907, Congress formally responded to reformers' concerns by appointing a commission to investigate “the importance of women for immoral purposes.” After two years of sending investigators across the country to secure testimony from white slaves and procure, the commission delivered its report to Congress. Significantly, the commission's findings gave credence to reformers' concerns. White slavery *did* exist, people *did* buy and sell women for the purpose of forcing them into prostitution.

**NOTES: “white slavery”**

**“1907 Congress”**

“Two highly influential investigations of prostitution, George Kneeland's *Commercialized Prostitution in New York* (1913) and Abraham Flexner's *Prostitution in Europe* (1914) were sponsored by John D Rockefeller through the Bureau of Social Hygiene.

**END PAGE 15**

**BEGIN PAGE 16**

**NOTE: “segregate”**

“Many female reformers, for instance, agitated for minimum wage laws to protect working women and for more severe sanctions against men who bought and sold prostitutes' services. Social hygienist agitated for sex education; social purity reformers, for censorship; municipal reformers, for better urban recreational facilities and social services. Within this diverse coalition, the concerns most effectively legislated were those shared by the coalition's most powerful members.”

**NOTE: “misplaced energy of reformers. Ugh!”**

“Measures to close red-light districts, keep close surveillance over prostitutes, and control venereal disease were in the interest of the crusade’s powerful medical, judicial, business, and political leaders; broader concerns about the welfare of the prostitute, the status of women, the double standard of sexual morality, or industrial exploitation were not.”

“In Minneapolis, the city’s mayor enlisted two physicians to give weekly checkups to all prostitutes for five months during 1902. In exchange for a dollar, each woman was issued a “certificate of freedom from communicable diseases.”

**NOTE: “Minnea. 1902”**

“From March 1913 until May 1915, the city of San Francisco also attempted to regulate prostitution through the newly-created Municipal Clinic for the Prevention of Venereal Disease. Proposed and supported by Dr. Julius Rosenstirn, The San Francisco Clinic examined prostitutes every four days. If found infected, prostitutes were forbidden to practice and we’re giving free treatment. If found healthy, they received certificates that guaranteed them immunity from police harassment. Unlike physicians enforcing regulation in other cities, rows and Stern and his colleagues appear actually to have made substantial efforts to treat prostitutes with sensitivity and consideration.”

**END PAGE 16**

**BEGIN PAGE 17**

NOTE: “regulate”

“Rosenstirn, an intelligent and articulate supporter of regulation, defended his clinic against abolitionist attacks with well-reasoned medical arguments.”

“... it would “not suffice to close the brothels, to tear down the shelter of the prostitute, to hunt and imprison the street walker.”

**NOTE: “much like abortion.”**

“But when local social purity reformers, joined by abolitionists from all over the United States, threatened to boycott the upcoming Panama-Pacific International Exposition through a barrage of adverse national publicity, San Francisco’s mayor and businessman decided to protect the city’s reputation and economic investment by closing the clinic.”

“Nor was segregation a viable remedy. At least forty cities had denounced the nineteenth-century segregation of vice and to circumscribed Districts.”

**END PAGE 17**

**BEGIN PAGE 18**

NOTE: “regulate”  
“Decriminalize”

“The very idea of decriminalization—which views prostitution as a victimless crime that should not be regulated or legalized by law—countered the progressive impulse to utilize the state to purify society. Reformers never seriously considered complete rehabilitation, either, the method later employed by the Russian, Chinese, and Cuban revolutionary governments.

**NOTE: “rehab (socialist)”**

**END PAGE 18**

**BEGIN PAGE 19**

“Between 1910 and 1915, at least thirty-five vice commission reports concluded that the presence of the Social Evil was “an intolerable fact of life.”

“In each instance, a profoundly moralistic impulse shaped the direction of reform.”

“ In the area of penal reform, progressives sought to end the fine system through which prostitutes have been punished in the courts. such fines, they correctly argued, only forced women to engage in further prostitution in order to pay them. In its place, penal reformers advocated probation or rehabilitation in the newly created women's reformatories. In addition, they established special morals, or night, courts to separate prostitutes from other criminals. The Domestic Relations Court in Philadelphia, the Morals Court in Chicago, and the Women's Court in New York we'e products of these new judicial systems.”

**NOTE: “womens courts”**

“Four boys, adolescence was viewed as the period in which permanent character took shape. Their deviance was a short-term threat to society since the character could be changed through probation and parental restraint. For girls, however, the situation was different. Theoretically, a girl's morals were instilled in childhood and tested in adolescence.”

**NOTE: “attitude towards boys and girls”**

**END PAGE 19**

**BEGIN PAGE 20**

“Female crime seemed more “permanent”; girls, therefore, received probation less often than did boys.”

“Court records indicate how little probation was actually used for girls. More frequently, judge has sent young female sexual offenders—including prostitutes—to reformatories or to county work houses. A sample of cases in a New York Night Court over a period of two weeks

shows, for example, that of 262 women arraigned and sentenced, 104 were sent to a County workhouse, 7 sent to Bedford Reformatory, 64 discharged with a reprimand, 37 discharged for a lack of evidence, and 16 placed on probation.”

“It seems that the prospect of enduring a probation officer's scrutiny for an extended period of time constituted greater punishment than imprisonment.”

NOTE: “courtroom”  
“C-r”

“The first female Reformatory had only just been established in Indiana in **1873**, and other famous institutions were established only shortly thereafter, at Framington, Massachusetts, in **1877** and at Bedford Hills, New York, in **1901**.”

**END PAGE 20**

**BEGIN PAGE 21**

“In most cases, “rehabilitation” in reformatories meant practicing sewing, scrubbing, and cooking in preparation for work as a domestic servant—an occupation for which many prostitutes felt special contempt. Such work, moreover, was offered only to women under 18. Older women were presumably beyond redemption.”

**NOTE: “reformatory”**

“After 1910, prostitutes became one of the first mass populations to be tested for hereditary and genetic defects. Courts, for example, began establishing clinics to determine whether or not female criminals were “feeble-minded.” Although such tests were flawed by functional illiteracy and language barriers, many reformers began arguing that a major cause of prostitution was feeble-mindedness. by 1913, twelve states had laws that permitted the sterilization of criminals, idiots, the feeble-minded, imbeciles, syphilitics, moral and sexual perverts, epileptics, and rapists.”

**NOTE: “eugenics!”**

**END PAGE 21**

**BEGIN PAGE 22**

“A surprisingly high percentage of prostitutes were described as feeble-minded, and gradually the belief and feeble-mindedness as a cause of prostitution received widespread acceptance. The Massachusetts White Slave Commission found that only 154 out of 300 interviewed prostitutes could be described as “normal.” The “mental defects” of the others, they asserted, “were so pronounced and evident as to warrant the legal commitment of each one as a feeble minded person or as a defective delinquent.” Other reformers and authorities found similar strains of “mental degeneracy” among prostitutes. The superintendent of the State

Reformatory for Women at Bedford, New York, declared that of 2,000 common prostitutes of New York City, of whom we have data, we marked as normal, 49.13 %; epileptic, 1.2%; insane, 2.4%; neurotic, 2.64%; feeble-minded in varying degrees, 29.2%; or a total of 35.5% subnormal and 15.17% on whom we have not sufficient data.

**NOTE: “feeble-mindedness”**

“Another writer who noted that two kinds of feeble-mindedness existed among prostitutes: those “whose sexual inclinations are abnormally strong or whose power of self control over natural impulses is abnormally weak” and those “who are passive, non-resistant, and will yield to anyone.”

“It appears, then, that feeble-mindedness had little to do with the women's mental capacities; rather, the term instead “explained” both “inherited strains of degeneracy”---for which the prostitute could not really be blamed—and willful immoral behavior.

“The Massachusetts investigators, for example, revealingly concluded that:

*The general moral insensibility, the boldness, egotism and vanity, the love of notoriety, the lack of shame or remorse, the absence of even a pretense of affection or sympathy for their children or for their parents, the desire for immediate pleasure without regard for consequences, the lack of forethought or anxiety about the future—all cardinal symptoms of feeble-mindedness—were strikingly evident in every one of the 154 women.”*

Rather than indicating a mental deficiency, the label *feeble-minded* instead referred to the prostitutes’ refusal or failure to conform to middle-class values and behavioral patterns.

(split between 22/23)

**NOTE: [check] [check]**

**END PAGE 22**

**BEGIN PAGE 23**

“Protection of young women, argued C.C. Carstens, was indeed the responsibility of the community.”

**NOTE: “shame.”**

**END PAGE 23**

**— SKIP PAGE 24**

**BEGIN PAGE 25**

“On the request of her mother, Maimie [Pinzer] Had been arrested as an incorrigible child. The conflict between daughter and mother had been brewing for a long time.

Misunderstandings between a first-generation immigrant mother and an assimilated daughter who sought to enjoy the normal sexual and social Adventures of American adolescents had become frequent. On one occasion, Maimie, proud of her gleaming smile, had discovered American health aides with which to protect her teeth. Her mother, ignorant of American practices, became convinced that Mamie had purchased the tooth powder for lewd sexual practices and viciously attacked her daughter for presumed sexual perversions.

**NOTE: [check]**

**END PAGE 25**

**— SKIP PAGE 26**

**BEGIN PAGE 27**

“Female reformers, many of whom in facade the seduction and rape of young girls as a cause of prostitution, tried and some states to raise the age of consent (“the age at which no girl can legally consent to carnal relations with the other sex”) to eighteen or twenty-one. This was an important consideration; in some states a man could rape a ten-year-old without threat of conviction. In addition, female reformers and some male reformers fought to achieve a minimum wage law.”

**NOTES: “age of consent”**

**“min. wage”**

**END PAGE 27**

**BEGIN PAGE 28**

Summary of page:

Jane Addams blamed cities for not having enough wholesome activities for youth as a cause for prostitution. Wanted youth to enjoy time in parks and centers supervised. Recreation that took place outside of normal family activities was condemned. Censoring books, media, supervision everywhere. James Rolph, an SF mayor, challenged the “humanitarian” efforts of reformers saying their campaigns hurt the poor and put women out of work. Reformers wanted more laws, first of such passed in Iowa in 1909.

**NOTES: “park system”**

**“Censorship”**

**“\$”**

**“Moral —> legal”**

**END PAGE 28**

**BEGIN PAGE 29**



“...red light abatement laws...”

**NOTE: “how to close a house post 1909.”**

“In the end, antvice reformers were better organized than their opponents.”

“Another attempt to prevent landlord exploitation of prostitution was passed in Portland, Oregon, in **1913**. Called the Tin Plate Ordinance, it required a tin plate bearing the owner's name and home address on every building.”

“Many states also passed laws prohibiting the sale of liquor at dance halls, as well as in the small booths and connecting rooms used for prostitution in saloons. A few States also passed “white slave laws” prohibiting the sale of women for “immoral purposes.”

**END PAGE 29**

**BEGIN PAGE 30**

“Similarly, when the “new” abolitionist attempted to abolish vice from American cities, freed prostitutes to face a “free,” sexist labor market as unskilled and stigmatized workers.

**NOTE: “downfalls to closing R.L.D.S.”**

“Police crackdowns also disrupted the subculture and **friendship networks** that had thrived for years in the vice districts.”

“By 1916, the American Social Hygiene Association had published a list of forty-seven cities that had closed their vice districts. In a very real sense, the campaign against prostitution had to become national; each city had to protect itself from **refugee prostitutes** by closing its own red light district.”

Quoted reformer: “...it was not our prime idea to drive them out of the city, but our idea to drive them into decency.”

“...a desperate urgency to accommodate the new Criminal and illegal sanctions against their trade.”

**END PAGE 30**

**BEGIN PAGE 31**

“Subsistence wages could not support a young woman unless she lived with her family—and few prostitutes felt they could return to their parents or families.”

*1914 letter to society from prostitutes after the closure of DC's redlight district:*

Knowing that public opinion is against us, and that the passing of the Kenyon "Red Light" Bill is certain, we, the inmates of the underworld, want to know how the public expects to provide for us in the future?

We do not want "homes." All we ask is that positions be provided for us the majority will accept them. We must live somehow. We are human. With all the resorts in nearly all the large cities closed, it is useless for us to leave Washington.

How many citizens will give employment to women of our class? Very few would be so liberal minded. They would consider us a detriment to their business. If we must reform, you who recommend these rough formations, help us to lead a better life.

In years past, it has been tried and as soon as previous reputations were discovered, our positions were made unbearable. Then, through necessity we had to return to the old life."

*A conversation/scene from Toledo*

"But what am I to do?" he inquired. "These women are here."

"Have the police," they said, A new, simple and happy device suddenly occurring to them, "drive them out of town and close up their houses!" They sat and looked at him triumphantly.

"But where shall I have the police drive them? Over to Detroit, or to Cleveland, or merely out into the country? They have to go *somewhere* you know."

It was a detail that had escaped them, and presently, with his great patience, and his great sincerity, he said to them:

"I'll make you a proposition. You go and select two of the worst of these women you can find, and I'll agree to take them into my home and provide for them until they can find some other home and some other way of making a living. And then you, each of you, take one girl into your home, under the same conditions, and together we'll try to find homes for the rest."

They looked at him, then looked at each other, and seeing how utterly hopeless this strange man was, they went away."

(split between pg 31/32)

**END PAGE 31**

**BEGIN PAGE 32**

"...the women rejected menial labor at subsistence wages."

**NOTE: "why reform wasn't going to work!"**

"In one study completed in Baltimore, investigators found that of 256 prostitutes, 56 were not found; 43 return to prostitution; 15 probably engaged in clandestine prostitution; 20 live with men; 43 left town; 26 married; 15 became involved in some kind of business; 16 worked

regularly; 7 died; and 5 live with relatives. Although data of this kind probably raise more questions than they answer, they do indicate that the majority of prostitutes probably moved to New sections of Baltimore or other cities and engaged in new forms of prostitution.

**NOTE: “shift to call girl system”**

“... the closing of the house has meant increased streetwalking, which was immediately noticed in most American cities.”

**END PAGE 32**

**BEGIN PAGE 33**

“Given these conditions, it is not surprising that pimps began dominating the practice of prostitution.”

**NOTE: “pimps & organized crime”**

“It was not until the entry of the United States into the first world war, however, that the antivice movement developed into a full-scale repressive movement against the prostitute.”

“Prostitutes, as potential carriers of disease, soon became identified as a significant and dangerous internal domestic enemy.”

**END PAGE 33**

**— SKIP PAGE 34**

**BEGIN PAGE 35**

“After the Wasserman test became available in 1906, they further agitated for medical marriage certificates for both men and women.”

**NOTE: “what is [the Wasserman test]?”**

“By 1921, twenty states had required the Wasserman test for a marriage license. seeking to break the “conspiracy of silence” that had surrounded the subject of venereal disease, social hygienists also sought to institute sexual education into the public school curriculum. Although some of their measures were vehemently resisted by other reformers, social hygienists shared with their opponents and emphasis on a single standard of sexuality and chastity for both men and women and an exaggerated concern about the sexual practices of the poor. Their perspective was amplified by the Progressive belief in the power of expert to wield new technological and political power wisely for the common good.”

“...the “**American Plan.**” Under this new plan, the military could arrest any woman within five miles of a military cantonment. under the new health laws, when women were arrested their civil rights were suspended. If found infected, a woman could be sentenced to a hospital or a

“farm colony” until cured. By the end of the war, 15,520 infected prostitutes had been imprisoned for an average stay of seventy days in detention homes and in reformatories for an average stay of 365 days. Most of the prostitutes never received the promised rehabilitation or medical hospitalization. Rather, the majority spent their sentences in jails, stockades, and county workhouses. Not surprisingly, no men were arrested under the American plan, which was directed solely against women.”

“Despite strong support from British and European abolitionists, however, opposition to the American Plan failed to have any serious impact on the federal government. Most of the organized women's movement was deeply committed to and involved in the war effort. Public disapproval of the plan, they soon found, was equated with lack of patriotism. Although the Interdepartmental Board of Social Hygiene always invited women to participate in its meetings, it solicited women who either shared or bowed to the social hygienist perspective. Inevitably, the acquiescent participation of nationally-known women on the board served to undermine other women's opposition to the American Plan.”

**NOTE: “like republicans”**

**END PAGE 35**

**BEGIN PAGE 36**

“Gone were earlier concerns for The Prostitute, her exploiters, and the causes of her “downfall.” Gone was the belief in the potential transformation of sexual morality into a single standard for men and women. Gone with the feminist exhortation to fight patriarchal exploitation of all women. In their place stood the social hygienists: more powerful, better organized, and now federally legitimated as the professional experts on prostitution and venereal disease control. When the war ended, the prostitute fared no better; and intensification of efforts to formalize legislation against prostitution and venereal disease spread across the country. Volunteering clinics for prostitutes, like those advocated in England, were rejected in favor of continued repression of the Social Evil.”

**NOTE: “social hygiene ):”**

**END PAGE 36**

**BEGIN PAGE 37**

“In the end, the moral indignation of the abolitionists was joined by the managerial, efficient, medical perspective of the social hygienist to create an atmosphere in which the prostitute became a scapegoat and a symbol of society's ills.”

**END PAGE 37**

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## CHAPTER 3

### PROSTITUTION: SYMBOL OF AN AGE

— SKIP PAGE 38

BEGIN PAGE 39

“...Prostitution was probably in decline by the early years of the twentieth century. The important *and* reliable fact, however, is that most Americans *perceived* enormous increases in both venereal disease and prostitution and *thought* that both had reached epidemic proportions—which is “as telling to the cultural historian as its actual incidence.” In considering deviant behavior, it is wise to remember that it is not the prevalence of deviance which triggers social reform, but rather what deviance symbolizes. Deviance, as Howard Becker reminds us, “is not a quality that lies in behavior itself, but in the interaction between those who commit an act and those who respond to it.” What is deviant during one period of history may receive public toleration in another, and prostitution appears to be particularly susceptible to cycles of public toleration and persecution.”

END PAGE 39

BEGIN PAGE 40

Summary of page:

Many Americans found themselves in a strange new world of industrialization, immigrants, migrations of black people to the North, changes in family and class structure, new roles for women, loss of innocence, social stability, small town morality mythos, etc. They could easily blame prostitution.

Theoretically, more urban environments made it easier for people to be anonymous in committing vice activity, i.e. a guy seeing a prostitute without being held accountable by his neighbor.

**NOTES: “public fears of their era”**

**“why prost. seemed to grow.”**

END PAGE 40

BEGIN PAGE 41

“Prostitution in the most literal sense was considered to be encouraged by the new cultural emphasis on material acquisition and commercialized leisure. Many reformers saw the prostitute as a woman whose desire for “luxury,” “excitement,” and “finery” led her into obtaining

it by “easy,” immoral means. “The love of ease and luxurious living,” it was argued, “have so infected our domestic life that if we go on at the present rate, virtue may become a commodity to be found only among a few old-fashioned simple minded people.”

“We have become money worshippers”, complained Clifford Roe, a well-known legal foe of prostitution. “Most of our reforms have to do with money.... Let us put the purity of our homes and the morals of the people back in the proper place.... Then we shall not wreck the lives of our girls upon the wheel of economic conditions.”

**END PAGE 41**

**BEGIN PAGE 42**

“Prostitution itself exemplified the intrusion of market values into one of the most private areas of human existence. Although prostitution had always been a commercial transaction, the striking changes in the *scale* of its commercialization just before the turn of the century made it seem especially dehumanizing and most flagrantly immoral.”

“Another facet of progressive concern over prostitution with the fear of a “revolution in morals,” which gained widespread publicity between 1895 and 1910. Prostitution was invariably viewed as either the cause or the consequence of the changing morality of the young. Evidence of youthful eroticism seemed pervasive. “City youth” (a code for *working-class youth*) was “filled with vanity and youthful indulgence.... Youth is extravagant to prodigality with itself,” wrote one reformer. “It is drunk with its own intoxicating perfume... and we surround that young, passionate, bursting blossom with every temptation to break down its resistant power, lured into sentiment, pulsating desire and eroticism by lurid literature, moving pictures, Tango dances, suggestive songs, cabaret, noise, music, light, life, rhythm, everywhere, until the senses are throbbing with leashed-in physical passion.” The Vice Commissioner of Chicago explained that “the whole tendency of modern life” was to blame because it was placing a greater strain on the nervous system of both men and women of all classes than has ever been placed at any time in the history of the civilized world.

**END PAGE 42**

**BEGIN PAGE 43**

**NOTE: “general & pertinent” [symbol of venus written sideways]**

“Nevertheless, most reformers were primarily concerned over the low morals of the working classes, particularly those of young working-class women. By 1910, a record number of single poor women had been working outside their homes as domestic servants, Factory workers, waitresses, and department store sales clerks. Whereas only 9.7% of women had worked in the labor force in 1860, 24.8% of the female population had joined men in work outside the home by 1910.”

“By actual count,” reported one investigator, “one hundred girls and boys were intoxicated. Many of the drunken girls were sitting in the corner of the hall on the laps of their equally intoxicated Partners who were hugging and kissing them.”

**NOTE: “sounds great <3”**

“Reformers’ suspicions reflected an anxiety over changes in the position of women and a loss of traditional **controls** over women's behavior.”

**END PAGE 43**

**BEGIN PAGE 44**

“Young women who served men liquor frequently also offered sexual services in small curtained booths or upstairs “cribs.” Many places where the young congregated for amusement, however, probably were not promoting prostitution in the strictest sense.”

“As increasing waves of foreign immigrants and southern blacks settled in major Northern cities, xenophobia and **racism** came to dominate the discussion of prostitution.”

“Prostitutes were also typically portrayed as foreign, even though reformers’ own records show the majority to have been the native-born daughters of immigrant parents. George Kneeland’s 1912 investigation found that 68% of the prostitutes in New York City were native-born and that the foreign-born were in fact under-represented in The Prostitute population.”

“The divorce rate was rising rapidly; between 1890 and 1910, 954,000 divorces were obtained in the United States, two-thirds of them requested by women.”

**NOTE: “the family —> [women] roles”**

**END PAGE 44**

**BEGIN PAGE 45**

*American middle class households were producing less children, the average was 5.6 in 1859 then... “...by 1890, it was producing, on the average, one less child. Most important, women were entering the world outside the home in unprecedented numbers.”*

**NOTE: “family life”**

“Suffragists were held especially responsible for the increase in divorce...”

**NOTE: “first wave feminism”**

“ In the minds of reformers, prostitution was inextricably intertwined with all such changes and family life. It was therefore cited as a cause, consequence, or sign of every change. “ The surest sources of prostitution are found in broken homes,” 1 reformer warned; others claimed that husbands’ contact with prostitutes and venereal disease was one of the

main reasons that so many wives were petitioning for divorce. The falling birthrate, which supposedly presaged the extinction of the race, was blamed on the sterility caused by venereal infection of innocent wives and mothers. "A healthy woman," the Vice Commissioner of Chicago proclaimed, "living in wedlock all of her child-bearing life, under favorable circumstances for natural procreation, should have a family of ten children"; Venereal disease was preventing a natural growth of population. It was also contributing to race suicide by damaging the health of future generations. "Prostitution is pregnant with disease," explained reformers."

**END PAGE 45**

**BEGIN PAGE 46**

"Women's entrance into the public Arena, traditionally frequent only by prostitutes and other bad women, blurred the clear divisions between the "lady" and the prostitute. For many antivice crusaders—despite vehement opposition from feminists—women's activities outside the home became symbolic of whorish nature."

"As one reformer lamented, "Daughters no longer feel content to follow their mothers' lives in the home. our system of female education which fosters a contempt for the mother that delves amongst the pots and Kettles in the kitchen, while the accomplished daughter home from school, armed with her diploma, thumbs away at the piano in the drawing room, must be held accountable for much of the looseness and morals and virtue."

**NOTE: "thread of feminism to reform"**

"Prostitution was singled out because it was a visible and dramatic form of illicit sexual relation and the most stigmatized form a female existence outside of patriarchal authority and protection."

... "public sphere."

**END PAGE 46**

**BEGIN PAGE 47**

"...the innocent victim or the sinister polluter."

**NOTE: "duel presentation of prost."**

"Contradicting their own data, reformers frequently depicted the prostitute as a young rural girl whose innocence, ignorance, and poverty had been manipulated by Urban male procurers."

"The Atlanta Vice commission similarly depicted the prostitute as a "defenseless child of poverty, unprotected, unloved, and uncared for."

**NOTE: "procurement."**



“Between the wages of sin and the wages of the Sweatshop, the simple wonder is that so many women in need can hold two lives of chastity.” “Girls” were not to blame, concluded the Vice Commissioner of Chicago; unregulated business with the villain. “What is the natural result of such an industrial condition?” reformers asked. “Dishonesty and immorality not from choice but from necessity... in order to live.”

**NOTE: “necessity”**

**END PAGE 47**

**BEGIN PAGE 48**

“... a willful spreader of infection.” The sinister polluter received no sympathy...”

**NOTE: “the polluter.”**

*Wrote a reformer...*: “The Mating Instinct comes early to the slum girl. Overdeveloped physically, as she frequently is, while at the same time under developmentally, uninstructed, and with no knowledge of control of self, her impulses drive her to acts impossible to the girl whose parents have surrounded her with every safeguard that loving care can devise.”

“The extent to which these contradictory images could co-exist in reformers’ minds is striking. The same vice report that blamed poverty and evil procurers for young women’s downfall could also describe in vivid detail the immoral cravings that had produced the prostitute. Thus reformers vacillated in their policies and attitudes towards the prostitute. For the innocent girl, they search for environmental causes; for the prostitute, they found “natural” and individual failures: in morality, laziness, sexual overdevelopment, and feeble-mindedness. For the wronged girl, reformers tried to offer aid; for the degenerate prostitute, they legislated repressive laws, bill reformatories to isolate her from the public, and reviled her for her impurity.”

**NOTE: “contradictory images of prostitute.”**

**END PAGE 48**

**BEGIN PAGE 49**

Many Progressives have been brought up by their Victorian forebears so believe that women were “naturally” passionless beings who would submit to sex only as a duty of marriage, at the initiative of their husbands.

**NOTE: victorian sexual attitudes**

The innocent victim was typically portrayed as the embodiment of agrarian purity: white, native-born, and middle class in her manners and attitudes if not her background— potentially, if not actually, a “lady.”

**NOTE: race, ethics, class**

“These reformers manifested a strong compulsion to create a sense of order by reinforcing older moral boundaries and defining who should remain within and without the body politic.”

**NOTE: psych of reformer**

Socialists and many nonleftist women, while discussing prostitution in some of the same terms as other reformers, also developed their own unique symbolism of prostitution and used the topic to express radically different concerns. They tended, more than other reformers, to portray the prostitute as an innocent victim and empathetically to identify with her powerlessness.

The socialists saw prostitution primarily as the result of working women's poverty—a poverty stemming not from lack of humanitarian concern among individual employers, but from systematic exploitation under capitalism. Capitalism, they pointed out, not only forced men to sell their labor for wages; it also cause women to sell their bodies.

(split between 49/50)

**NOTE: feminists = victim**

**socialist = victim**

**END PAGE 49**

**BEGIN PAGE 50**

Whether or not nineteenth-century women's movements took a strong stand for “women's rights,” they did tend to express, however indirectly, criticism of male dominance in sexual subjugation.

To the extent that their sexual attitudes in class, racial, and ethnic prejudice has allowed them, women identified with the prostitute and perceived her as victim rather than criminal. Unlike male reformers, who tended to depict the body politic as a male body being polluted by the prostitute, women tended to portray their national collectivity as a female body being raped by men who bought, sold, and control the prostitute. In the end, however women's agitation and anger against prostitution were easily ignored a redirected in the service of a larger movement that driving prostitutes underground, made them even more vulnerable and powerless and before.

**NOTE: [men] vs. [women]**

**END PAGE 50**

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## CHAPTER 4

### THE LADY AND THE PROSTITUTE

#### START PAGE 51

...**Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, brilliant theorist and president of the National American woman's suffrage association; **Elizabeth Blackwell**, first woman doctor in the United States; Frances Willard, president of the W.C.T.U; **Victoria Woodhull radical advocate of equal rights, suffrage, and free love, and first female candidate for president of the United States**; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, social and economic theorist; **Emma Goldman, anarchist...** (split 51/52)

#### END PAGE 51

#### BEGIN PAGE 52

The Chicago Women's City Club, for example, managed to obtain nineteen thousand signatures for a petition to close the red light district.

The female reformers who attacked prostitution were inspired by some powerful personal motives that their male counterparts did not share. Many of them, like male reformers, asserted that prostitution must be abolished to protect the home; but “protecting the home” generally had a different meaning for them than it did for men. To men, it meant upholding patriarchal authority, barring women from the public sphere, and protecting women from knowledge of or contact with sordid realities. To women, however, it meant asserting some authority over that domain—the home—which men had supposedly granted them.

Frances Willard extended her campaign against liquor to encompass prostitution because she recognized that men's right to transmit prostitutes the venereal disease to their wives and children, like men's right to drink up their wages and abuse their wives, made a mockery...

#### END PAGE 52

#### BEGIN PAGE 53

In 1907, the New York Committee of Seven surveyed seven-hundred physicians and discovered that nearly one-third of infected women were married and had been infected by their husbands.

...The Social Hygiene Association revealed that congenital syphilis—infection passed from a pregnant mother to a newborn infant—had become a growing problem. **One of every twelve pregnant women was found to be infected.**

...congenital blindness... caused by venereal disease... 30 percent of all cases of blindness in New York.

Whereas male reformers typically represented the carriers of venereal infection as women, female reformers typically represented them as men.

Echoing Josephine Butler...American feminists argued that regulation discriminated against prostitutes and locked them into a life of prostitution.

**END PAGE 53**

**— SKIP PAGE 54**

**BEGIN PAGE 55**

Many women's organizations considered agitating for a single sexual standard...

In Ohio in 1891, for example, the age of consent was fourteen, yet a man could not be convicted of rape until he reached the age of twenty-one.

Frances Willard cynically noted "it is a greater crime to steal a cow than to abduct and ruin a girl."

...light sentences given white slavers. For stealing a horse or saddle, they argued, a man would be sent to San Quentin; for ruining a girl's life, his case will be dismissed.

Several feminists took their analysis of prostitution a step further then the critique of the double standard by pointing out similarities between the institutions of marriage and prostitution. A loveless marriage contracted for economic security were, like prostitution, a selling of women's sexual services; and marriage, like prostitution, placed women under the sexual control and exploitation of men. These arguments were not new; Victoria Woodhull..."

**END PAGE 55**

**BEGIN PAGE 56**

"... [Victoria Woodhull & others] advanced them in the 1870s. "The marriage law is the most damnable Social Evil Bill—the most consummate outrage on women that was ever conceived," she declared. " those who are called prostitutes, whom these bills assume to regulate, are free women sexually, when compared to the poor wife. They are at Liberty, at least to refuse; but she knows no such escape." Charlotte Perkins Gilman went on to develop these ideas more fully and her book *Women and Economics*.

A story attributed to George Bernard Shaw was widely quoted by radical feminist to express their attitudes towards marriage and prostitution as commercial transactions.

Gentleman: Madam, would you go to bed with me for a million pounds?

Lady: Well, for that kind of money, yes.

Gentleman: Well, would you go to bed with me for 2 pounds?

Lady: Heavens! What do you think I am?

Gentleman: we have already established what you are, Madam; we are now merely trying to establish the price.

Another male critic of marriage, Havelock Ellis, received a warm response from feminists when he argued that the wife who married for money, compared to the prostitute, is the true scab. She is paid less, gives much more in return and labor and care, and is absolutely bound to her master. The prostitute never signed away the right to her own person, she retains her freedom and personal rights nor is she always compelled to submit to man's embrace.

Ethel Sturgis Dummer, a **Chicago** feminist...

**END PAGE 56**

**BEGIN PAGE 57**

Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the international Women's Suffrage Association, returned from a trip abroad to pronounce that all over the world, **“just as numberless girls were sacrificed in olden times to appease the anger of the god, so are they sacrificed today to appease the demands of men.”**

Rose Livingston, called in New York the “Angel of Chinatown”...

Even more famous was Donaldina Cameron...

**END PAGE 57**

**BEGIN PAGE 58**

Suffragists argued that women could not be politically effective in causes like the fight against prostitution until they had the vote: “We women suffragists will never be content with alleviation, with half measures, with aimless and hopeless service, while we have no real power over the ultimate causes; that power with which only franchise can bring; only the franchise rightly used can make operative.”

**END PAGE 58**

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**BEGIN PAGE 60**

Some anti-suffragists responded by arguing that if women got the vote, “bad women” would vote for the continued existence of prostitution and against the prohibition of liquor. Suffragists, however, managed to defend their position by explaining that “no class of women needs the ballot and other measures of protection more than the so-called ‘bad woman,’” and that “if the ballot is an uplift for good women, it can be made an uplift for bad women.”

...Jane Addams sympathetically recounted numerous stories of young women driven into prostitution out of economic hardship. She described how a factory girl, weary and discouraged from “the long hours, the lack of comforts, the low pay, the absence of recreation, the sense of ‘good times’ all about her which she cannot share, the conviction that she is rapidly losing health and charm,” might eventually be no longer able to withstand “temptation.” while Adams, like many male reformers, mentioned the desire for finery as a motive for entering prostitution, she described it not as an individual fault but as a socially instilled ambition. Young women, she wrote, were raised to believe that no obstacles ought to stand in the way of financial success. Extravagant displays and department stores continually tempted poor women whose dreams of material success could never be realized. Torn by the desire for fine purchases...

**END PAGE 60**

**BEGIN PAGE 61**

... Knowledge that honest efforts could not obtain them, poor women developed a “dangerous cynicism regarding the value of virtue.”

They protested the fact that “proper” ladies were “actually forbidden to have any knowledge of their fallen sisters.”

“Suppose that you knew that the sacrifice of other women protected you— it does not, but if it did—how many of you would buy your protection at the cost of the lives of other women? I do not believe that there is one.” [unknown quote]

**END PAGE 61**

**BEGIN PAGE 62**

Prostitution lowered the status of women “because they came to be looked upon as possible harlots.”

On occasion, women reformers could become important allies of prostitutes. In Denver, for example, the local political machine try to force prostitutes to register publicly so that their votes could be exchanged for police protection. Angry at the political extortion, prostitutes appealed to a large political club of middle-class women to stop the police harassment.

Efforts to give prostitutes charity and employment tended to backfire because the Assumption behind them was naive: that a prostitute would find any work, no matter how ill paid and degrading, or even the mere provision of food and shelter, better than making a living from prostitution. Reformers generally persisted in seeing prostitutes as women driven by desperation into Vice because they had no alternative, rather than women making a rational choice given their limited alternatives. Because of this misperception, reformers often felt hurt or bewildered—and occasionally indignant—when prostitutes refused their aid.

**END PAGE 62**

**BEGIN PAGE 63**

*San Francisco letter from former dance hall girl who rebuffed offers for domestic work:*

In regards to the employment of the dance hall girls; I wish to state as one of them that the work suggested by the majority of the club women is not any better than that offered an immigrant. Possibly you have failed to realize that the majority of these girls are young, fair-looking, well-educated, well-groomed. . . . They have had or are now maintaining a home for themselves or relatives. . . . they are not immoral or they wouldn't be where they are, most of them are using that means of livelihood as a quicker road to a home of their own. Some of them have professions or trades, quite a few are musical; if it wasn't for the fear of ridicule or curiosity they would return to their legitimate labor. I don't believe any one of them would accept the position of kitchen mechanic. If a living wage was offered where the girls could work, meet their installments, I doubt if they wouldn't gladly accept.

**END PAGE 63**

**BEGIN PAGE 64**

One feminist, for example, felt that prostitutes represented “more living energy than any other repressed women.” If only that “energy were channeled into different areas,” she argued, “perhaps women would be happier.”

In California, for example, Florence Roberts, converted in 1896 by a vision of her own carnality and selfishness, became known as Mother Roberts as she wandered through small Northern California towns and cities trying to rescue young prostitutes. (Interestingly, Mother Roberts's conversion occurred when her husband lost his job and she realized that she needed to become economically independent.) With extraordinary bravado, she invaded the dark dives of San Francisco's Barbary Coast. There she set up her autoharp, sing hymns, and tried, without success, to persuade prostitutes to accept Christ and receive her offers of redemption.

Having failed to eradicate prostitution in Oakdale, the Californian W.C.T.U. had the police arrest the prostitutes and send them out of the county—an act that did little to improve the relationship between female reformers and prostitutes.

**END PAGE 64**

**BEGIN PAGE 65**

One reported that a prostitute had teasingly asked her, “Are you a reformer? Do you want to make us good girls?” One settlement worker who had visited hundreds of prostitutes honestly conceded, “We reach one in a hundred and try not to be discouraged.” A.W. Elliot, a clubwoman who was president of the Southern California Rescue Mission, admitted that she had offered aid to fifteen thousand prostitutes and yet had reformed only one. “I do believe,” she said, “that they love that kind of life and scoff at the reformer and kick him out if he does not get out.”

*After a lecture from a female reformer unknowingly to a former prostitute, she wrote of the encounter:*

It has been decreed that, while prostitution must go, the “vampires” must be kept outside the pale. A most peculiar logic this and one which I am utterly unable to grasp—the decrying a sin and yet condemning a fellow-woman to follow it for the term of her natural life. “Surely my dear,” said a noted club president to me recently, “surely you would not have us condone? If we forgive them and take them back again into decent Society, *where* will the family be?”

**END PAGE 65**

**BEGIN PAGE 66**

...Emma Goldman...

**END PAGE 66**

**BEGIN PAGE 67**

In short, Goldman recognized that women would abolish prostitution not by enacting repressive legislation but by gaining real power over “ultimate causes”—social, political, and economic. “As to a thorough eradication of prostitution,” she wrote, “nothing can accomplish that save a complete transvaluation of all accepted values—especially the moral one—coupled with the abolition of industrial slavery.”

**END PAGE 67**

**— SKIP PAGE 68**



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## CHAPTER 5

### THE COMMERCIALIZED WORLD OF PROSTITUTION

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BEGIN PAGE 70

Although brothels existed in the early towns and cities, the majority of prostitutes probably practice their trade much like The Artisans who owned the tools and product of their own craft; they were the owners as well as the employees of their trade.

When the prostitute was employed by another individual, she usually worked in a brothel controlled by a woman, a madam. Although some of the larger towns (by the 1830s) began to designate specific neighborhoods for prostitution, “nightwalkers” probably plied their trade in an informal, casual manner.

...During the nineteenth century, several major changes took place. Increasingly, large numbers of women became part of a permanent and professional class of prostitutes. Such women search for customers in seaports, and congested manufacturing centers, and in mining and lumber camps—wherever a large unattached male population worked. Gradually, with increased urbanization, neighborhood politics concentrated prostitution into tolerated red-light districts. There, hidden from genteel society, a large and increasingly profitable traffic and trade in women grew into a complex and commercialized business. As third-party agents began to seek a share in the profits of vice, prostitution became deeply enmeshed in the political, economic, and cultural life of the city.

Like the shoe-makers, who lost their independence as they became industrial wage earners, the prostitute became increasingly dependent upon and exploited by third-party employers or agents who reaped the profits of her labor and paid her a “wage.”

Although women also exploited prostitutes as procuresses or madams, the vice Commission of Chicago was basically accurate and charging the *men* now owned and operated business of prostitution.  
(split between 70/71)

END PAGE 70

BEGIN PAGE 71

The gradual growth of prostitution into a large and commercialized enterprise involved in enormous financial investments and generated incredible profits. In Kansas, for example, it was estimated that the red-light districts involved at least four hundred thousand in capital investment; in Chicago, reformers estimated that fifteen million dollars of business revolved around the traffic....

**END PAGE 71**

**BEGIN PAGE 72**

In Storyville, the famous New Orleans red-light district, it was estimated that “over a million dollars a week, well over ten million a year, probably closer to fifteen million, found its way into the stockings of the prostitutes, the cassocks of the clergyman who owned the whorehouses property, the pockets of the politicians, and the swelling accounts of the landlords.”

Because prostitution was tolerated but not exactly legal, the trade and women required a broad range of protective services from politicians. Between 1900 and 1917, prostitution became a powerful political weapon in urban politics.

The attempt to oust Tammany Hall politicians in 1901 in New York is the most dramatic example of prostitution becoming a central issue in urban politics.

Precisely because the legal status of prostitution remains so vague, politicians could extort vast amounts of protection money by harassing a brothel for “infractions” of regulations. In addition, politicians frequently offered official protection to those exclusive brothels they frequented themselves.

**END PAGE 72**

**BEGIN PAGE 73**

In New York, for example, reformers discovered that particular lawyers associated with the trade charged prostitutes exorbitant fees for settling their legal problems with local politicians. In Storyville, the local newspaper found that certain parlor houses had been assessed unusually low tax rates. It seems that leading citizens and politicians had invested so heavily in these houses that they granted owners special tax breaks.

**END PAGE 73**

**BEGIN PAGE 74**

Although tolerated by official authorities, red-light districts had to pay municipal “fines” to maintain official “toleration.” In Kansas, for example, the vice report revealed that seventy-eight

houses in one red-light district paid monthly fines of \$1,374, whereas another district paid combined fines of \$1,334.50.

The madams simply paid local authorities a weekly visit with their “fine” money.

In Minneapolis... many officials testified to the widespread police corruption that the tolerated District had formally generated... they further substantiated their opposition to segregated districts with stories of respectable girls who had been denounced to the police as prostitutes out of Revenge or jealousy. Such girls, unprotected by brothel bribes, were sometimes that arrested as prostitutes.

in New York, an ordinary parlor house “contributed” about five hundred dollars to a new precinct captain and thereafter gave fifty dollars every month as another contribution to local police officers. One owner of a parlor house paid thirteen plain-clothes men ten dollars each per month, and two patrolmen five dollars each per month as well; this was an addition to local police and ward officials.

**END PAGE 74**

**BEGIN PAGE 75**

NOTE: everyone who profits...

And, on occasion, police were not above using their official authority to take advantage of a “little business.” One investigator filed the following report:

Wabash Avenue. October 31 at 2:30 A.M., place crowded at this hour, and several persons were intoxicated. Two strangers, who had the appearance of being Farmers, where with two prostitutes. They complained to the waiter that he had overcharged them and . . . were ejected from the saloon. Later they returned with two officers who called the waiter and spoke a few words to him.

The officer then turned to the farmers and told them to “beat it or they would be arrested.” The men appeared surprised, and finally left as one of the officers was about to hit one of them with his Club. The two officers then entered the cafe, and holding their hands over their stars, went to the rear closet, took their uniform coats off, and put on ordinary coats, which were much too small for them. They then took off their helmets and sat down with the same prostitutes. They did not pay for their drinks. Investigators recognized them as being the two who were patrolling the district.

**NOTE: omg!**

Police “lists” of brothels and streetwalkers, for example, grossly underestimated the number of both in a given District. Protection of prostitution meant higher incomes. Looking the other way, moreover, help to maintain order and stability in the vice district.

In every district, for example, certain beauty and manicure parlors agreed to cater exclusively to a “disreputable” clientele and their specific cosmetic needs. In exchange, they charged prostitutes outrageous prices for exclusive service. In the same way, druggists who sold prostitutes morphine and cocaine handsome profits. Hotel owners who permitted streetwalkers to bring customers to their rooms profited greatly from the nightly rental fees.

In return for a rather superficial and Superfluous inspection, doctors issued certificates of health in exchange for high fees. Many other individuals exacted small commissions for simply “steering” customers to one particular woman or brothel. “Nightliners,” bartenders, waiters, chauffeurs, and cab drivers were all part of an informational network that profited from the existence of prostitution. Cadets, if they succeeded in seducing or persuading a woman to enter a brothel, received a commission from either the owner or madam of the house.

In addition to such steerers, many young boys learned the profession by earning money as a “messenger boy.” One investigator for the Vice Commission of Philadelphia reported the following conversation with such a 16 year old.

“You know you're in the red-light district now. Would you like to go see some of the women?”

“How do you know where the women are?”

“No? Why that's my business to know . . .”

“How does that come about?”

“All the women in the houses telephone to the office when they want something. We run errands for them, by Chop Suey, take messages, buy things for them, and do anything they want us to. If it were not for this business, the office could close up.”

(split between 75/76)

**NOTE: use.**

**END PAGE 75**

**BEGIN PAGE 76**

... cadets, who sold women to brothels but did not then continue to make money off of them; at other times the terms *pimp* and *cadet* were used interchangeably.

**NOTE: cadet = pimp**

His occupation is professional seduction.

Although madams never permitted pimps to live in the brothels, it was not uncommon for madams to split the prostitutes earnings between themselves and the pimps. In other cases, pimps took most of a streetwalker's income and returned a pittance of her earnings to her.

In most brothels, prostitutes' wages were further diminished by the custom of “splitting” half of all earnings with the madam. In a one-dollar house (considered medium-price), supporting eighteen inmates, each prostitute earned about twenty-one dollars a day. Since the

madam received half of each woman's earnings, she could earn over fifty thousand dollars in a year. In addition, many inmates cynically learned that madams required them to buy their clothing and furniture from peddlers and dealers, who charged exorbitant prices and then gave kickbacks to the madam. The Vice Commissioner of Chicago pointedly described how "An inmate of ----- avenue said she had to buy a kimono for \$15.00 from a man who came to the house which could be bought over-the-counter for \$3.00. The Madame received \$9.00; the salesman, \$6.00."

Although the madam realized sizable earnings throughout the year, she, in turn, had to pay a substantial part of *her* income to the men who owned the actual real estate in which the business was conducted. Given the legally ambiguous status of prostitution, landlords rented their property for "immoral purposes" at two to three times the normal rental rate.

**NOTE: Geyston (?) House (possibly Oyston?)**

\$

**END PAGE 76**

**BEGIN PAGE 77**

The rental of property for prostitution proved to be a very profitable financial investment. In one house, for example, which had fifteen inmates, a landlord realized \$6,454 each month from his real estate investment. Since most property owners tended to cultivate close ties with local politicians, they were generally left alone despite the passing of the red-light abatement laws and "tin plate" ordinances.

Another large group of profiteers involved in prostitution were saloon keepers, brewery owners, and anyone else involved in the sale and distribution of liquor. Breweries, for example, sometimes forced indebted saloon keepers to establish a string of available prostitutes on their premises in order to stimulate more drinking and attract a wider clientele. Prostitutes were instructed to require each customer to buy a drink so as to avoid appearing a "cheapskate." Saloon keepers, for their part, gave each prostitute a small commission...

In some cases, saloon owners similarly received kickbacks from the hotel that their "girls" used in their trade. Most saloon keepers readily conceded that they made their greatest profits from the drinks bought by customers who accompanied prostitutes to the rear booths or upstairs rooms used for sexual activities.

With so many powerful interest groups reaping Financial rewards from the practice of prostitution—politicians, police, real estate agents, landlords, and the owners of saloons and breweries—reformers face serious economic resistance in their attempts to close down the red-light districts. Not all businessmen, of course, supported prostitution. On the contrary, many small businessmen feared the potential depreciation of their small stores' property if a neighborhood became filled with prostitutes. Or they feared that customers would hesitate to patronize a store that was located in center of a district. As the Hartford Vice Commission pointed out, however, nearly every aspect of prostitution had become profitable to someone, somewhere...

**END PAGE 77**

**BEGIN PAGE 78**

NOTE: blue book value

The location for much of this business between 1890 and 1918 was the red-light district— a segregated area in which various forms of vice were “tolerated.” In theory, of course, vice was limited to the district, “thereby protecting other neighborhoods from its manifestations.” In fact, prostitution was mainly practiced in **poor neighborhoods**, which frequently overlapped with or included the designated red-light district.

In one edition of a New Orleans Blue Book, a guide to brothels in the famous storyville District, 247 more names appeared than were registered on the police rolls. Records on prostitutes themselves, such as the lists of names, photographs, and certificates of Health kept in some cities, were even less complete. In the South in particular, most Mexican and black prostitutes were never registered or even officially noted by the police. One investigator estimated that, at best, one sixth of all prostitutes were officially regulated by the practice of segregated prostitution. In small towns or cities, as one prostitute recalled, “segregation was a name only, not a fact. . . . Vice flourished in all parts of the city [Kansas City]; wine rooms were wide open for anyone having the price of a drink; private houses and assignation houses abounded— and the road houses ran full blast for twenty-four hours a day.”

In the larger cities, commercialized Vice had reached a highly organized and visible presence. In its prime, for example, Storyville supposedly had 230 sporting houses, 20 assignation houses, and two thousand prostitutes. In some cities, such as New York or Chicago, investigators estimated that from four thousand to fifteen thousand prostitutes actively practiced their trade.

... in Superior, Wisconsin, a typical small District, twenty brothels paid fifty dollars a month in fines, practically licensing fees. Part of the fines went to the court and part to a drug clerk who sold three hundred and fifty dollars worth of drugs monthly to the district. In such towns and cities, probably fewer than a hundred women became involved in prostitution.

**END PAGE 78**

**BEGIN PAGE 79**

... dens of legalized vice: New Orleans's Storyville, San Francisco's Barbary Coast, Denver's Market Street Line, Baltimore's Block, Chicago's Levee, and New York's Bowery, Five Points, and Tenderloin.

In Chicago, for example, where several officially segregated red-light districts existed simultaneously, police regularly published “Rules Governing the Regulation of Vice,” in which injunctions were included against: persons between three and eighteen years of age in a

brothel; underage brothel inmates; forcible detention of girls in brothels; women entering certain houses without male escorts; prostitutes wear short skirts, transparent gowns, or improper attire in the public rooms; males who lived off the income of a prostitute entering a brothel; prostitute soliciting from houses; signs, lights, or obscene pictures on the outside of a house; and swinging doors on parlor houses.

**NOTE: laws for the parlor**

... inThe poorest neighborhoods, where residents, mostly renters, had the least political clout. One former chief of police in Chicago, for example, issued a semi-official statement to the effect that persons “involved in prostitution who confined their business to the west of Wabash Avenue and to the east of Wentworth Avenue would remain immune from police harassment.” Predictably, this neighborhood was largely composed of black residents.

By the turn of the century, most of New York's prostitution had become increasingly concentrated in black and poor ethnic neighborhoods. In his autobiography, the Reverend Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, remembered living surrounded by the sights and sounds of prostitution. Finding rooms in a cold-water flat, he recalled hearing “prostitutes over me and all around me.” His congregation, moreover, often included “large numbers of pimps, prostitutes, keepers of dives and gambling dens.” Outside the church, “harlots would stand across the street on Sunday evening in unbuttoned Mother Hubbards soliciting men as they left our service.”

*(split between 79/80)*

**NOTE: use**

**END PAGE 79**

**BEGIN PAGE 80**

... black women were probably arrested more frequently than white women and that black women were over-represented in the prostitute population. Like black women, Japanese, Chinese, and Mexican women also were over-represented in the prostitute population because they found fewer avenues of economic survival available than did working-class women of other backgrounds.

**NOTE: racism in arrest**

In Chicago, for example, nearly all the domestics of brothels were black women, and the majority of musical entertainers and saloons and parlor houses were black men.

The “professors,” as black musicians were known, were frequently required to compose Dirty lyrics to excite male customers. Given the environment in which Jazz developed, it is hardly surprising that white early identified jazz with prostitution and other forms of “low life.”

**NOTE: jazz**

Hattie Rose, a New York white slavery fighter, found that “black and tan” clubs existed on the side streets of New York’s red-light districts. In such clubs, both black and white women practice prostitution in the same houses. In Kansas, however, the vice report revealed that houses were segregated by color. The city of Little Rock was so segregated that separate reports on prostitution were issued for white and black prostitution. In New Orleans, segregated black and white houses stood side-by-side in the same district. Black men, however, were not permitted to patronize either “color” house. After 1917, when the government officially closed down Storyville, separate black and white areas of prostitution emerged in different parts of the city. In San Francisco, some “cribs”. . . The top floors of the building [were] allocated to French, English, and American women, whereas the lower floors were relegated to Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican women. Prices varied according to the race and nationality of the prostitute.

**END PAGE 80**

**BEGIN PAGE 81**

In the largest cities, blue books—published guides to prostitution—directed the visitor who “hopped” around the district to particular services. The first blue book guide to New Orleans apparently appeared in 1895 and was distributed until 1915. The Storyville blue books carried the following motto: “Order of the Garter: Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense (Evil to Him Who Evil Thinks).” in Chicago, a guide also appeared, bearing the title, *The Sporting Club Houw Directory, Chicago: Containing a Full and Complete List of all Strictly First Class Clubs and Sporting Houses*.

**NOTE: chicago blue book!**

**END PAGE 81**

**BEGIN PAGE 82**

In Chicago, pamphlets raved about the fabulous resorts on Dearborn Street. The “comfort to be found within the walls of that sumptuous house,” they assured the visitor, would relieve men of “other worries.” No one, they boasted, need “feel the chill of winter nor the heat of summer in this place.”

... advertising their wares. Young boys were paid to stand on street corners and distribute cards advertising a particular house. Behind the windows of low-priced brothels, prostitutes indicated what kinds of services were offered by visibly sucking their thumbs. Outside the brothels, “a lighthouse,” usually a young boy, supplied potential customers with information on available sex practices while watching for sudden and unexpected police raids. In return for a commission, bartenders and saloon keepers offered to direct potential customers to the houses...

**NOTE: advertising**

*[the most important advertising]* ... was the district itself.



**END PAGE 82**

**BEGIN PAGE 83**

Excerpt from *Jews without Money*, Michael Gold:

On sunshiny days the whores sat on chairs along the sidewalks. They sprawled indolently, their legs taking up half the pavements. People stumbled over a gauntlet of whores' meaty legs. . . .

The girls winked and jeered, made lascivious gestures at passing males. They pulled at coat-tails and cajoled men with fake honeyed words. They called their wares like pushcart Peddlers. At five years I knew what it was they sold.

The girls were naked under flowery kimonos. Chunks of breasts and belly occasionally flashed. Slippers hung from their feet; they were already ready for "business."

**NOTE: good description**

... women tended to rely on **massage parlors**, call-girl flats, and other safer and more private forms of prostitution.

In the larger towns and cities, the theater became associated with prostitution during the nineteenth century. Lower-class prostitutes were permitted to use the third tier for making connections with customers. Meanwhile, on the first tier expensively dressed prostitutes mingled with the fashionable clientele for the same purpose.

From the literature of the period, it appears that a significant amount of prostitution centered around the saloon. This impression may be due to the prohibitionist bias of many of the writers of vice reports. Nevertheless, it does seem that many prostitutes who were not attached to a brothel became in some formal way linked to a particular saloon. In 455 saloons investigated by the Vice Commission of Chicago, an investigator was solicited by prostitutes 236 times and counted 928 prostitutes soliciting other men. "Waitresses" who worked the saloons were given a meager salary, compensated by commissions on their customers' drinks. a twenty-five cent pint bottle of beer usually brought a 178 percent profit. When sold in the private upstairs rooms used for prostitution, the same bottle made a 250 percent profit for the owner. Each waitress earned about \$3 a day from liquor commissions, which, when combined with her small salary, equaled three times the earning of a domestic worker.

*(split between 83/84)*

**NOTE: booze [money]**

**END PAGE 83**

**BEGIN PAGE 84**

Because saloons offered more than simply liquor, they frequently advertised their services as well. Printed cards distributed by lighthouses extolled "the joys to be found within."

In case an unfriendly patrolman approached the saloon, the lighthouse pressed a concealed electric button.

**NOTE: ?!**

in some saloons, prostitutes offered quick sexual services to customers in private booths surrounded by tables and other booths. Waiters asked unescorted men if they wished a lady companion for the evening. 1 investigator from Hartford, Connecticut, described his surprise when he learned that

sexual immorality was habitually practiced by them there. Seeking advice from the waiter, one of our detectives was told to "Go Ahead; nobody will come near this booth while the curtains are drawn;" The girls said "I told you so; it is done in these booths every day." Three of the other booths were occupied at that time and the conversation in one corroborated the reputation of the place. Those entering the second floor invariably ask the waiter if there are vacancies on the floor above. The upper rooms are preferred on account of their greater privacy.

In addition to the booths and upstairs rooms, saloons frequently provided vaudeville shows in rear-rooms. Such shows regularly included sexual acts designed to create more interest in immediate sexual gratification. Half-naked, stripping dancers encouraged male customers, already plied with drink from waitresses, to accept prostitutes' offers.

in addition to offering the sexual Services of female prostitutes, it appears that saloons attracted male homosexuals or actual male prostitution. The Vice Commission of Chicago referred to vaudeville performances in "which men impersonate women and solicit men for perverted practices." Allusions to male homosexuality or transvestitism are vague and veiled behind euphemisms.

**NOTE: backroom shows**

**END PAGE 84**

**BEGIN PAGE 85**

... such practices [*above*] were "practiced extensively."

... "there are a lot of **fairies** (sexual perverts) hanging around the tenderloin."

Until further research is completed, however, it will not be clear to what extent female or male same-sex liaisons took place either in or near the segregated brothel district; nor is it clear how much male prostitution was practiced in these same neighborhoods.

**END PAGE 85**

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## CHAPTER 6

### THE SUBCULTURE OF PROSTITUTION

#### BEGIN PAGE 86

Every city, for example, posted several expensive five- and ten-dollar parlor houses that attracted wealthy men, who used the facilities much as a gentleman's social club. There, they made political connections, met their associates, and relaxed in an atmosphere of exquisite food, wine, and women. One-dollar houses catered to the interests and budgets of middle-class men, and fifty-cent houses and cribs heavily relied on the working-class “stiff” for their clientele. *(split between 86/87)*

**NOTE: [male] social status**

#### END PAGE 86

#### BEGIN PAGE 87

The success or failure of a high-priced parlor house ultimately rested on the central figure of the establishment, the madam.

Her first priority was to maintain a profitable business.

A reputation for absolute silence was essential; for example, she had to protect the identities of her customers. In the event of a customer's sudden illness or accident while in her house, a madam would have the person removed to a more respectable location before notifying police or family. A successful madam, moreover, never greeted her clientele in public; she traded her silence for the continued political protection of her business. In some cases, some madame's became silent partners in the local power structure; they knew too much for any local politician to shut their establishments down.

... she checked on the servants who prepared meals for the inmates and herself, made sure that sheets in all rooms were changed several times during an evening, maintained an adequate supply of fine wines and liquors, and oversaw repairs. In addition, the madam interviewed, hired, and fired servants, maids, musicians, and prostitutes who worked in her house.

One prostitute found that her credentials from Kansas City were no match for the “proper” behavior and dress required in the “Ice Palace” in Chicago. There, the haughty madam reluctantly took her in because she possessed youth, good looks, and manners that “might” be transformed into an appropriately elegant employee of a sporting resort.

**NOTE: Madeleine?!**

#### END PAGE 87

## BEGIN PAGE 88

"Frequently called Mother by her employees, she learned to placate their worries and help them solve their problems. . . .

She was, in fact, both friend *and* exploiter of her "girls."

**NOTE: [?] was prostitution**

To maintain a fresh supply of prostitutes, madams offered good commissions to procurers to replenish their house. Patterned after some of the famous European and British brothels of the nineteenth century, some American parlor houses specialized in the defloration of young virgins, flogging, and assorted sexual activities and never enumerated because investigators found them to be too "lewd" to discuss.

## END PAGE 88

## BEGIN PAGE 89

The madame said it cost her **several thousand dollars** to furnish that one room.

**Lulu White** became synonymous with high-priced parlor houses. Born on a farm in Selma, Alabama, this black woman passed herself off as a "West Indian" in Storyville society. Her famous "Mahogany Hall" became one of the most notorious and expensive sporting houses in New Orleans. Unfortunately, she permitted herself to become involved with a "fancy man" who disappeared to Hollywood with her savings of \$150,000.

**Josie Arlington** (born Mary Deubler). . . .

After managing a low-priced house characterized by constant brawling, she parlayed her talents into the establishment of "The Arlington" on Basin Street, with the intention of creating the grandest bordello in the district. During the last years of her life, Josie Arlington built herself a red marble tomb with a cross on the back and a statue of a kneeling woman whose arms are filled with flowers. In front of the doors of the tomb stands a "beautifully executed statue of a young girl. . . in an attitude of knocking at the door." Legend has it that the statuary was to symbolize that Josie Arlington had never permitted a virgin to be ruined in her house.

**... the Everleigh sisters** in Chicago. . . .

During the 1898 Trans Mississippi Exposition, they opened their first brothel and then moved their business to Chicago. The Everleigh Club became one of the most exclusive sporting clubs in the nation. The club boasted a fifty-dollar entrance fee and required a formal calling card or letter of introduction.

(split page 89/90)

## END PAGE 89

## BEGIN PAGE 90

As the infamous San Francisco madam Sally Stanford was later to remark about her profession, “It doesn’t take much to produce a good merchant of cash-and-carry love; just courage, an infinite capacity for perpetual suspicion, stamina on a 24-hour-a-day basis, the deathless conviction that the customer is always wrong, a fair knowledge of first and second aid, do-it-yourself gynecology, judo—and a tremendous sense of humor.”

In describing a madam who catered to a **prairie clientele in Canada**, one male customer commented that

*Pearl Miller was easily the most successful whore Calgary ever had. I think her secret of success was that she ran a clean and happy joint. She really acted more like a hostess than a whore. You know, she’d visit you, have a drink with you though I never saw her drunk. She kept her eye on her girls and tried to run a real nice place where you like to return. If you didn’t think where you were, you could easily imagine you were in a boarding parlor with ordinary lodgers, with Pearl being the landlady looking after things.*

One madam in Chicago. . . . Catering to an upper-class clientele, she charged five dollars for a typical visit and seven or ten dollars for extra services.

## END PAGE 90

## BEGIN PAGE 91

*[Referring to the madam above in Chicago]. . .* with her annual salary of six thousand to seven thousand dollars.

In her published Memoirs of her life as a successful madam, **Pauline Tabor**. . . .

. . . **in fact, the desire for future respectability mingles with a genuine disgust for society’s sexual purists.** As the irrepressible Sally Stanford noted in her autobiography, “Madaming is the sort of thing that happens to you, like getting a battlefield commission or becoming the Dean of Women at Stanford University. But I have never been the least bit touchy or sensitive about it. . . never. Many are called, I always say, but few are chosen; and for me it has been a steppingstone to bigger and more profitable things.

*[referring again to Pauline Tabor]* Explaining her occupation as a Madam in Bowling Green, Kentucky, Tabor wrote; “To compound such felonies against society’s code of ladylike behavior, I was a mercenary. I was a sex merchant for the same basic reason that motivated

other people to peddle pills, groceries, clothing, toys, cars and all manner of their wares—to make money and acquire the better things of life.”

“The girl must be kept gay and attractive. . . . she must smile and laugh and sing and dance or she becomes a ‘has been.’” one Storyville prostitute recalled greeting each customer with some exclamation of affection: “‘My you so han’some, why you no come before,’ I say ‘you jus’ my type.’ T’ings like dat day don’ mean nawthing, be de man like dees, hah?”

A prostitute in such an exclusive sporting house was supposed to be an accomplished actress, demonstrating at every instant the customer’s irresistibility through dramatic declarations of passion and excitement. Even the language of the trade, “turning a trick,” reflected the hoax that the prostitute was perpetuating on the customer.

**END PAGE 91**

**BEGIN PAGE 92**

“I lay on de bed, and he do what he want. Ees nothing, you know—maybe wan, two minutes. Si! I can make heem do eet queeker, but mo’ all de time eet ees not necessary. He ees quick by himself.” Apparently not all customers found such mechanical sex, without an aura of fantasy and illusion, very satisfactory. One wealthy gentleman who frequented Storyville’s high-priced houses for over twelve years and also had visited brothels all over the world, concluded that American prostitutes lacked all pretense at creating sexual fantasies. “I consider the quality of sex in Storyville,” he sniffed “to constitute an indictment against the American man’s taste and degree of civilization.” In comparison with American prostitutes, he continued,

*foreign whores somehow managed to feign an attitude that leads you to believe, at least for the moment of intercourse, that you have their attention and that they are interested in seeing that you have a pleasant time. Well they never do it for free, they always seem just a little surprised when you give them the money. . . as though they’d forgotten about this crass detail. They have, how shall I describe it, pride in their workmanship. Some at times show a certain art consciousness, as though in recognition of the possibilities of the development of substantial aesthetic qualities in sexual congress.*

**NOTE: the act itself versus in Europe.**

Descriptions of middle-class establishments are rare; investigators apparently found the extremes of high-priced parlor houses and low-priced tenement houses more interesting to investigate. One prostitute described the informal ambiance of such middle-class joints that catered to the average working man. “The prostitutes,” she wrote,

*sat around in their underwear or wrappers, drank beer, joshed a lot in country talk, felt at home with the simple horny guests that came to them with dusty*

*shoes and derbys. There was a morality about these places that mirrored the words of the whores and their guests. They were Mama and Papa fuckers, doing it mostly the straight and traditional American way, as they had been raised. Frenching was talked and joked about, but rarely asked for or offered. The Italian way, entry through the rear, was kind of a joke carried over from farm boys experimenting on themselves and each other, considered a sign of depraved city sinning. Memories of Bible lessons and sermons on Babylon and hellfire from their country churches was still there in the middle class whorehouse.*

(split between 92/93)

**END PAGE 92**

**BEGIN PAGE 93**

. . .the madams and most of the prostitutes in the small towns were of “native stock, corn-fed **Kansas** girls and hustlers who had come from broken down farms and small ranches. Some had been deserted by a railroad brakeman or boss carpenter, who moved on, leaving them with no rent money or food.” If a prostitute had real ambition, she left such towns for the large cities to apply for work in the high-priced brothels.

. . .the middle-class whorehouses cater to the needs of “all those who figured the cost of their spending. . . . The clerk, the wagon husky, the logger, the husband who wasn't getting it properly at home. . . he could come to have his ashes hauled, his Wick dipped—both expressions popular in those middle-class joints.” Although many of the customers may have asked for sexual practices refused to them at home, “the idea of flogging for fun, or being stomped on by high heels, or a daisy chain in a middle class whore house was like spitting on the flag or drawing a mustache on Martha Washington's picture.”

(split between 93/94)

**END PAGE 93**

**BEGIN PAGE 94**

. . .low-priced prostitution. In New York, one cheap joint was described as follows:

*A large wooden bench was placed against the wall of the receiving parlor. Business was very brisk at the time the investigator entered. The bench was full of customers crowded close together, while others, who could not be accommodated with seats, stood about the room. At the foot of the stairs which lead to the bedroom above, a man was stationed. Every time a visitor came groping his way down the stairs, the businesslike and aggressive announcer would cry out, “Next!” At the word, the man sitting on the end of the bench nearest the stairs arose and passed up. As he*

*did so, the men on the bench moved along and one of the men who was standing took the vacant seat.*

Unlike the pretentious wealth exhibited in the best parlor houses or the sturdy, comfortable atmosphere of a medium-priced house, most low-priced tenements and cribs contained a few old leather couches in a small receiving room. The rooms were “dirty, the loose creaking floors [were] covered with matting which [was] gradually rotting away, the ceilings [were] low, the windows small, the air heavy and filled with foul odors. . . the atmosphere heavy with odors of tobacco and perfumes, mingled with fumes of medicine and cheap disinfectants.”

A “cowyard whorehouse” was a three- or four-story tenement with long halls lined with cubicles or closets. Sometimes as many as 250 women crowded into these separate small cubicles. “Crib whores,” mostly Chinese and black women, also worked in small shacks where they were virtual prisoners of the man who stationed himself in the front reception room. In the back, the prostitute worked in a small room surrounded by a basin, a washstand, and a small bed with a strip of oil cloth at the end of it. For “two bits” the customer was briefly washed and permitted to take off only his shoes.

As Sally Stanford noted in her autobiography,

*I learned that men came to a place such as mine not for sex but for a whole batch of other reasons; to talk about their troubles, their wives' infidelities; to sleep off a drunk; to find out if there were any new wrinkles; to get laughs from jokes that were clinkers elsewhere; to find sweethearts and even wives; to escape from the cops; to get advice on the cure of social diseases; and some to get a good cup of coffee and a plate of ham and eggs when everything else was closed.*

(split between page 94/95)

**END PAGE 94**

**BEGIN PAGE 95**

Brought by his father to Lulu White's “Mahogany Hall,” one “gentleman of means” recalled his first sexual encounter. . .

*. . . She wore a red wig that hardly pretended to be natural in color. . . Lulu was obviously Negro. Her efforts to appear cultured or quite ludicrous. Her quick smile was as fake as the color of her wig.*

**[referring to the same kid above]** His actual experience, however, revealed the disillusioning fact that he had bought the sexual services of a woman who, justifiably, cared nothing about him:



The young lady, apart from a certain studied theatricality, was just as ill-informed and gauche as she could be. She led me upstairs to a bed-room of medium-size, dominated by a fourposter bed, quite dusty looking— the drapes, I mean. She got out of her clothes and invited me to do the same. She approached and seized my genital organ in one hand, wringing it in such a way as to determine whether or not I had the gonorrhea. She did this particular operation with more knowledge and skill than she did anything else before or after. I was not taking aback, because I had already heard about this part of the procedure from many people, including my father. She washed me with some foul-smelling disinfectant and laid down on the bed, inviting me to mount her. This I proceeded to do, and the mechanical procedure that followed endured for perhaps a minute. She then washed me and herself again, politely asked me if there would be anything else, and when I thanked her and said no, she asked for ten dollars. I apologized, telling her I didn't know whether the money was paid to the girl or to some cashier at the close of the evening. Back in the parlor, I found my father still conversing with Lulu.

(quote split between 95/96)

**END PAGE 95**

**BEGIN PAGE 96**

**[Al Rose, a working man, quoted]** . . . “as a wage laborer I couldn't afford those luxury places on Basin Street. . . . the real truth is, though, that an evening at any house, no matter what the going rate was reported to be, it always cost you as much as you had in your pocket.”

[Al Rose, quoted]

You wouldn't believe how fast these girls could get their clothes off. Usually they leave on their stockings and earrings, things like that. A man usually took off his trousers and shoes. New girls didn't give you a second to catch your breath before they'd be all over you trying to get you to heat up and go off as soon as possible. . . . When it came to the actual act, though, the routine was standard. . . . I think the girls could diagnose clap better than doctors at the time. She'd have a way of squeezing it that, if there was anything in there, she'd find it. Then she'd wash it off with a clean washcloth. She lay on her back and get you on top of her so fast, you wouldn't even know you'd come up there on your own power. She'd grind so that you almost felt like you had nothing to do with it. Well, after that, she had you. She could make it get off as quickly as she wanted to . . . and she didn't waste any time, I'll tell you. . . . I'd say that the whole thing, from the time you got in the room until the time you came didn't take three minutes.

Then she'd wash you off again, and herself. Then she'd get dressed, without even looking at you . . . you could see she was already thinking about nothing but getting downstairs. But she'd be smiling, though, as if everything was

just fine and she had a good time. . . . In fact, from the time you'd come in the front door of the house until you'd be back out on the banquette hardly even took more than fifteen minutes.

I don't mean that I thought the girls had cheated me, but I always had the feeling afterwards that life had cheated me. I always had the feeling that there must be something—more fun, you know. . . . Of course, they drain me off. I'd be depleted and enervated—but I never had the feeling of satisfaction that I was always looking for. The truth is that a man wants something more from a woman than that—and it's not easy to find even outside of district. Most all the married women you run across are just a different kind of whore. But a man keeps looking for somebody he can just feel—well, like he isn't always *alone*.

(quote continues 96/97)

**END PAGE 96**

**BEGIN PAGE 97**

. . . Male customers since the 1930s, has determined that whereas only ten percent of men in the thirties asked for any sexual activity other than “straight” relations, nearly nine out of ten male customers in the 1960s requested oral sex or “half-and-half,” a combination of oral and straight sex.

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**BEGIN PAGE 98**

These problems were most severe for Street Walkers and women working and low-class dives and cribs. . . . Their inadequate and precarious means of support expose them, more than other prostitutes, to the medical problems most common to the poor: tuberculosis, tonsillar infection, and malnutrition. Crib prostitutes also saw more than the four or five customers that high-priced prostitutes entertained in one evening. the squalor of the surroundings, combined with the quality of the customers she served (from thirteen to thirty), made the low-class prostitute's work an intolerable, inhumane, and debilitating experience.

. . . some prostitutes used morphine. . . . Although drug addiction among prostitutes did not receive a great deal of attention, it was probably more prevalent than realized; when arrested, many imprisoned prostitutes suddenly became seized with violent withdrawal symptoms. One female worker with prostitutes noted that prostitutes and workhouses smuggled and morphine or cocaine and pies, oranges, and chewing gum.

At Bedford Reformatory, 5.7 percent of 647 prostitutes were found to be using drugs. The superintendent of police of Philadelphia, however, estimated that closer to 50 percent of prostitutes working in the districts used drugs. The use of cocaine—since its discovery twenty years before as a surgical anesthetic—had spread too many criminal subcultures. One rescue

worker stated that 7 out of 229 prostitutes she had encountered were “confirmed opium users.” When brothels were closed, some municipal reformers noted that pimps began selling opium and cocaine to recoup their losses  
(split page 98/99)

**END PAGE 98**

**BEGIN PAGE 99**

**Maimie Pinzer** recalled that she, too, had been addicted to “m\_\_\_\_\_.”

Estimates of infected prostitutes varied widely. One female reformer guessed that forty thousand prostitutes died every year as the result of venereal infection. In one New York study, **20.56 percent** had clinical manifestations of venereal disease. After testing, however, only **10 percent** were actually found to be infected. One writer estimated that **60 to 70 percent** of all active prostitutes eventually became infected while plying their trade. Another study at Bedford Hills of 200 prostitutes revealed that only **13.5 percent** of prostitutes were free from venereal disease. Yet another study concluded that **74 percent** of active prostitutes in San Francisco tested by the new Wasserman laboratory procedure were found to be infected.

Although contemporaries sexual handbook still described women's fertile period as during and after menstruation, prostitutes were apparently aware of the accurate female fertility cycle and used such well-known contraceptive methods as “**packing with sponges**” and **douching**. . . . “baby farm” where an older woman, sometimes a former prostitute, took care of prostitutes’ children. Prostitutes also had access to quack doctors, who parasitically lift off the Women's medical problems. Pharmacists and doctors provided a “black pill which, if taken for three days and with hot baths, usually brought a girl around.” All those statistics are unavailable, it is likely that the many deaths associated with prostitution might have resulted from some of the medicines and procedures used for abortion. Another gynecological problem that prostitutes may have experienced was chronic pelvic congestion, caused by excessive sexual intercourse without orgasm, and uncomfortable condition for which prostitutes now frequently seek medical help.

**NOTE: abortion**

**Suicide** was also associated with prostitution.

The prevalence of suicide among prostitutes is difficult to determine. One study of prostitutes working in brothels found that 11 percent of the women had attempted suicide at least one time.

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**BEGIN PAGE 100**

Another major occupational hazard for prostitutes with their own **aging**.

Without any training or skills, she might at best marry; at worst, she might be forced into the fifty-cent houses or into streetwalking, where older and less attractive women finally plied their trade.

[partial quote from Maimie Pinzer]

. . . I can recall hundreds of times when I would meet a man—son of “nice” people—& he, thinking to come down to the level of a girl of my sort would either express himself coarsely or in language that would not be considered good English by “nice” people—and I would take great pleasure in correcting him, thinking to show him that it wasn't necessary to come down— I would come up. . .

Maimie. . . maintained a rather cynical attitude word conventional definition of respectability. “Respectability,” she realistically noted, “too often means a cheap room with cheap surroundings.” . . . “I just cannot be moral enough to see where drudgery is better then a life of lazy vice.” . . . “I am absolutely honest with you. . . . I can't stand this any longer. It is a struggle each day.” . . . “My trouble,” she described, “is that I am a working girl who has lived like a ‘lady’ and it's hard to curb my desires and live as the working girl should.”  
(split between page 100/101)

**END PAGE 100**

**BEGIN PAGE 101**

In her memoirs, Pauline Tabor most articulately described the process of acculturation which led her from a respectable background to owning a successful brothel.

Fortunately, the human spirit is not easily destroyed. It instinctively builds defenses against attack. In my case, I soon developed protective armor of cynicism about my fellow man. The once naive Pauline Tabor, like an old soldier, just faded away. She was replaced by a hard-nosed, cash-on-the-line madam who operated on the philosophy that all God's children have feet of clay. That philosophy, I might add, was firmly found it on the knowledge that many of the gentleman who snubbed me and public were patrons of my house; that many of the public officials who cried out the loudest against Vice were the first and line to accept supposedly soiled money in return for closing their eyes to the vice against which they created; that many of the respectable ladies who scorned me and my profession were failures as wives, frigid females whose sex-starved husbands turned up at my door to buy an illusion of love and human warmth they couldn't find in their own homes. So in time I learned to ignore the barbs of a disapproving society, and I was able to laugh all the way to the bank.

*[below about a young girl in Storyville, daughter of a prostitute]*

Growing up in a cheap brothel, she learned before five how to prepare opium and how to wash off her mother's clients. At seven, she began performing sexual acts for clients. Soon after, her virginity was auctioned off for \$7.75. Later, she became a waitress, continued to turn a few tricks, and eventually married. When asked how she viewed her early life, however, she breezily replied, "I ain't ashamed of what I did, because I didn't have much to do with it." She then went on to explain what seemed to be a typical attitude of many prostitutes: "I know it'd be good if I could say how awful it was and like crime don't pay, but to me it seems just like anything else—like a kid whose father owns a grocery store. He helps him in the store. Well my mother didn't sell groceries."

**NOTE: wow ):**

**END PAGE 101**

**BEGIN PAGE 102**

*[from a daughter of former black slaves]*

When asked when she had first started having sexual relations with men, she replied "Shit! I don't know when I started. I've been fucking from before I can remember. Shit yes! Wit my ol' man, wit my brother, wit d' kids in da street."

One vital means of support which helped prostitutes face any stigma or brutality they encountered in their trade with the **subculture** of prostitution itself.

Judging from past and present evidence, it is likely that the subculture of prostitution offered valuable ways of helping women to defend against social devaluation. Typically, prostitutes managed maintained an attitude of defensive superiority toward "respectable" members of the rest of society: they joked about the "charity girls" who freely gave away sexual favors, and they derided the "respectable" wives of their customers. In particular, they expressed contempt for the "respectable" domestic and factory workers who worked for subsistence pay, endured poor working conditions, and often had to submit to sexual harassment by their bosses. Most frequently, they reserved their worst epithets for the "nosy" reformers who wanted to "save" prostitutes by destroying their means of support and running them out of town.

*[referring to name change examples] ... "Violet" or "Sugarplum."*

. . . the change of name was a means of bonding to a subculture considered deviant and degraded by the dominant culture. . . . It was as if a new name (as in a nunnery) made a new claim on the individual's loyalties to her passed through the purposeful elimination of an older identity.

Interestingly, the new name never included a surname. . . .

**NOTE: not true**

**END PAGE 102**

**BEGIN PAGE 103**

[Maimie Pinzer's alter ego] . . . "Mimi," on which she blamed her sporting life."

**END PAGE 103**

**BEGIN PAGE 104**

It is clear that madams viewed lesbian relationships among prostitutes as a rather natural and common occurrence and worried about it only when personal jealousies or unhappiness threatened to disrupt the work routine.

Given the occasional demands for women to turn "lesbian tricks," it may be that prostitutes early learned to explore their sexuality as a result of customers' requests.

Contemporary research indicates that the stories and humor that prostitutes share with one another emphasize the frailties and inadequacies of their customers.

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**BEGIN PAGE 105**

"At Madame C's," she wrote, "it was considered bad luck for a man to come in and then leave without spending money. To remove the curse from the house it was the custom for the girl who let him out of the door to spit on his back."

Other superstitions included injunctions against using one's own name and bringing a cat inside a brothel. Placing wine on the sidewalk or readjusting a wall mirror supposedly brought more customers. If a woman was rejected by the first evening's customer, her luck was certain to be bad for the near future. If a woman performed fellatio, bad teeth or a rotten stomach would result if she swallowed any sperm.

*Red-light*, For example, derived from the early railroad days in Kansas City, when a brakeman, who carried a red lantern signal lamp, would hang it outside the whorehouse while engaged inside. The dispatcher then knew where to find the brakeman, as well as any other member of the train's crew, when the train was ready to pull out. The origin of *hooker* was attributed to the many women who became camp followers in General Hooker's army during the Civil War.

Prostitutes also shared the daily worries and problems they faced as roommates living in the same house. Recalling the days of running an illegal brothel during the thirties, Pauline Tabor emphasized that “a madam and her girls are cut off from the normal society in which they once moved. . . . As a result, they tend to adopt each other as a family. Although they indulge in gossip, petty jealousies, and quarrels, they develop a sense of loyalty and concern for one another's problems—a tolerant acceptance of human faults which sometimes even extends to the customers they serve.” The myth of the “whore with a golden heart” probably originated not from what prostitutes did for men, but what they did for one another. When a woman could not pay for her child care at a baby farm, the other women chipped in to help her out. When one prostitute became pregnant and lost her baby, the women surrounded her with all the nurturance “of her own sisters and mother.” In effect, women living together could, under certain conditions, create a surrogate family life in which both deep caring and fights sustained and bonded the entire group together.

. . . prostitutes did develop a rather widespread reputation for generously tipping other workers such as Maids or bartenders, taking in stray dogs, with whom they developed extremely close and loving ties, and acting like the mythical “whore with a golden heart.”

**END PAGE 105**

**BEGIN PAGE 106**

Although some high-priced prostitutes tried to dress like other wealthy women, it has long been a tradition for prostitutes to identify their trade by wearing special attire. (Interestingly, many of the aspects of “whorish” appearance have inevitably become part of “respectable” women's appearance: make-up, wigs, drawers, shaving of bodily hair, Boots, short skirts, etc.) (split between page 106/107)

**END PAGE 106**

**BEGIN PAGE 107**

As one young prostitute explained these class differences, “The social gulf between the first-class courtesan and those who have become the dregs of prostitution is as great as the gulf between the sheltered woman in her home and the streetwalker.”

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The relationships that some prostitutes in the larger cities formed with pimp mirrored in an exaggerated form some of that heterosexual conventionality. Such relationships posed a great problem, however—pimp domination over streetwalkers or prostitute attached to saloons was a particular horror of prostitution. Albeit small by today's numbers, the growing group of

pimps had already begun to develop their own particular culture: they gathered in gambling resorts during the evening while their women “worked the streets or saloon,” and maintained tyrannical and brutal control over the women. “It is an unwritten law among these men,” explains the Rockefeller Commission, “that the authority of the individual over the woman or women controlled by him is unquestioned by his associates to whatever extreme it may be carried.”

“Arrei,” a former prostitute, explained, “Well shit, you know how ‘tis wide dese heah who’s. Evvy one of dem got a manshe give all her money. I ain’t no diffen’ I give *mah* man mah money. One time I buy gos back suit, an’you know what he do? He punch me in d’head an’tell me he don’need no suit he need money. Aft’dat I jes give him mah money. Ah doan know why. Ah jest give him mah money.”

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**BEGIN PAGE 109**

Emma Goldman noted, “It is not the cadet that makes the prostitute. It is our sham and hypocrisy that creates both the prostitute and the cadet. . . . Why is the cadet more criminal or a greater menace to society than the owners of department stores and factories, who grow fat on the sweat of their victims, only to drive them into the street?”

The story of a former cadet named Marc. . . . born on . . . Dauphine Street in the French Quarter. . . . Marc found economic security and respectability. He expressed no regrets: “I got this far. I got a fine house with a big yard. . . . I don’t care that I made mine pimpin’. How was I gonna make it, selling papers? I was in business like anybody else, and I run it good.”

**END PAGE 109**

**BEGIN PAGE 110**

Due to a double standard of sexual morality, the prostitute suffered great ostracism and brutality, while the pimp parasitically lived off her earnings.

**END PAGE 110**

**—SKIP PAGE 111**

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## **CHAPTER 7**

### **WHITE SLAVERY: MYTH OR REALITY?**



## **BEGIN PAGE 112**

Why did women enter prostitution? During the early years of the twentieth century, when social scientific studies fired the country's imagination, many reformers tried to answer this question by gathering evidence on economic and social factors: the low wages paid to women in the labor force; the generational conflict between children and parents of immigrant families; the crowded, unsanitary, and emotionally explosive conditions under which the poor lived; and the diseases, alcoholism, and chronic unemployment that wrecked such homes. Others attempted to link prostitution to inherited strains of physical or mental degeneracy.

Alongside these theories, however, another explanation—that hundreds of thousands of women were being captured and sold into prostitution as white slaves—was gaining increasing public attention and causing a nationwide panic that reached its height during the years 1911-15.

Denial of white slavery's existence today is accompanied by a denial of its existence in the past. Most historians have assumed that the white slavery described by reformers of the Progressive Era was merely a myth that expressed certain tensions, fears, and conflicts in American society.

To Progressives, *white slavery* and its most specific sense meant the selling of women's bodies (the "traffic in women") for the purposes of prostitution.  
(quote begins between page 112-113)

## **END PAGE 112**

## **BEGIN PAGE 113**

Definitions often became blurred, however, and one cannot always be sure whether reformers or journalists were describing sexual *slavery*, in which a woman was bought, coerced into prostitution, and held against her will, or forms of prostitution in which a woman did in fact exercise some degree of choice.

. . . to claim, as authors of white slave narratives did, but between 40 and 100 percent of prostitutes in the United States were white slaves.

. . . imagine a continuum along which varying degrees of force were used to bring a woman into prostitution and keep her there.

## **END PAGE 113**

## **BEGIN PAGE 114**

The very absence of the subject of white slavery from our standard historical texts further undermines The credibility of its historical or contemporary reality. (It is important to

remember, however, that historians have long neglected many other significant aspects of the female historical experience.)

a tendency to deny the historical and current reality of male violence against women and to hold women responsible for their own victimization. . . is also at work in the reluctance to acknowledge the reality of forced prostitution.

One suffragist, for example, advised her female audience not to worry about exaggerating stories that dealt with white slavery. "Remember, ladies," she warned, "it is more important to be aroused than to be accurate. Apathy is more of a crime than exaggeration in dealing with this subject."

. . . films such as *Traffic in Souls*. . .

. . . such episodes as a policeman finding a note, "Help me—I am held captive as a white slave,"—supposedly written by a raped and drugged young white slave held in a brothel.

Reginald Kauffman. . . his book *The House of Bondage*. One of his typical stories describes a girl who arrives in a large city and is drugged by a "thickly accented German Jew." . . . (embellished with pornographic details). . . .

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[warning posters read] "Danger! Mothers beware! Sixty thousand innocent girls wanted to take the place of sixty thousand white slaves who will die this year in the United States."

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**BEGIN PAGE 116**

Nor did the term *white slave* originate in the United States. Rather, factory workers first used this term during the early industrial era in England, and later in America, to describe their "slavery" to wages and Industrial discipline.

While fighting the Contagious Diseases Act in the 1880s, Josephine Butler also discovered a traffic in women from London to Brussels.

In 1885, white slavery received widespread publicity when British reformer Williams Stead scandalized England with an article he penned in the *Pall Mall Gazette* titled "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon." Having infiltrated fashionable brothels, Stead became enraged by the traffic in young girls. In order to prove that a child could easily be purchased for white slavery in Great Britain, Stead arranged to buy a thirteen year old girl for service "in a nice

home.” Her parents, he later assured his readers, had understood the immoral purpose behind his offer and had been paid a pound for their daughter. The result was that Stead was arrested and imprisoned for three months for his involvement in the exposé.

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. . . “new abolitionism” and the fight against white slavery. *Union Signal*, the official organ of the W.C.T.U., published a shocking account of the white slave trade that had invaded the lumber camps of Wisconsin and Michigan.

By 1902, recognition of the traffic and women had become so widespread that France invited other nations to an international congress for the suppression of the white slave trade. A treaty was formulated that bound member nations to suppress the traffic in women. In May 1904, a majority of the nations signed the treaty; the agreement was ratified by the United States in 1905 and officially proclaimed by President Roosevelt in 1908. Until the revised immigration law of 1907, the Mann Act of 1911, and the various states’ white slave act, however, American authorities did not seriously interfere with the flow of white slavery.

Former abolitionists, who had rejoiced at the end of black slavery, now joined forces with “social purity” reformers to battle the new slavery.

E.W. Sims, U.S. district attorney, agreed that white slavery constituted real slavery. Stanley Finch, chief of the Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice, even asked Congress to accept the slavery amendment in the Constitution as the basis for legislation against white slave trade. Clifford Roe, the fiery US district attorney of Chicago who was hailed as the William Lloyd Garrison of the anti-prostitution movement, never wavered in his belief that the white slave trade posed a serious threat to women. “Chicago,” he dramatically declared,

at last has waked up to a realization of the fact that actual slavery that deals in human flesh and blood as a marketable commodity exists and terrible magnitude in the city today. It is slavery, real slavery, that we are fighting. The term “white slave” isn't a misnomer or sensational term conjured up by sensational newspapers. The words describe what they stand for. The white slave of Chicago is a slave as much as the Negro was before the Civil War, as the African is in the district's at the Congo, as much as any people are slaves who are owned, flesh and bone, body and soul, by another person, and who can be sold at any time and place and for any price at that person's will. That is what slavery is, and that is the condition of hundreds, yes, of thousands of girls in Chicago at present.

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. . . the Minneapolis Vice commission concluded that “nearly every city is infested with its agents and everywhere these connect themselves with corrupt ward politicians and more secretly with men higher up who give them police protection or immunity in exchange for votes.”

Moreover, the statistical records kept by the Bureau of Immigration and other federal agencies, which described deportations and arrests for white slave trade activity, were not begun until after white slavery had received wide publicity.

For example, from June 1910 to January 1915, 1,057 persons were convicted of white slavery in the United States.

Thus, white slave fighters argued that American women received a warm welcome and a high price in cities of the Orient; East European girls found themselves installed in parts of South America; and French women ended their journey as high-priced prostitutes in the fancy parlor houses of American vice districts.

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**BEGIN PAGE 119**

New York City. . . . San Francisco, San Antonio, Cleveland, Boston, and Chicago. Montreal and Seattle were also cited as common ports of entry.

A majority of international procurers, it was surmised, were of French, German, and Polish origin. . . . reformers often pointed to Jews and Italians as the primary “foreign” villains who recruited young girls into prostitution. In fact, however, of men convicted under the Mann Act, 72.5 percent were native-born Americans, 11.5 percent were Italians, and 3.5 percent were Russians.

“I can assure you,” one correspondent wrote, “that I have found a woman the likes of whom you can never find; young, beautiful and who fully decided to leave. You can well understand I gave them a song and dance. I will send you her photograph. Her beautiful teeth alone are worth a million.”

Procurers took great pains to teach women how to answer the questions that customs officials would ask them. At other times, procurers met boats of arriving immigrants and carefully searched for young women who entered the country without family. Offers of employment and shelter would be made. However a young woman was procured, she would find herself sold to the owner of a house of prostitution.

(split between pages 119/120)

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**BEGIN PAGE 120**

*[testimony of a French girl at a Seattle trial recounting her life from Paris to arrest in US]*

When I was employed in a delicatessen store two men called to buy something and left. I met them again on the street sometime later, and they asked to be allowed to accompany me home, which I refused. Next time they met me they took me to a cafe and treated me. They told me they knew a man who was looking for girls to do some kind of work which paid better money than I was getting at the store, but they would not tell me what kind of work it was. They also told me that the man was very rich and asked me how I would like to marry a rich man. . . . Later they sent me a message to come to a certain place on the street, saying they had something for me. After my work was done I went to the designated place and met three men.. the two I had met before and a third one, who was Emil Chaillet. . . . He induced me to go with him and stay with him, promising to make me very happy. I asked him how he would make me so happy, and he told me he would marry me, so I went to the hotel and stayed with him ever since. I was not even allowed to go back for my clothes or let anyone know where I was.

At first he treated me very kindly for about a month while I lived with him; then he told me he would put me in a place where I could make plenty of money, but did not say how. He told me that we were going to America, but I did not know where.

We left Paris. . . . I traveled with him as his wife. . . .

The first time he told me about the kind of business I was to do was on the boat from Liverpool, but I was so young—I was only seventeen—I did not understand what it meant. He explained about it; how they lived in houses of prostitution; but I had no idea about what it really meant, even after his explanation. I was helpless. I could not tell my misfortune to anybody. I was afraid he might do me some harm. When we arrived at Montreal we stayed there one day and then he placed me in a house of prostitution. . . . I stayed there seven months. . . . He compelled me to give him every cent of my earnings. . . Which I had to do, as I was very much afraid of him. He wants blackened my eyes in Montreal because I went to the theater with another girl and did not practice prostitution. . . .

He told me he was taking me to Seattle to practice prostitution, as the exposition was on there and that I could make as much money there as in Fairbanks by prostitution and. . . we were arrested at Tacoma.

I am very anxious to return to my father and mother and my sister. This man, Emil Chaillet,. . . or whatever his name is, actually kidnapped me. I had no idea what awaited me. The man The Men who first met me actually sold me to Chaillet, as he later told me himself that he gave them some money for bringing me to him. . . . Since Chaillet put me in a house

of prostitution at Montreal I have earned more than \$2,000, but he kept all that money; he forced me to give the money to him.

(quote finishes on page 121)

**END PAGE 120**

**BEGIN PAGE 121**

As the immigration commission pointed out. . . "The alien woman," they emphasized, "is ignorant of the language of the country, knows nothing beyond a few blocks of the city where she lives, has usually no money, and no knowledge of the rescue homes and institutions which might help her."

. . . [In the] United states, Chinese and Japanese women probably suffered the cruelest treatment and enslavement. In part, this resulted from the strong antagonism against Asians prevalent on the West Coast.

Around 1854, six-hundred women were imported from China by the Hip-Yee Tong. Finding Chinese women for importation was not a difficult task. The extreme impoverishment and destitution among families made daughters a serious liability and prerevolutionary China. Just as some parents actually broke their children's limbs to seek charity, certain families welcomed Promises of marriage and payment for their daughters, even when they suspected that the girls might be sold as concubines within China.

The number of Chinese prostitutes on the West Coast apparently so offended California's that the importation of Chinese women for "immoral purposes" was outlawed in California in 1870. After the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, white slavers had to devise new means of importing Chinese women into the United States for prostitution. Bribing or blackmailing immigration officials were some of the "business methods" commonly used. Due to the difficulty of securing passage for such women, the prices of Chinese white slaves skyrocketed.

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**BEGIN PAGE 122**

[recount of a Chinese girl whose mother made arrangements for her to be married in a far away city, instead a procurer sent her to the United States.]

"One thousand five hundred and thirty dollars were paid for me," the girl later recalled, "I saw the money paid and I. . . was placed in her den. They forced me to do their bidding, but I cried and resisted. I did not want to live this life. They starved me for days, tying me where food was almost in reach of me. . . then they beat me time after time and threatened to kill me if I did not behave right."

. . . “yellow” slavery.

. . . Dupont Street in San Francisco.

Occasionally, when these girls managed to escape, members of tongs, or of the white slave trade, spread throughout Northern California, searching for runaway slaves and returning them to their “owners.”

**END PAGE 122**

**BEGIN PAGE 123**

Although the importance of foreign girls and women probably accounted for only a small percentage of white slavery in the United States, the international traffic in women received an inordinate amount of publicity. . . . Such traffic could be dismissed as a problem of uncontrolled immigration. If only immigration laws would exclude more foreigners, many Americans reasoned, the international white slave trade would cease to be an *American* problem.

In New York City alone, 1,439 girls disappeared in one year. Police estimated that 20 percent of the girls (ages fourteen to seventeen) reported missing were never seen again. The very fact that Americans began noting the disappearance of young female runaways attests to the probable generational conflict between daughters and families or to the new Independence that some women sought away from their families.

Both reformers and prostitutes asserted that brothel owners and procurers resorted to coercion when insufficient numbers of voluntary prostitutes were available. Former prostitutes told federal agents that an innocent young girl was viewed as particularly desirable because the “house” did not have to share her earnings with a pimp. Proprietors of brothels would pay a procurer up to one thousand dollars for such an attractive and potentially profitable “item.”

Of great concern to Americans obsessed with monopolies was whether a nationally organized traffic in women existed.

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. . . no evidence of a *formal* organization of white slavers.

. . . two of whom were from a “black and tan” dealer.

. . . public never received. . . conclusions of the Rockefeller Grand Jury. A delayed statement released to the Press implied that the jury had found no evidence of organized traffic in women. The next day, June 29th, 1910, newspapers across the United States carried

misleading stories indicating that no evidence of white slavery had been discovered. As a result, both the American public and future historians were seriously misled. Those attempting to discredit the idea of white slavery would henceforth cite the newspaper report of the jury's conclusions and dismiss other accounts as sensationalism and hysteria.  
(quote concludes on page 125)

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Between 1910 and 1913, 337 convictions were obtained in cases involving white slavery, and 35 cases ended in a quittals. Granted that some of these cases may have involved blackmail against a man and that other cases may have simply reflected a young woman's willingness to cross state lines with a man, there is nevertheless strong evidence of a white slave trade and its operations.

A procure would be paid for his efforts, according to the woman's age and attractiveness, with one fixed sum or a percentage of her earnings. . . . False promises of marriage, mock marriages that had no legal status, and deliberate attempts to entangle a woman in financial debt or emotional dependency were some of the most commonly known methods of procurement. . . . were not so different from those used today on contemporary teenage runaways. In Boston, procurers searched court records for the names of young women on probation who might want to leave the jurisdiction and the vigilant eyes of a probation officer. Women procures also searched the charity wards of local hospitals for indignant girls recovering from accidents or illnesses. An offer of employment would be made and the girl would be taken to a house of prostitution.

Women who responded to advertised positions as domestics might be sent to a local sporting house.

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. . . [one woman got work with an agency] To work as a nurse at a sanitarium for elderly people. The "sanitarium" turned out to be a parlor house to which other innocent women had been sent. Another woman, who responded to an advertisement offering employment at as a lady's companion for a European vacation, found herself lured into a wealthy madam's "vice resort." A young woman from Connecticut responded to an advertisement for work and received a letter that provided her with an address to which she might apply. When she entered the building, however, her clothes were seized and she was thoroughly drugged. [citation circled]

US Senate, *Reports of the Immigration Commission*, p. 68; Miner, *Slavery of Prostitution*, p. 55; H.M. Lytle and John Dillon, *From Dancehall to White Slavery*, p. 24; Laidlaw, "Scrapbook," clipping from *Evening Mall*, 1911



Cabdrivers, for example, received commissions from proprietors of vice resorts for delivering unsuspecting female passengers to their building. This practice apparently so scandalized citizens in Chicago that the city council felt compelled to pass an ordinance prohibiting the transportation of any unwilling person in public vehicles to a “house of ill fame.”

Women panderers, posing as concerned social workers...

One male panderer went so far as to drag a married lady from a train into his carriage. Counting on the public's devaluation of the woman's emotionality, and over the woman's hysterical protests, he explained to onlookers that she was only his deranged wife.

. . . “knock out drops,” . . . [drugs to knock a girl out at a bar, to later find they had been] “ruined.”

In their attempts to recruit new prostitutes, however, procure more frequently played upon the specific psychological, social, and economic needs of young women. Italian women, for example, were promised marriage; Jewish women were promised good employment. “If the girl is one of the ‘love sick kind,’” one procurer testified, they pretend they are in love with her, and in most cases, they promised to marry her.”

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For example, a Bertha S. was taken to a parlor house by an Emmanuel Grove and placed there for four weeks. During that time she earned \$400 for him, seeing 30 minutes a day for fifty cents a piece. Later the case came to court when Grove slashed her with a knife because she had appropriated five dollars for badly needed new shoes

in Canada, the *Regina Register* reported in 1909 that a brothel owner had recruited two Polish immigrant girls for housework and then forced them into prostitution. He was sentenced to four years in the penitentiary at hard labor.

Jane Addams worried most about . . . “that a foreign girl who speaks no English. . . .”

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. . . one must still ask *why* they seemed so susceptible to these methods in the first place. It seems inconceivable that all these women could have been as naive as they were portrayed.

What psychological, social, or economic needs caused them to place themselves in danger of being victimized?

In part, their susceptibility stemmed from the same factors that caused some poor women to consider prostitution a better alternative than other problems and options they already faced. . . .

Marriage, moreover, represented both the affectional and economic protection many young women sought in a society that blocked their own independent upward mobility.

Sometimes, as procurers recalled, the other prostitutes and the madam attempted to convince the white slave of the advantages of her position:

There is such an air of camaraderie about the madame that the young girl is usually relieved of her embarrassment and the landlady usually admits that she is the owner of a house where nice men come and pay liberally for their entertainment. That it is possible for the girl to always wear beautiful gowns and have plenty of money, to say nothing of the Dandy time she will have. Then the other girls are brought into the picture and they bring all their persuasive power to bear.

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To prevent a white slave from escaping, the madam or pimp took away her street clothes and money. In exchange, the young woman received flimsy transparent gowns in which she could not enter the street.

Theoretically, a white slave could accumulate enough money to escape or to purchase her freedom. This was exceedingly rare, however, due to the elaborate credit system—much like the sharecropping credit system of the postwar South—employed in most houses. Half of her earnings as a prostitute went to the house. In addition, she had to pay back the fee or commission that her procure had received for her. She was also required to pay exorbitant prices for the jewelry and flimsy gown she was given as part of her costume— often at four times the regular price she would have paid elsewhere.

[a young irish woman was asked why she hadn't escaped]:

Get out! I can't. They make us buy the cheapest rags, and they are charged against us at fabulous prices; they make us change outfits at intervals of two or three weeks, until we are so deeply in debt that there is no hope of ever getting out from under. Then, to make matters worse, we

seldom get an accounting oftener than once in six months, and sometimes then months or a year will pass between settlements, and when we do get an accounting it is always to find ourselves deeper in debt than before. We've simply got to stick, and that's all there is to it.

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Pimps and madams, it pointed out, had pull with the police and made it impossible for prostitutes to count on police protection.

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Many were estranged from their families and friends and knew that any return to them would be accompanied by whispered rumors or met with explicit contempt. When white slaves did manage to escape, procurers who had been alerted throughout the underground grapevine frequently found and returned them to their "owners." Prostitutes also feared going to the police. Madams would have the police arrest the escaped white slave. Identified as a thief, she would then be returned to pay the considerable debts she still owed. Prostitutes also feared the retribution that resulted from involving the police. After testifying against her procurer, one former prostitute was killed by a bomb explosion her apartment.

As Maude Miner explained, "The severe condemnation of society only degrades her further. She finds herself cut off by her friends and family; through being consistently deceived she loses faith in human nature; she loses respect even for herself. . . . this demoralization of character constitutes the real slavery of prostitution."

The Prostitute might have adopted the defensive and hostile antisocial attitudes generally associated with individuals who are labeled deviant and marginal outsiders. Breaking out of such a subculture—the slang, habits, customs, attitudes, rules, and expectations—could have proven increasingly difficult. The subculture, moreover, now offered the most immediate solutions to a woman's need for economic and social protection. Each day, the options offered by the society "outside" seemed less accessible, less attractive, and more remote.

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As the Wisconsin Vice Report pointed out. . . . "The prostitutes," it summarized,

are made to feel absolutely dependent on the “madam” and “pimps” for everything they need, and are sometimes threatened with more or less severe violence in cases of any Mutiny. In this way they soon lose all ambition in life and following the path of least resistance, they resort to drink and drugs to palliate their unfortunate position.

When 6,309 prostitutes during the Progressive Era were asked why and how they entered prostitution, only 7.5 percent listed white slavery or extreme coercion as the cause (see table 1). Since most of the prostitutes interviewed were working in brothels, on the streets, or in prisons, and since any actual white slaves were unlikely to be available for interviews, the true percentage of women forced into white slavery might perhaps be somewhat higher. It may be safely assumed, however, that white slavery, though it did exist, was probably experienced by less than 10% of the prostitute population.

The class guilt of middle-class Americans for conditions that gave rise to prostitution was projected onto a few villainous white slavers, typically represented as foreigners. Furthermore, the white slavery explanation, more than any other, emphasized woman's passivity.

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## **CHAPTER 8**

### **THE LOST SISTERHOOD: THE CAUSES OF PROSTITUTION**

**BEGIN PAGE 137**

*“These same men who tell us we are angels send vice commissioners to investigate why girls go wrong. I should think a glance at the pay-roll would give them the answer.”*

*—Rose Schneiderman, the industrial woman's need of the vote*

To describe women as active participants in their own lives is not to ignore the very real societal and economic oppression they suffered.

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. . . both pimps and prostitutes enjoy lying to reformers when filling out the questionnaires. “They laugh,” he explained, “when they tell me how they answered 47 questions incorrectly out of a possible 50.”

in some cases, social workers directed the women to write down *Houseworker*.

Most of the prostitutes in New York's Bedford Reformatory study came from working-class families, as indicated by the blue collar occupation of their fathers (see Table 2). The same study also showed that many of the prostitutes' mothers (22.4%) worked outside the home while their daughters were young children (see Table 3). Since in 1900 only 6 percent of women in America were working for wages outside the home. . . .

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An unusually high percentage of prostitutes came from situations in which the family economy of either their original family (family of origin) or their newly created family (family of procreation) had been severely disturbed. Many of the prostitutes, therefore, came from families that were not originally destitute; rather, certain conditions had disrupted the entire family's means of survival.

Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* helped to popularize and perpetuate the “fall of the country girl” myth.

In 1911, however, a combined study of 2,364 prostitutes in New York City showed foreign-born women to be *under-represented* in the prostitute population;. . . . Native-born women. . . were over-represented. . . .

Thus it appears that *native-born women of foreign parentage were more likely to become prostitutes than were foreign-born women*.

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Reformers often assumed that the “new immigrants” (Eastern and Southern Europeans and Italians) were primarily responsible for prostitution. The data they collected, however, revealed that foreign-born women of such backgrounds were in fact underrepresented in The Prostitute population.

Those ethnic groups that tended to emphasize family solidarity and female chastity—Jews, Irish, and Italians— or under-represented in the foreign-born prostitute population.

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Dreams of upward mobility, generational conflict between children and parents over new customs, and the gradual disintegration of family and community ties may have contributed to more deviant activities on the part of the daughters of foreign-born parents.

[of the women in the Bedford Reformatory study]

When asked why they had moved to New York, 78 percent said they had come to “live with family” (usually relatives), and 26 percent said they had been looking for “work” or “easier work.” It appears from this and other studies that an increasing number of young women were moving from city to city, often “just for pleasure.”

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Most prostitutes had received very little education. . . . left school to support a fragile family economy torn apart by the death or desertion of one parent or by chronic unemployment.

William Sanger found that over half. . . were orphans. Fourteen percent of the prostitutes in the Bedford study had already been orphaned by the time they were admitted. . . .

In all, two-thirds of the 647 prostitutes had grown up without one parent for a part of their childhood, and 14 percent had no parents at all. Between 1907 and 1915, another study in New York found that, of 378 prostitutes, 25 percent had no parents and 60 percent came from “broken homes.”

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. . . The vast majority of prostitutes had lived at home with their families or husbands before practicing prostitution.

Although investigators often failed to inquire about prostitutes’ religious or educational backgrounds, they rarely missed an opportunity to collect data describing the sexual history of each woman. For most prostitutes, their first sexual contact (“offense”) was not associated with prostitution. Of sixty-six prostitutes studied in Hartford, twenty-five listed their first partner as a boyfriend or acquaintances; twenty-two said that their first sexual contact had been with a total stranger; and the remainder listed family members, friends of their family, or, for two of the women, an employer—an experience possibly indicating the sexual harassment so common to

women who worked in factories or department stores or as domestics. The average age of the woman's first sexual contact was between fifteen and eighteen years.

As the famous madam Pauline Taber later recalled, she began questioning her "charity" and "decided to start merchandising sex instead of giving it away."

Nearly every study emphasized that the average number of years which most prostitutes practice their trade rarely exceeded five or six years.

Former madams such as Pauline Tabor and Sally Stanford later described prostitutes who found husbands, "went straight to suburban homes and did damn well at it," "went to college," "became marriage counselors," "became further involved and dope or crime," or "saved sufficient money to attend college."

. . . one prostitute who married a salesman who had peddled clothes to the brothel.

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In addition to securing demographic data from prostitutes, investigators also asked the women why they had turned to prostitution. Unfortunately, it appears that prostitutes had to select their answers from categories created by the surveyors. It seems unlikely, for example, that prostitutes would have described their reasons in the language drafted by reformers: "tired of drudgery," "love of luxury," or "born bad."

All of the women could have blamed their "fall" on procurers or economic destitution, knowing that reformers widely believed in these twin evils. Yet of 3,117 prostitutes, only 2.8 percent specifically cited white slavers and 11.3 percent accuse men (lovers, seducers, etc.) of having actively forced, seduced, or betrayed them into prostitution.

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The *Summary Report* concluded that "poverty, whether it be the result of a low family income or of insufficient wages for a girl living by herself, touches the question of immorality in many ways. It decides the girl's companionships, her amusements, her ability to gratify without danger her natural and reasonable tastes, her very capacity for resistance to temptation.

In their former occupations, prostitutes had earned from four to six dollars a week.

The *Summary Report* conservatively estimated that a young working woman needed \$3.80 for shelter, \$ .38 for clothing, \$1.49 for carfare leaving \$ .37 for amusement. Since most authorities agreed that a working woman needed a weekly wage of nine dollars— especially if she lived alone— most working-class women were clearly underpaid. Industrialists Justified their subsistence wages by arguing that women worked simply for “pin money” and were already supported by their families or husbands. Manufacturers further exploited women as a cheap source of labor by hiring them for seasonal work. . . .

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Despite the testimony of prostitutes who complained of their former subsistence wages, industrial employers continued to argue that there was no connection between low wages and vice. Since most unions refused to train women for skilled jobs—fearing their competitive labor and the lower wages they had been forced to accept over the years—women workers found little support for their demands for higher wages.

As a prostitute, however, a week a woman's weekly earnings soared. The average brothel inmate or streetwalker received from one to five dollars a “trick,” earning in one evening with other working women made in a week.

Earning more money than other working women, however, was not a sufficient reason for prostitutes to risk of the social isolation and ostracism that frequently accompanied a life “in the trade.” The personal and social costs of joining a deviant subculture had to be offset by some other compelling motivation.

. . . fragile family economy. . . .

Over 90 percent of female workers during the early part of the twentieth century gave all of their earnings to their families.

“It is evident,” the *Summary Report* noted, “that the amount these workers were paying for their own individual use is too small to account for their going to work. In the main, their earnings go into the family fund, from which they are fed and clothed, but no part of which is looked upon as particularly theirs.”

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A twenty-five-year-old Swedish prostitute recalled that when her mother died she had to leave home at the age of sixteen to find work. Finding employment as a servant, she became an involuntary sexual partner of the husband of her mistress. When caught and later discharged, she found a position as a nurse to an invalid woman whose husband demanded occasional



sexual favors as part of her work. After her father left the city in which she was employed, she felt she could become a full-time prostitute without disgracing the only living member of her family. . . . The lack of family, however, gave her freedom to get paid for what her employers already required: sexual favors. "Nobody really cares what becomes of me," she said, "so why should I starve to be decent? Only one week this year have I made less than \$30 and so far I haven't spent a cent on doctors either."

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*[writing a letter to the Illinois Senate investigation on prostitution]*

"I am a widow with a little girl to support," the letter began,

and I am employed at one of the largest department stores on State Street and give my time from 8:15 to 6:00 p.m. and at present I am doing two persons' work for the small salary of six dollars a week and I know I am doing my duty to my employer. Now, I must clothe my little girl and myself, pay rent and buy food. My expenses for the day: ten cents car fare, five cents lunch, ten cents child's lunch, 50 cents a day for rent, 30 cents for supper: I make \$1.15. Now I am obliged to do a little sewing in the evening after I have worked hard all day to try and make my expenses, and my health is not very good, and I'm not able to do very much in the evening. Now where is the money to buy clothes and books for the child's education question and if a clerk does not look just so, she is sent home. How can you expect a woman to take care of a child and herself on \$6 a week? No one can blame a girl for doing wrong when they are obliged to work for such wages. . . . I kindly ask you to withhold my name.

Such "occasional" prostitution has always been part of the history of the trade period as the Wisconsin vice report revealed, many women during the early years of the twentieth century quietly slipped into and out of prostitution as economic need required.

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A dancehall prostitute explained to an underground investigator in Chicago that the \$6 weekly wage she had earned in the basement of a department store did not cover her basic expenses. To supplement her income, she therefore "hustled" three nights a week at a dance hall.

. . . many prostitutes favorably compared prostitution to the other occupations available to working-class women. Many of these occupations (dancehall hostess, waitress, department store clerk, factory worker, domestic worker) made the difference between pleasing male customers or male employers and occasional prostitution seem rather arbitrary.

*[a former waitress explains to the Illinois Senate Committee on Vice]:*

You wait on a man and he smiles at you. You see the chance to get a tip and you smile back. Next day he returns and you try harder than ever to please him. Then right away he wants to make a date, and offer you money and presents if you'll be a good fellow and go out with him. And if you refuse and he stops coming in, the boss jumps on your neck and wants to know why you are losing his customers. Then the next thing there's a new girl in your job and you're out on the street. For my work in the restaurant I get \$3.00 a week and my meals and a few dimes each day and tips just enough to pay my room rent and for my laundry. If I didn't pick up a little money on the side, I'd have to go naked. If it wasn't for my folks, I quit bluffing and get into the game right.

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as a result of the sexual harassment women frequently encountered at work, some women workers may have come to the conclusion that sexual purity with a privilege unavailable to the poor.

Poor ventilation, crowded working conditions, and uncontrolled noise and humidity levels combined to innervate factory operatives' strength.

*[says a woman factory worker named Sally Frowne]:*

"Sometimes in my haste I get my finger caught and the needle goes right through it. It goes through quick, though, so that it does not hurt much. I bind up the finger with a piece of cotton and go on working."

. . .Ulmer Park. . .

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Because they received room and board, their wages were considerably lower than other female workers. On the average, most domestic servants earned three dollars a week. With no place to entertain male visitors, except in the kitchen, domestic servants often felt isolated from the social world of other young working people. They rarely frequented the dance halls, ice cream parlors, and bars, which attracted young factory workers.

. . . certain factors, such as whether or not work was seasonal, affected whether women in a particular occupation turned to prostitution.

The Committee of Fourteen *Department Store Investigation Report* of New York revealed that the *highest*, and not the lowest, paid saleswoman most often turned to prostitution. Theatrical workers, office workers, telephone operators, typists, and stenographers—all of whom received higher wages than domestic or factory operatives—appeared with a surprisingly high degree of frequency among the lists of prostitutes' former occupations.

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In George Bernard Shaw's play, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, the heroine presents a prostitute's perspective on exploitation: "Do you think we were such fools as to let other people trade in our good looks by employing us shop girls, or barmaids, or waitresses, when we could trade them in ourselves and get all the profits instead of starvation wages? Not likely."

"I'll live fast and die early rather than become somebody's kitchen slave. Restaurant work is bad enough, but I won't be a dog in anybody's kitchen." Having never married, this twenty-six-year-old whose fierce pride kept her from becoming a servant, stated that she had never met a man whom she wished to live with—either as a wife or as a mistress. Another prostitute explain why she detested the life of a domestic servant. "The ladies," she explained, when they got money to hire servants imagine they have some form of dog to kick around, and I don't want to be kicked around."

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"While in the store, I heard of a case of a good girl getting six dollars a week. She asked for more money. She said she couldn't live on that. The man said, "Can't you get somebody to keep you?"

As a rule, prostitutes worked from nine in the evening until two in the morning.

One eighteen-year-old who had quit her five-dollar-a-week job begin earning thirty-five dollars a week at a brothel. After splitting the customary "half" with the madam, buying the

required lavish clothing, and purchasing the necessary cosmetics and medical services, she was just as broke as she had been in her former occupation. She enjoyed a higher standard of living, however, which included well-made clothes and regular meals.

*[one woman's take on the above]:*

I felt that if I was right in a house, I would be able to take care of myself, take care of my health and everything better than where a girl worked every day and had to see people on the outside at night. . . . as far as having respect of people goes, I wasn't any more respected and that line than any other line. I was sporting just the same anyway. . . . if I am in a house I can get my rest, and I am not out late at night. I can rest and I don't have to get up early in the morning. I am provided with good board and with a good room and I am able to look after my health.

During the 1909 shirtwaist strike in New York, for example, the well-known Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn recalled that when the young female strikers were jailed, the prostitutes in jail jeered at their low wages and told them they could do much better at *their* trade.

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. . . vicariously enjoy his status and wealth as *Mrs.* Horatio Alger. How to accomplish this feat was a secret passed on from one generation of women to the next—a young woman had to cultivate her physical appearance and learn the gentle art of bartering sexual favors for the promise of future social and economic security in the marriage.

Daughters of immigrants, in particular, rebelled against the idea that one should dress according to one's "class."

"I got to get out of this place and meet some guy, and marry him before my folks get wise," she explained. "If my father knew he'd kill me."

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She justified her occasional prostitution with the statement that "men don't hunt in laundries for wives."

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A young prostitute explained to Hartford authorities how early identification with delinquent and “deviant” groups influenced her perspective on life: “I slipped when I was a kid, and believe me my mother put me in a home. I did not know a thing when I went in, but I was wise when I came out. Girls there told me how to make money and lots of stuff. I came out educated. I stayed home for a bluff for a while, but I hate my mother and \_\_\_\_\_ made up her mind and we beat it together. I am of age now and they can’t stop me now.”

. . . some young women felt strong human needs for love and affection and sought that companionship with young men. Unfortunately, such attachments all too often ended in abandonment by a man not interested in marriage. Frequently, families disowned and “locked out” their daughters.

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Another prostitute, for example, explained that she had kept company with a man who later abandoned her. “I was in love with a fellow,” she said, “and kept company with him because he could not marry until his mother died.” After the mother’s death, however, the woman discovered that her lover had already married another woman.

Despite its potential brutality and exploitation, prostitution offered the immediate promise of other women. . . . [as community]

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“I am sure I lacked love,” she wrote to Howe in one of her letters. “Many girls before they give themselves over to the sinful life, have the love of their parents, but people of the sort they spring from—as were my people—are singularly undemonstrative and often it isn’t for lack of love, that the girls go astray, as much as for some evidence of it, which in the sinful life, they get in abundance—of a sort of course.”

. . . some proportion of prostitutes came from well-to-do families. Whether this was a growing phenomenon is difficult to determine. The Bedford study revealed that nearly one quarter of their institutionalized prostitutes had come from homes that could be described as low and high white collar. . . .

The Vice Commissioner of Chicago described a prostitute from a wealthy family who had been an inmate at a brothel for three years. Her parents thought she had a respectable job in another city and each week the daughter sent them ten dollars. . . .

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In 1858, when William Sanger asked two thousand prostitutes why they had become prostitutes, one quarter chose the category labeled "inclination."

In memoirs written by madams during the twentieth century there are sporadic references to prostitutes who stood out from other women because they actually enjoyed the work. A common sexual fantasy of American females is working as prostitute. What is fantasized, however, is the opportunity to take an active and controlling initiative and giving and receiving sexual pleasure, not the lack of choice and customers, the physical dangers, the potential brutality, and the probable social ostracism.

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The breakdown of a family economy often created sudden acute need for income. Furthermore, to practice prostitution, women had to risk familial rejection.

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Reformers' emphasis on prostitution as *the* "Social Evil" obscured the many other "social evils" of sexual and economic exploitation that poor women faced. Such a limited perspective polarized prostitute and her former and made the crusade against prostitution ultimately self-defeating.

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## EPILOGUE

### BEGIN PAGE 169

*Know where is woman treated accordingly to the Merit of her work, but rather as a sex. It is therefore almost inevitable that she should pay for her right to exist, to keep a position in what ever line, with sex favors.*

Emma Goldman, *The Traffic in Women and Other Essays on Feminism*

*Women do literally sell their bodies—if not of prostitutes, then to the public licity Industries, modeling and so on—much as men and women sell their labor power. As a worker finds himself alienated in his own product, so . . . a woman finds herself alienated in her own commercialized body.*

Juliet Mitchell, *Women's Estate*

Part of the Progressive legacy is that the state began to assume the role of parent to the dependent, the needy, and the deviant. As a result, the state responded paternalistically to the needs of people and neglected their rights as individuals.

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As in the nineteenth Century, most Americans and politicians reluctantly acknowledged the presence of a “necessary evil,” which periodically shifted to different “tenderloin” areas—usually the neighborhoods of the transient poor. Politicians tolerated (or ordered crackdowns on) prostitution in response to public outrage (or the political exigencies of an election).

Such arbitrary law enforcement—exacerbated by a dizzying array of conflicting local statutes—created a permanent “scatter syndrome,” first witnessed by Progressive reformers after the closing of the first large red-light districts. Depending on the political climate and changing local statutes, prostitutes and pimps participated in a constant hide-and-seek game with authorities as they fled one city, where police were cracking down, for another, where the atmosphere was more lenient and congenial.

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### BEGIN PAGE 171

Women who sell their bodies continue to suffer from a double standard of Social and criminal justice. Prostitution remains an enormously profitable business, with most of the profits siphoned off by men—pimps, taxi drivers, members of organized crime, liquor dealers, physicians, and real estate speculators. As during the early twentieth century, prostitution still

reflects social class stratification and caters to every man's budget. Private clubs, massage parlors, call girls, and streetwalkers make sexual services affordable to nearly all potential customers.

Many of the changes in prostitution have been merely superficial. For example, the “key” club brownstones in New York, which double as exclusive brothels, are merely the 20th century counterparts of the famous red-light parlor houses of an earlier era. “Private” membership status offers these upperclassmen the kind of police protection provided two gentlemen of an earlier era.

. . . the famous brass checks. . . .

. . . the feathers and other accoutrements. . . .

**END PAGE 171**

**BEGIN PAGE 172**

. . . the sexual activity requested is of a kinky or nature than during the earliest 20th century, with a new emphasis on sadomasochism.

in July 1979, for example, the C.I.A. conceded that it had used prostitutes in San Francisco “safe houses” to extract information from potential informants. The C.I.A. also used both pimps and prostitutes in drug-related mind control experiments, knowing they had little recourse to legal authorities.

**[note from Hayley: this is probably MK Ultra, if you decide to look further into it, I’m pretty sure the files are now declassified.]**

**END PAGE 172**

**BEGIN PAGE 173**

Today, a majority of prostitutes still enter prostitution from similar backgrounds. Yet, there have been changes. Prostitution, as this book has continually emphasized, tends to *mirror changes in the family, women's lives, and sex roles*.

**END PAGE 173**

**—SKIP PAGE 174**

**BEGIN PAGE 175**

In 1980, women were making fifty-nine cents for every dollar earned by men. “Pink-collar” work may offer the “perks” of vicarious association with white-collar professionals in



clean office environments, but the female factory worker in overalls brings home a larger paycheck and need not spend it on simulating a “white collar” appearance. The earnings of the pink collar worker, moreover, are unconscionably inadequate to support the growing number of female-headed households, which have resulted from a growing divorce rate in the increase and extended family relations.

American cities spend astronomical proportions of Revenue in constant combat Against The Prostitute. All across the nation, large numbers of women are daily jailed at Great public expense and dumped out again, only to be arrested and jailed again of prostitutes.

Prostitution laws, as Marilyn Neckes has emphasized, are selectively enforced against women and not men. Among prostitutes, laws are selectively enforced against the most powerless individuals, the streetwalkers, drawn disproportionately from the ranks of racial minorities, the poor, the very young, and the drug-addicted. It is no accident, for example, that black women are arrested for prostitution ten times more frequently than white women.

**(split between pages 175/176)**

**END PAGE 175**

**BEGIN PAGE 176**

. . . the legislation of morality becomes tricky when conflicting interests must be appeased. As sociologist Jennifer James points out, “Authorities have found themselves making moral laws to satisfy one group, The not enforcing these laws to satisfy another group, and, finally, selectively enforcing the laws to satisfy a third group.”

Certainly this has been the case with prostitution. Progressive reformers successfully passed laws against prostitution for the benefit of the middle class, which viewed prostitution as a symbol of a threatening new urban social order. These laws have been arbitrarily enforced depending on whose neighborhood prostitutes invaded, which businessman did or did not profit from prostitution, or which politicians based election and required evidence of renewed efforts to eliminate visible corruption. Arbitrary law enforcement has encouraged questionable practices among the police, such as entrapment.

Another neighbor explained why police tolerated prostitution in their neighborhood. “The prostitutes are here,” she bitterly noted, “because it’s a low-income neighborhood and many people think that anything goes here.”

**END PAGE 176**

**BEGIN PAGE 177**

One prostitute said of the residents: “They got a m—f— job and I got my own job.” Another prostitute defiantly responded, “They’re not going to get rid of us. . . . Here again, we see the scatter syndrome.

. . . most authorities today agree that the use of the birth control pill, the decreased reliance on the condom, and the extensive sexual activity among the young largely accounts for the contemporary epidemic spread of venereal disease. Prostitutes, some who frequently live on a steady diet of penicillin, are not so likely to be viewed as polluters of society's health.

How is the prostitute victimized by society? First, she suffers from class and gender discrimination, which limits her options early in life. Second, she is brutalized by her pimps, harassed by police, and ostracized by society. Finally, she suffers from a double standard of social and criminal justice which renders her a criminal while her customer generally escapes social condemnation. As a member of a relatively powerless group in society, she has neither the political nor the social power to control her fate. . . .

Solutions to the problem of prostitution depend on whether prostitution is viewed as an ineradicable part of the human condition. Those who have suggested that prostitution be legalized are in basic agreement with their Victorian forebears that prostitution is, in the end, a necessary evil. The attempt to create segregated sexual ghettos in which women service customers (with the state assuming the role of the pimp) is the modern analogue of regulated prostitution in the nineteenth century. The Eros Center in Hamburg and the legalized brothels in Nevada are example of the loss of civil rights (restricted mobility) that legalized prostitution has brought prostitutes.

**END PAGE 177**

**BEGIN PAGE 178**

Several researchers have suggested that a variety of reforms should ideally accompany the withdrawal of legal statutes. Marilyn Neckes, for example, has argued that mass arrest for obstruction of sidewalks and loitering should be discontinued because they are not enforced against male clients; safe houses for runaways should be established in high crime and high prostitution areas; counseling and medical services a specially tailored to the needs of prostitutes should be established; a twenty-four-hour hotline for prostitutes and runaways in urgent need should be created; educational and job training programs and work education furlough programs should be available to prostitutes; "streetworkers" should be employed to reach out to prostitutes; and the only statutes involving prostitution that should remain on the books are laws involving pimping or child protection.

Despite these proposals, many proponents of decriminalization acknowledge that it is only a temporary solution that remedies the worst aspects of prostitution and leaves untouched the fundamental sexual and economic exploitation of women.

. . . forced rehabilitation. . . .

. . . view such measures as coercive and authoritarian. . . .

Such ideas counter the strong strain of individualism in American Social thought. . . .

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CITATION NOTES

CHAPTER 1

An interesting Canadian Community study describes the conflicts between families and prostitutes at the Prairie towns became civilized, which has many American parallels; see James Gray, *Red Lights on the Prairies*. For a history of Western prostitutes themselves, see Jacqueline Barnhart, *Working Women*.  
(pg. 181)

CHAPTER 2

2. . . . The first city to have a standing vice commission was Pittsburgh. It's Morals Efficiency Commission, which grew out of a post-Civil War study of prostitutes titled *The Pittsburgh Survey*, was replaced in 1913 by the Public Bureau of Morals.
  4. A study of *Readers Guide* articles indicates that only fifteen articles on prostitution appeared during the years between 1905 and 1909. Between 1910 and 1914, however, one hundred and forty-five articles appeared. By 1918, the number of Articles diminished to twenty-five. . . .
  8. Shumsky finds that the business community exerted enormous power in the initial support, and then demise, of the clinic. Business in general was quite concerned with the *costs* of prostitution; Ray H. Everett, *The Cost of Venereal Disease to Industry*.
  12. Decriminalization has become of the goal of several well-organized, contemporary unions of prostitutes; see Guy Roche, "The Emergence of Militant Prostitution in America."
  15. A summary of the most commonly suggested recommendations made by vice commissions can be found in Woolston, *Prostitution*, p. 268, and and Joseph Mayer, "Social Legislation and Vice Control," *Social Hygiene* (July 1919): 337.
- . . . "The Crime of Precocious Sexuality," pp. 82-85.

. . . repressive legislation enacted in the contagious diseases acts in England helped create a more professional class of criminal outcast; see Judith K. Walkowitz, "The Making of an Outcast Group."

57. The following is a partial list of cities in which vice commissions resulted in the closing of red-light districts; from Joseph Mayer, *The Regulation of Commercialized Vice*, p. 11: Atlanta, 19 12; Baltimore, 1915; Bay City, 1913; Bridgeport, 19 15; Chicago, 1912; Cleveland, 19 15; Denver, 19 13; Almira, 19 13; Grand Rapids, 1912; Hartford, 19 12; Honolulu, 1917; Kansas City, 1913; Lancaster, Pa., 1914; Lexington, 1915; Little Rock, 1913; Louisville, 1917; Minneapolis, 1913; Newark, 1917; New York City, 1916; Philadelphia, 1913; Pittsburgh, 1914; Portland, Me., 1915; Portland, Ore., 1913; Richmond, 1914; St Louis, 1914; Shreveport, 1917; Springfield, 1915; Syracuse, 1913; Toronto, 1913.

63. Given the hostile relationship between prostitutes and investigators, as well as the dangers of admitting to practicing prostitution during police crackdowns, one must question the validity of these answers. Some of the women who "lived with men," "worked," or "married" may still have been plying their trade; Baltimore, "Abolition," pp. 181-83. In a later study, Walter Reckless, *Vice in Chicago*, points out that no substantial evidence exists to document the immediate aftermath of the closings of the red-light districts on prostitutes.

65. As a result of the closings, police used all kinds of new and old laws to arrest prostitutes. Wilston summarizes arrest records from Oakland, California, New York City, and Boston, showing the heightened arrests, as well as the fact that enforcement varied from City to city. In Boston, for example, one third of Arrested women were imprisoned. In New York, of 1,952 convicted prostitutes, 63.5 percent went to the workhouse, 14.1 percent went to Reformatory, 3.3 percent received suspended sentences, 13.2 percent received probation, and 5.5 percent went to prison; Woolston, *Prostitution*, pp. 125, 249, 258.

. . .the social hygiene movement eclipsed the older abolitionist movement. He also analyzes the "American Plan" in an important study titled "Cleansing the Nation."

. . .the United States remains the single nation that attempts to prohibit prostitution by punishing the prostitute— despite rhetorical claims to the contrary; Winick and Kinsie, *The Lively Commerce*, p. 288.

### CHAPTER 3

6. . . . the beginnings of urbanization and industrialization produce cultural and social normlessness, which in turn shapes the modern forms of urban prostitution. The society that he describes bears striking similarities to that of the United States during the Progressive Era; Samir Khalaf, *Prostitution in a Changing Society*.

57. Nearly all published vice reports pointed to the starvation wages paid young working women as *one* of the basic causes of prostitution. . .

. . . The Vice Commission of Minneapolis Report, while listing wages and other problems of working women, also found it necessary to list the “looseness of discipline,” “entertainment,” “diversion,” and “foreign elements” contributing to the general “lowering” of “moral standards”; Minneapolis, Vice Commission of Minneapolis. . .

70. Leftist analysis of prostitution has a long tradition; see, for example, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. A.J.P. Taylor (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp. 100-101; August Bebel, *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (East Berlin, 1964), pp. 207-42. See also Leonora O'Reilly, LOP, folder 168. William O'Neill points out that, to many leftist intellectuals, the prostitute became romanticized as the antithesis of bourgeois morality; see William O'Neil, *Echoes of Revolt*, p. 186; “Wages and Sin,” p. 263.

71. . . . female reformers symbolized male domination of women by male invasion of the female body. For the Jacksonian era moral reformers of Smith-Rosenberg's study, the invasion was that of seduction and rape. For the British female opponents of the Contagious Diseases Acts study by Walkowitz, the invasion most strikingly depicted was that of the speculum used in compulsory medical examinations of prostitutes. In the Progressive Era, women used even more images of violation: “white slavery,” and the invasion of venereal disease into their bodies and their homes.

## CHAPTER 4

9. Henrietta Frank and Amalie Jerome, *Annals of the Chicago Women's Club for the Forty Years of Its Organization, 1876-1916*, p. 242. The idea that regulation would end women's chance at a second life after being a prostitution was echoed by Harriet Laidlaw, “Testimony and Addresses on Segregation and Commercialized Vice.” See also Ethel Sturges Dummer To Bertha Lowell, ESDP, for feminist reasons for opposing segregation. Dummer, a well-known Chicago reformer in probation and World War I “protective activity” for prostitutes and a prolific writer of articles on women's status and probation, wrote that Maude Royden's *Women and the Sovereign State*, a study of regulation of vice in Europe, had convinced her of the discrimination against women such regulation would bring.

. . . In her well-known novel, *The Long Day*, Dorothy Richardson popularized the belief that girls were the victims of economic exploitation and therefore pray to prostitution when she had her heroine say, “The factories, the workshops, and to some extent the stores of the kind I have worked in at least, are recruiting grounds for the tenderloin and ‘red-light’ districts. They send annually a large consignment of delinquents to their various and logical destinations. It is rare indeed that one finds a female delinquent who has not been in the beginning a working girl; Dorothy Richardson, *The Long Day*, p. 276.

. . . Mrs. Henrotin, the wife of a Chicago banker, was an activist in urban reform.

Garrett argued that prostitution should be dealt with by eugenicists rather than by social hygienists.

67. *Madeleine*, p. 320.

## CHAPTER 5

3. In her study of mid-nineteenth century prostitution in England, Judith Walkowitz provides some of the only exhaustive data and models of such casual neighborhood prostitution; see Judith K. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*. Barbara Hobseon, "Seduced and Abandoned," helps confirm my speculative impressions in the American context.

5. Fred Johnson, *The Social Evil in Kansas*, p. 2.

6. The Vice Commission of Chicago obtained these figures by multiplying the number of prostitutes on police lists by the average number of men each woman saw, times the average price of each visit. In addition, they included the following figures: "rentals of property and profits of keepers and inmates, \$8,476,689; sale of liquor in houses, flats, and profits of inmates on commissions, \$2,915,760; sale of liquor, disorderly saloons only, \$4,307,000; total profits (annual) from business of prostitution in Chicago, \$15,699,449"; Chicago, *Social Evil*, p. 113, quoted in Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans*, p. 30.

37. *Madeleine*, p. 63. It has been necessary for me to distinguish among many so-called Memoirs of prostitutes, which, like slave narratives, were frequently rewritten by abolitionists, but nevertheless contained important information on slavery. I have discounted most prostitutes' memoirs I have read. I am using *Madeleine* as evidence because I believe the story has an authentic and plausible narrative, and the well-known judge Ben Lindsey probably extracted this information from a young woman or created a composite profile. In any case, the facts of her stories are congruent with other statistical and survey material of the period, And I therefore have used careful judgment in selecting this document as a representative of many young women's lives as prostitutes.

55. *The Blue Book* (New Orleans 1910)

61. *Madeleine*, p. 55.

62. Some writers estimated that for every known or visible prostitute, there existed yet another hundred prostitutes;. . .

64. The Massachusetts Vice commission estimated that at least 22 percent of prostitution took place in established brothels, and another 28 percent took place in hotels and

lodging houses that functioned as brothels; 20 percent were unknown; 4 percent listed as “out of doors”; . . .

## CHAPTER 6

7. Pauline Tabor, *Memoirs of the Madam on Clay Street*, is a memoir of Tabor's successful high-priced brothel in Kentucky during the 1930s. Much of the discussion of the occupation of a madam derives from Tabor's detailed description of her management of such a house in Bowling Green long after the red-light districts were closed. Her alliances with local politicians, however, enabled her to run a first-class house like those in the red-light districts during the Progressive years. Another source for the management of a high-priced parlor house is Charles Washburn, *Come into My Parlor*, which documents the rise and management of the most famous “sporting houses” in the United States at the turn of the century. Also see *Madeline*; Sally Stanford, *Lady of the House*.

8. The number of inmates in brothels varied widely. It appears that the average number of inmates was about five or six; Louisville,. . .

. . . A recent study of modern brothel life suggests that madams are masters of verbal manipulation and, as a result, can extract loyalty from prostitutes whom they daily exploit.

20. Stanford, *Lady of the House*, p. 10 **NOTE: Canadian Prairie**

29. Nell Kimball, *Her Life as an American Madam*, p. 109. The plagiarism that marks this book has justifiably prompted scholars to question the authenticity of all its material. Its graphic descriptions of brothels—taken from earlier authors and observers—should not be totally dismissed, however, since this description of the middle-class brothel corresponds to other imagery found in Tabor, Stanford, *Madeleine*, and other first-hand accounts. It just may be considered an important historical source, but one from which every piece of evidence should be evaluated by the scholar and light of other sources of the period.

43. . . . In an article on prostitution, Albert Ellis has suggested that a married man seeks a prostitute whose appearance in no way reminds him of his wife. In this way, the man can freely indulged his sexual desires without tainting the “purity” of his wife; Albert Ellis, “Why Married Men Visit Prostitutes.” Unfortunately, very little is actually known about the male patrons of prostitution. Then, as now, male patrons did not receive much public attention.

60. The fact of a prostitute's downward mobility was mentioned and described in nearly all the literature of the period. It was a special concern to reformers who felt horrified at the sight of aging, disease women plying their trade and cribs or on the street.

**[NOTE FROM HAYLEY: I have left out many of the *Madeleine* citations circled as they don't contain extra information, seems you may've just been driving home the frequency of this reference.]**

81. See Fernando Henriques, *Prostitution and Society*, a lengthy history of prostitution all over the world, in which he describes authorities' or prostitutes' attempt to identify themselves through special armbands, signs, or attire.

82. *Madeleine*, p. 213; Gail Sheehy, Among other writers on prostitution, has consistently emphasized the "class snobbery" and distinction between the independent courtesan or today's call girl, an occupation which has been highly glamorized, and the larger number of prostitutes who worked or work for someone else under extremely inhumane conditions. . . .

## CHAPTER 7

1. Most of the vice commission reports, as well as the popular literature, emphasized such environmental factors, even though they still concluded that morals was *a*, or *the*, basic determining factor.

6. See Connelly, *Response to Prostitution*, chap. 6, for an example of this approach to white slavery. While I find his analysis of white slave narratives insightful, I disagree with his assumption that the white slave scare was simply mass hysteria with no basis in fact.

11. "The White Slave Films"; "Is White Slavery Nothing More than a Myth?"; "Popular Gullibility as Exhibited in the New White Slavery Hysteria"; Reginald Kauffman, *The House of Bondage*; Reginald Kauffman, *The Girl That Goes Wrong*; the poster is described in *Survey* 30 (May 3, 1913): 5.

17. . . . as concern over white slavery increased, states began passing their own laws. McClure's 35 (July 1910):348, reported that nine states had already passed their own white slavery laws. Unfortunately, the Mann Act became a means for women to blackmail men while the Supreme Court ruled in the Diggs-Camminetti case in 1917. . . ., cases adjudicated in the Supreme Court) that the Mann Act could be used to prosecute men for taking women across state lines for "immoral purposes," not simply for prostitution. This weakened the strict interpretation of the Mann Act; see legal arguments in the New York Times. . . .

. . . Stanley Finch estimated that twenty-five thousand women and girls were annually procured in the United States and that fifty thousand men and women were actively involved in contributing to the traffic in women. . . .

. . . The Vice Commission of Chicago also gave strong evidence for the widespread organization of white slavers. . . .



. . . The reason that deportations for the white slave trade were so low during the Progressive Era is that the Supreme Court in the Kellor case ruled that only the importation, and not the harboring, of young girls with a constitutional basis for immigration exclusion; U.S., Senate, *Reports of the Immigration Commission*, p. 60. The conclusions of the Immigration Commission were based on extensive and well-researched investigations. Their agents interviewed madams, physicians, prostitutes, panderers, police, and court officials. Furthermore, their research covered San Francisco; Seattle; Portland, Ore.; Salt Lake City; Ogden, Utah; Butte; Denver; Buffalo; and New Orleans.

## **EPILOGUE**

. . . point to the newer emphasis on sadomasochism, oral sex, and “water sports” in the business. . . .