

2014

# Sacrificing our daughters: changing perceptions of prostitution in Iowa, 1880-1915

Hope C. Mitchell  
*Iowa State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd>

 Part of the [History Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Mitchell, Hope C., "Sacrificing our daughters: changing perceptions of prostitution in Iowa, 1880-1915" (2014). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 13881.

<https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/13881>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [digirep@iastate.edu](mailto:digirep@iastate.edu).

**Sacrificing our daughters: changing perceptions of prostitution in Iowa, 1880-1915**

by

Hope Mitchell

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of requirement for the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: History

Program of Study Committee  
Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, Major Professor  
Jana Byars  
Gloria Jones-Johnson

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2014

Copyright © Hope Mitchell, 2014. All Rights Reserved

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM.....	10
CHAPTER THREE: INTERPRETATION OF THE PROBLEM.....	27
CHAPTER FOUR: LEGAL REFORM EFFORTS.....	44
CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIAL REFORM EFFORTS.....	63
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION.....	81
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	87

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking my committee chair, Dr. Pamela Riney-Kehrberg for her guidance, support, and willingness to read through what seemed like an endless stream of rough drafts. In addition, I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Jana Byars and Dr. Gloria Jones-Johnson. Without their insight, time, and support, my thesis would not be what it is today.

Secondly, I would like to thank John Zeller, who has been an incredible resource throughout the research process. When it appeared as if I had hit a dead end in my research, John swooped in and saved the day. I am eternally grateful for his knowledge, enthusiasm for Iowa history, and his generosity during this process.

Additionally, my fellow graduate students and the History department faculty and staff deserve a tremendous thank you. Their constant support, guidance, and words of encouragement have meant the world to me throughout my entire graduate experience. I also owe a very special thank you to Jennifer Rivera, who has always been an incredible source of wisdom and support.

Last, but certainly not least, I owe a tremendous thank you to my family. Their willingness to listen to a constant stream of facts and stories about prostitution, their ability to talk me off the ledge on a weekly basis, and their enthusiasm for all of my endeavors has been the greatest gift that anyone could hope to receive. Without them this entire thesis never would have come to be and I am incredibly blessed to be their daughter, sister, niece, and friend.

## ABSTRACT

In response to the urbanization and industrialization that occurred throughout the nineteenth century, people across the country began to reevaluate their perceptions of prostitution during the later part of the nineteenth century and into the early part of the twentieth century. As young women began to migrate to cities looking for factory and domestic work, parents became concerned by the dangers that their daughters would face in the city. This concern was especially felt within the Midwest, where farm families were heavily dependent upon the labors of their daughters. As they transitioned into the later part of the nineteenth century, Iowans' became more concerned that young women would be lured into prostitution and began lashing out at those individuals who they believed posed the greatest danger to their daughters. This thesis will analyze the changing perceptions of prostitution in the later part of the nineteenth century and the varying responses to prostitution during the early part of the twentieth century. Using district court records and newspapers, this thesis will trace the changing opinions of prostitution, focusing specifically on the ways in which people redefined who was to blame for perpetuating prostitution and who suffered the most because of prostitution. After establishing a more focused perception of prostitution, Iowans' began reevaluating the social and legal ways in which they approached prostitution; this thesis will then conclude with an examination of the reasoning of these revised reform measures and their level of effectiveness through an analysis of parole records and annual reports from local reform societies.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It was a sweltering Iowa summer day in August of 1929 as Jerry Gardineer made his way out to his front porch. He had come outside to read the paper while he waited for the reporter from The Des Moines Tribune-Capital. Apparently the man was curious about this former red light district, and since Jerry had been a resident of the neighborhood for the past forty years, he was just the man for the job. He had come outside hoping to catch a nice breeze, but no such luck. Instead, Jerry sat there fanning himself with the newspaper and looked out over the neighborhood that had been his home for so many years.

When it was built in the 1870s, this part of town had been known as Scribner's Row. At that time, the block had been filled with separate frame houses occupied by working class families. Back then, this had been nice little family neighborhood, surrounded by some of the more prominent neighborhoods in Des Moines. Over the years the neighborhood had shifted hands several times, first being dominated by Irish immigrants, and then being bought up by the Italians. As the years went on, Scribner's Row was eventually absorbed into the White Chapel neighborhood, or what was known as the red light district, of Des Moines. The more prominent families in the neighborhoods surrounding Scribner's Row had already left. Some working class families' left if they could, but others, like Jerry's family, had stayed.<sup>1</sup>

Sure, White Chapel was a bit of a rough neighborhood, but the business had always been good. With twenty coal mines in a ten mile radius and just as many farms, the business in White Chapel had been about catering to the miners and farmers who surrounded Des Moines. The principal business of the community had been the manufacture and sale of liquor and the running of illegal establishments, such as gambling dens and houses of ill

---

<sup>1</sup> "Scribner's Row As It Stands Today," Des Moines Register and Leader, July 12, 1908.

repute. Jerry remembered how these businesses had once lined six whole blocks of Court Avenue. Doing the math in his head, Jerry estimated that there had been about thirty-five saloons in about fifteen to twenty square blocks, and all of them open twenty four hours a day.<sup>2</sup> All of that had changed shortly after the turn of the century. Reform movements began taking hold, and the rough and tumble neighborhood with a red light on every block was now a run down sleepy little part of town full of pool halls and barbershops. Looking across the street, he saw the faded advertisements on the side of a long closed saloon proclaiming, “Drink Old Tavern Beer. Made In Des Moines.” With a bittersweet smile, Jerry wiped the sweat off his brow, flipped open his paper and waited for the reporter and a discussion of the way White Chapel had once been.

While Jerry’s descriptions of early Des Moines might portray it to be nothing more than a bustling mining and farming community, these rural ties played a significant role in the way which Midwestern reformers began to approach prostitution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Des Moines acted as not only a trading outpost and business hub for nearby farmers, but also as a center of potential employment for young farmwomen. Whether they heard about opportunities for work in Des Moines from friends or found them in newspapers, near the turn of the century young women began migrating to Des Moines from the country in search of employment.<sup>3</sup> This thesis will explore not only the presence of prostitution within the Midwest, focusing specifically on Iowa, but also the ways in which

---

<sup>2</sup> “Gone Is White Chapel District Here But Old Signs Recall ‘Glorious’ Days,” Des Moines Register and Leader, May 22, 1929.

<sup>3</sup> “Saved Girl From Life of Shame,” Des Moines Register and Leader, November 23, 1904 and “They Ply Their Foul Traffic Even In Des Moines and In Iowa, Claiming Many Innocent Victims,” Des Moines Register, November 8, 1908. While these two article focus on ways in which women were lured to Des Moines, throughout my research I found small advertisements in the papers every day seeking young women to work in a variety of factories.

familial fears worked to reshape the perceptions of prostitution as society transitioned into the Progressive Era, and the eventual affect this had on the way in which society dealt with prostitution both socially and legally.

Leading up to the Progressive Era, society tended to have a fairly negative perception of prostitutes. Throughout the mid-nineteenth century, the people of Des Moines referred to prostitutes as gypsies or *nymphs du pave* who lived on beds of grass by the river and flitted around the city creating mayhem wherever they went.<sup>4</sup> These early descriptions of prostitutes tended to portray these women as more animalistic than human, promoting the idea that these women lacked reason and logic, and perhaps even a soul. These beliefs were reflected in the early reform tactics used on prostitutes. Reform efforts throughout the early and mid-nineteenth century focused on the religious reformation of fallen women. Reformers would invade disreputable neighborhoods and deliver sermons and hand out Bibles. They also established rescue homes for women seeking shelter and Magdalenian homes for young women convicted of prostitution or lewd behavior. While these early reform efforts tended to be quite aggressive, they overlooked many of the factors that actually led to the perpetuation of prostitution and tended to be fairly ineffective.<sup>5</sup>

Near the later part of the nineteenth century, there was a shift in the way society perceived and approached prostitution. This shift is reminiscent of an early Progressive Era mindset. Mary Odem noted this in her 1995 book, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*. She argued that

---

<sup>4</sup> “Arrest of a Notorious Cyprian! Angelic Company of Nymphs!” Iowa State Register, June 27, 1866 and “The Social Evil,” The Iowa State Register, April 14, 1871.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 1. Ruth Rosen, *The Maimie Papers*, (New York: The Feminist Press, 1977), xxii.

beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, reformers developed a stronger stance against prostitution. They altered their reform methods by fighting for increased legislation against prostitution. This demand for legislation worked to not only further empower reform efforts, but led to an increased level of government involvement in the fight against the continued spread of prostitution. One major example of this push for increased legislation was the Mann Act. Passed on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1910, the Mann Act forbade the transportation of women in both interstate and foreign commerce, “for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery, or any other immoral purpose,” and was meant to suppress white slave trafficking, which became a societal concern in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

Odem’s study, which was based in California and focused primarily on changes in legislation, actually draws many parallels to the ways in which prostitution was being approached in Iowa at this time. The religious techniques used by reformers in California, which Odem argued began in the northeastern part of the country and were inspired by evangelical Protestantism, were also seen in Iowa. What was different about the Midwest was that while reform efforts in the Midwest continued to expand and adopt more proactive approaches to reform, they managed to still maintain their spiritual basis. The Sunbeam Mission, a reform society for unemployed men and fallen women in Des Moines that operated from 1893 until 1907, continued to take its “salvation wagon” into the White Chapel neighborhood of Des Moines, which was dominated by brothels and gambling dens,

---

<sup>6</sup> William Seagle, “The Twilight of the Mann Act,” *American Bar Association Journal*, 55, no. 7 (1969), 641.

and deliver sermons and Bibles, and even at times invaded the brothels.<sup>7</sup> Such reform organizations in the Midwest continued to rely on their religious foundations while also working to promote legislation that would help to keep women from turning to prostitution.

While Odem's analysis of reform efforts did an excellent job examining the legal steps that society took in order to protect women from the evils of prostitution, she did not fully explore how this proactive shift toward legislative measures occurred. In the Midwest, these shifting perceptions coincided with the onslaught of urbanization and industrialization. In her 2009 book, *Calling This Place Home*, historian Joan Jensen acknowledged that the out migration of young rural women was an area of particular concern for farm families. As labor patterns shifted, young women began migrating to urban centers in search of more lucrative employment and a greater degree of independence. Families became concerned that these young women would fall prey to urban dangers, specifically prostitution. They also worried that these fallen women would then go on to become the sort of incompetent mothers who would continue to produce more delinquent children. As a result, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a period in which there was an increase in detention centers specifically for women. This rise in concern was spearheaded by urban female middle class reformers who helped to shut down both urban and rural brothels and promoted state legislation to put an end to white slave trafficking.<sup>8</sup>

In her 1986 book, *Open Country, Iowa: Rural Women, Tradition and Change*, Deborah Fink offered some insight into this female out migration pattern by arguing that due to the isolation of rural communities, rural women not only struggled to make a living and

---

<sup>7</sup> Frank L. Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, (Des Moines, 1904), Cover.

<sup>8</sup> Joan Jensen, *Calling This Place Home*, (Minneapolis: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2009) 213.

create meaningful connections with their peers, but also felt as if they maintained very little control over their lives. While Fink ultimately argued that rural women used kinship networks as a source of power, it is entirely possible that these same factors also motivated young women to abandon the family farm and seek out work in nearby urban centers like Des Moines. Fink herself even confirmed this by acknowledging that women in Iowa increasingly began seeking employment outside of the home because of the potential to earn more income and for increased leisure time.<sup>9</sup>

It was not simply the fact that young women migrated from the family farm into the city, but what these young women found once they got there, that worried both parents and reformers. In her 1986 book, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*, Kathy Peiss argued that new freedoms, which came about due to changing patterns of labor, created tension among families, particularly among immigrant parents and their American born daughters, who came into conflict over social and cultural expectations about behavior.<sup>10</sup> Parents objected to their daughters' frivolous use of leisure time spent at dances or in other social arenas, but the desire for such amusements was most likely a response to the discipline, drudgery, and exploitative conditions of labor that young women endured.<sup>11</sup> In some cases, these young women chose to exert their freedom and live outside the family household; those young women who did so walked a fine line between asserting their independence and protecting their respectability.<sup>12</sup> While Peiss's study was centered on New York, her same argument about the reasons young women sought work

---

<sup>9</sup> Deborah Fink, *Open Country, Iowa: Rural Women, Tradition and Change*, (Albany: University of New York Press, 1986) 3.

<sup>10</sup> Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986) 39.

<sup>11</sup> Peiss, 45.

<sup>12</sup> Peiss, 73.

outside the home and the tensions within families over the labors of young women could just as easily be applied to families in the Midwest.

All of these factors, urbanization, industrialization, female migration into the city, and new social outlets for women led to a shift in the way society understood prostitution in the later part of the nineteenth century. This shift eventually resulted in new legislative measures that helped to protect young women from falling into prostitution. While all of these concerns played out on a national scale, farm families in the Midwest were especially aware of these factors due to their heavy reliance of the farm economy on the stability of the family.

Farming may generally be perceived as a masculine form of work, but in order for a farm to survive throughout the nineteenth century, a farmer generally had to rely heavily on the labors of his family as well. While women typically maintained the home, which was no small feat, it was not unheard of for a farm wife or daughter to be out in the fields running the plow with her husband or father. In many cases, women also contributed to the family economy through the production and sale of butter and eggs. In some cases, women maintained a substantial amount of control over this income, which ultimately increased their power and standing within the farm family, but this was not the case for all farm women.<sup>13</sup> In Iowa especially, Fink argued that women felt isolated by their labors on the farm and began seeking employment off the farm, but in doing so they ran the risk of social censure. According to Fink's sources, it was acceptable for women to work off the farm, so long as another family member, such as an uncle or a cousin, employed them. Members of rural Iowa communities became concerned when young women began working in public places that forced them to interact with strangers. The community viewed this work as unseemly and

---

<sup>13</sup> Fink 57-58.

indecent and the women risked their social standing within the community.<sup>14</sup> While the community criticized and distrusted these industrious young women, it is very likely that this was in part a reflection of their own fears of what sort of effects their daughters' absence would have on the farm.

With the censure that young women received from their communities for seeking honest employment off the farm, it was not surprising that they began migrating to larger urban centers where they would experience a greater degree of anonymity and potentially find more employment options and freedoms. As they migrated to cities like Des Moines, middle class urban reformers, who were often parents themselves, became increasingly concerned about these young women. While many of these reformers belonged to the middle class, they did not let that cloud their opinions of prostitution. Both reformers and parents alike acknowledged the fact that lower class women were more susceptible to the dangers of prostitution. The idea that prostitution was a 'necessary evil' within society was completely unacceptable to late nineteenth century parents and reformers. They believed that no parent, regardless of class, should have to sacrifice their daughter to prostitution.<sup>15</sup> These concerns for family became the driving force behind the new style of reform efforts that took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Fear for their children instilled a ferocity within Midwestern parents and motivated them to seek stronger legal and social measures to inhibit prostitution.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, society began to reevaluate who was to blame and who suffered the most from prostitution. People began to scrutinize the different players within the realm of prostitution to assign blame and to aid victims as

---

<sup>14</sup> Fink, 3 & 19.

<sup>15</sup> "The Disorderly House," Des Moines Register and Leader, July 27, 1906.

needed. In doing so, society gained a better understanding of the institutions that posed the greatest danger to young women. This thesis will demonstrate that familial fears acted as a driving force for major social and legal reinterpretations of prostitution in Iowa throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Chapter Two will more fully explain the localized origins of these shifting perceptions by analyzing district court records and the testimonies of those most affected by the spread of prostitution. Chapter Three will discuss the continued spread of these perceptions throughout the media. Using newspaper articles, I will analyze the ways in which society reshaped their fears about prostitution and how these articles educated families and also functioned as a call to action. Chapters Four and Five will discuss the various ways in which society began to actually renegotiate the ways in which it dealt with prostitutes. Chapter Four will analyze how and why the court system changed the sentencing for prostitutes and discuss some of the flaws in this system. Chapter Five will then discuss the ways in which society began to reshape their reform techniques for prostitutes. This thesis will conclude with a discussion of the ways in which Iowans continued to perceive prostitution into the Depression Era and how the reform efforts they pursued on in the late nineteenth century continued to influence their approach to prostitution, despite dramatic social and economic shifts.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Nelson L. Tucker was enjoying the warm summer morning as he walked down East Court Avenue to the Des Moines Mill Manufacturing Company, where he worked as a clerk. As he passed the home of John Kline, he noticed an unfamiliar young girl sitting on the front stoop. He knew that Kline's sisters in law came to stay with him from time to time, but he had never seen this girl before and she looked a bit troubled. "Hello miss, my name is Nelson Tucker. I work just up the road at the Mill. Are you a relation of Mr. Kline's?" he asked. She shook her head and quickly explained that no, she had actually just arrived in Des Moines from Sioux Falls, South Dakota looking for work. Upon her arrival she had met a gentleman who told her that she could find work with Kline and had escorted her there. Kline's place was not what she had expected and she was not sure what she would do there. Upon hearing this, Tucker became quite concerned. He had known Kline about a year now and knew that he was not the sort of man who should be trusted with single young women. As far as Tucker knew, Kline did not work, but Tucker had often seen many coal haulers coming and going throughout the day. Tucker knew that this was not the place for a single young lady alone in the city. "At five o'clock, after the whistle blows," said Tucker, "I'll come right back here and get you a good place to stay." The girl smiled gratefully and thanked Tucker; she also said she would inform Kline that she would be leaving with Tucker that afternoon.

Tucker spent the rest of the day worrying about that poor girl. He had often seen Mrs. Kline strike her husband; he had never seen Kline lash out at his wife, but he still feared for the girl. More importantly, he remembered what had happened with Mrs. Kline's sister. She was a very young girl who was often charged with watching Kline's daughter. The child would often run away from the house and over to the mill, and Mrs. Kline's sister would

come chasing after her. Tucker never learned her name, but he did remember when the police had come and taken the girl away.

At five o'clock, Tucker crossed the alley at the back of the mill and headed to Kline's. Sure enough, the girl was sitting there, but when Tucker insisted she come with him, she refused. Tucker immediately knew something was wrong. While that morning she had seemed concerned and confused, the young girl now seemed terrified and yet she refused to leave Kline's. It was clear that her conversation with Kline about leaving his employment had not gone well. Tucker returned to the mill and called the police. He was afraid if he did not act quickly the girl would fall to the same fate as Mrs. Kline's sister. He also knew that this was the time of day when men began making their way to the Kline's house and Tucker feared the worst for the poor girl.

The police arrived shortly and Tucker showed them to Kline's. When they began questioning the girl, who sat there silently, Kline appeared in the front door. He tried to explain that this girl was his wife's cousin and was simply in town for a visit. Tucker quickly interjected, informing the police that that morning the girl had made it very clear to him that she was of no relation to Kline or his wife. Kline began to get heated, but in the end the police decided it was in the best interest of the young girl to leave Kline's house.<sup>16</sup>

This is a narrative retelling of Nelson A. Tucker's testimony, presented to the District Courts of Des Moines in August of 1892. Tucker's concern for the poor nameless girl from South Dakota and his dislike for men like Kline was typical of the time period; the late nineteenth century was a time which public opinion about the source of vice, particularly prostitution began to shift. Throughout the mid-nineteenth century, people saw prostitutes in

---

<sup>16</sup> State of Iowa vs. John Kline, 5732 1-2 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1892), County Office Archives.

Des Moines as corrupters of society or as the sad and pathetic victims of their own poor choices. Near the turn of the century there was a shift in the ways society viewed prostitution, more specifically, who was blamed for prostitution. While society portrayed girls, like the young woman from South Dakota in Tucker's testimony, as naive but well-meaning victims, people viewed men like Kline as lazy and selfish individuals who hoped to prosper by taking advantage of the women around them. This is not to say that people saw women as being entirely blameless. Citizens often viewed older and more experienced prostitutes as beyond redemption; because there was no hope of saving them, society viewed them as a threat, especially to young single women working in the city. Using the testimonies from district court records and newspaper articles, this chapter will examine the ways in which society decided who was to blame for the problems presented by prostitution, who needed to be saved from prostitution, and the threat that prostitution posed to both the family and societal structures.

As Tucker mentioned in his testimony, the police took John Kline's sister-in-law away. Mrs. Kline actually had two sisters, both of whom offered up testimony against Kline in the summer of 1892. One sister, Anna Foster, recalled a very telling conversation with Kline during her stay in Des Moines.

I am sixteen years old; last spring when I was here two weeks he says to me: 'Why do you work and do as your folks tell you?' and I says: 'Because it is honest;' and he says; 'Couldn't you do as Sadie [his wife]?' says I; 'What does she do?' and he says: 'She does all I tell her; she don't have to work like a dog;' and I says: 'Ma has always told us to be honest;' other times he wanted to know why I did not do as those women in the bottom, and I told

him I wanted to live decently; he said if I would do that way I could make a good deal more than I could by working...the week; he says; 'If you will stay with men and not take less than \$2.00 you can make from \$8.00 to \$10.00 a week and not have to work for \$2.00 a week, you may as well do that as not, and you won't have to do other people's biddings;' he said if I would do as he told me to I would get half I made; I told him when I worked out for wages I got it all.<sup>17</sup>

This conversation between Foster and her brother-in-law was very revealing for several reasons, the first of which being the problem that unemployed men posed to society. Men like Kline did not suffer from unemployment because of a lack of available jobs, which society might have more easily forgiven, but instead willfully chose to remain unemployed. They recognized an opportunity to profit from the labor of others, including single women, and took full advantage of it. Men like Kline recognized the difficult working conditions and poor compensation that women received in the workplace, but rather than fighting for greater equality, they chose to profit from this system by tempting women into prostitution with promises of higher wages and more freedom. In many ways, men like Kline acted as entrepreneurs, but society tended to despise their entrepreneurial spirit when it meant the sexual subjugation of hardworking and helpless women.

This conversation between Foster and Kline also demonstrated how men like Kline abused their patriarchal authority and worked to undermine family structures. Kline openly admitted to forcing his wife to work for him in manner that would generally have been considered improper, and while he did have a certain degree of legal control over his wife's

---

<sup>17</sup> State of Iowa vs. John Kline, 2-3.

actions, forcing her into prostitution was considered an abuse of the power awarded to him through a patriarchal system. In using his authority to force his wife into prostitution, he was tainting the prestige that came with patriarchal power and thereby threatening the ability of every other man to maintain patriarchal authority within the home and even within society as a whole. Kline continued to undermine family structures by questioning the judgment of Foster's parents.

The young and hardworking women coming to Des Moines at the turn of the century also faced another potential threat in the form of their landlords. In the 1888 case of the State of Iowa vs. L.P. Miller, one of L.P. Miller's tenants, Maud Louis, a young woman from Cedar Rapids working in Des Moines as a dressmaker, testified that she was paying \$8.75 a week for room and board.<sup>18</sup> Louis did not specify how much she actually made a week, but when this is compared to Anna Foster's income of \$2.00 a week, these rents were obscenely high.<sup>19</sup> It is very likely that men like Miller intentionally forced young women like Louis into impossible situations in which they would need to seek out a secondary source of income. In the 1891 case of the State of Iowa vs. Louis Hubbard, H. Reich, a man who testified against Louis Hubbard, recalled a conversation he had had with Hubbard. "I talked with defendant about the kind of people he had at his house; he said he did not know anything about them; that he rented them rooms, and that it was none of his business what they did."<sup>20</sup>

While the district courts charged these landlords with keeping houses of ill fame, they took great pains to explain what they meant by this charge. They specified that it was not simply enough for women of ill repute to be residing in these dwellings, but that the jury

---

<sup>18</sup> State of Iowa vs. L.P. Miller, 3013 14 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1888), County Office Archives.

<sup>19</sup> State of Iowa vs. John Kline, 2-3.

<sup>20</sup> State of Iowa vs. Louis Hubbard, 5438 1 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1891), County Office Archives.

must be convinced that the defendant had some knowledge that his tenants used their lodgings for the purpose of practicing prostitution.<sup>21</sup> The exchange between Hubbard and Reich would indicate that Hubbard was intentionally turning a blind eye to what was going on in his property because he did not want to jeopardize his income, therefore making him guilty of keeping a house of ill fame. Unlike Kline, men like Miller and Hubbard could claim that they were productive members of society and when asked about the types of tenants they kept they claimed plausible deniability, but, in fact, these men were just as guilty of promoting prostitution and abusing their patriarchal authority as Kline was.

While men like Kline were a threat to the women around them, they posed the greatest threat to their wives because of the legal control they held over them. In the 1904, Charles Bueche stood trial in the district courts of Des Moines for keeping a house of ill fame. During the trial, his wife Nellie testified that many times her husband had brought his friends home with him and he forced Nellie into bed with them. Beuche began bringing men home to his wife just a week after they had been married. He informed her that, “if [she] did not take the money [she] could get out of these men [she] could go without any from him.” She recalled that he would say to her, “go to it old woman, I will be back in about twenty minutes.” After they finished with her, the men each paid Nellie a dollar, which Beuche then used to take his friends out drinking. One night, Nellie refused to have sex with a man her husband brought home so he dragged her out of bed and “gave [her] a good pounding.” Just a week before his arrest, Nellie had gone home to visit her mother, most likely in an attempt to briefly escape her abusive marriage and possibly seek counsel. When she returned home

---

<sup>21</sup> State of Iowa vs. Louis Hubbard, 10.

Monday morning, she found that her husband had burnt all of her clothing, leaving her with only the clothes on her back.<sup>22</sup>

Men like Kline and Bueche used violence and intimidation to force their wives into prostitution, a profession that they may not have otherwise chosen for themselves. The actions of their husbands may have also had negative effects on the ways in which society perceived these women. Mrs. Beuche's testimony clearly illustrated that she was being victimized by her abusive husband, but in some cases, the ways in which women responded to their abusive husbands only worked to damage their own reputations. Such was the case with Kline's wife, her neighbors recalled her fighting in the street with her husband, calling him names, and striking him. These actions may have been out of frustration or self-defense, but because she lashed out at her husband in such a public manner her neighbors had a tendency to view her as a troubled woman who would naturally be drawn to a man like Kline.

Young women who came to the city looking for work also encountered threats outside of those posed by unemployed men. Older and more experienced women posed a serious threat to young women, by perpetuating prostitution through the recruitment of young women into their houses of ill fame, and for this reason they received very little sympathy. Perceived as confirmed degenerates, communities generally believed that they were beyond help and therefore did not generally expend any great effort to aid them.

In 1897, reformer C.M. Christian began visiting and interviewing prostitutes in the White Chapel district of Des Moines. The reformers hoped that by meeting with these women they could convince them to see the error of their ways. Unfortunately these women

---

<sup>22</sup> State of Iowa vs. Charles Bueche, 9052 1 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1904), County Office Archives.

were less optimistic. In his meeting with Alice Landre, a woman who had been practicing prostitution for nearly six years and went on trial in 1897, Christian found that Alice believed that there was no hope for redeeming herself or any other woman like her. Whenever the Salvation Army came to lead prayers in their neighborhoods, Alice and the other women would close their doors and pull down their blinds. Once, Alice recalled, the reformers had attempted to organize a rooming house up town. She had sought shelter there, but the reformers had been so pesky and overbearing that she eventually returned to White Chapel. Alice had hoped to lead a more virtuous life, but the persistent reformers, combined with the persecution she felt from the respectable members of society made her believe that redemption was impossible. Alice believed that these unsuccessful reform efforts may have been part of the reason that the number of prostitutes in the White Chapel neighborhood had increased over the past several years.<sup>23</sup>

Women like Landre painted a scary picture. They illustrated that if these women could not be saved from the evils of prostitution as soon as possible they would soon become the embodiment of all social evils and be completely beyond redemption. These fears were not unfounded. In court records, police officers often recounted the other crimes that prostitutes had committed. These included vagrancy, larceny, intoxication, and drug use.<sup>24</sup> But women like Landre also posed another threat. Their poor choices had made them desperate and ruthless and they were therefore not above preying on young women in order to survive.

At the turn of the century, articles began to appear in the newspapers describing incidents of white female slave trafficking. In October of 1905 articles ran about Jewish girls

---

<sup>23</sup> State of Iowa vs. Alice Landre, 7823 1 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1897), County Office Archives.

<sup>24</sup> State of Iowa vs. Lizzie Brubaker, 9923 1 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1909) County Office Archives.

being imported to Wisconsin and sold into “immoral slavery.”<sup>25</sup> That same month the Des Moines Register and Leader published another article about young girls being lured to from Chicago to China by high paying maidservant jobs, only to be sold into slavery. People were shocked to learn that there was no law prohibiting this sort of transaction.<sup>26</sup> While these stories were coming from Wisconsin and Chicago, they made Iowans nervous; what was to stop these people from crossing the border and preying on their hardworking and innocent daughters?

While in some ways it was comforting to pretend as if these sorts of things, such as prostitution and white slave trafficking, did not happen in Iowa, there were many instances where fears about white female slave trafficking and the influence of ruthless and desperate prostitutes came together; such was the case with Jennie Woods. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Woods was convicted several times for enticing young women into prostitution.<sup>27</sup> In July of 1899, Woods had been convicted of luring two young girls, Grace Davis, who was just sixteen, and her friend into prostitution. Davis was staying at a boarding house while working in Des Moines when she met Woods, who most likely went out of her way to target young single women in the city. Davis was known to complain about the low wages she was receiving and after about a week of knowing one another, Woods came to Davis’s room and asked her if she would be interested in going to a

---

<sup>25</sup> “Jewish Girl Victims: Of White Slave Traffic,” Des Moines Register and Leader, October 18, 1905.

<sup>26</sup> “Allege Traffic in American Girls: Are sent to China practically for sale as slaves,” Des Moines Register and Leader, October 18, 1905.

<sup>27</sup> *State of Iowa vs. Jennie Woods*, 8000 2 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1898), County Office Archives and *State of Iowa vs. Jennie Woods*, 8000 4 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1899), County Office Archives. These are the only two cases I was able to come across, but it is not unreasonable to assume that there were other instances in which she was convicted of similar crimes associated with prostitution and the trafficking of young women.

place where she “could make a good deal of money.”<sup>28</sup> Woods explained that it was a house of prostitution and that she had been there before. Davis was hesitant, but she promised that she would go so long as Woods could convince Davis’s friend, the landlady’s daughter May, to join them.

On the eighth of December the three women left on the three o’clock train for Council Bluffs. They stayed the night there and took a hack to Grand Island, Nebraska around eight thirty the next morning. Arriving at about two o’clock, the young women were greeted by Maggie Mustard, the proprietress of the house and the woman who had hired Woods to recruit girls. Mustard’s house was located about a mile and a half outside of Grand Island. As she departed, Woods informed the girls that they would have to pay Mustard two dollars a week for board and that she would be keeping half of their profits from any business they might do.

The girls generally charged between two and three dollars per client, which meant they would be making anywhere from a dollar to a dollar and fifty cents to keep for themselves. There were eight other girls living in the house when Davis and her friend arrived. They stayed with Mustard for two months and during that time two other women came to Mustard’s house via Woods.<sup>29</sup> A few months later, Des Moines police officer, J.M. Dailey, arrested Woods. While searching Woods’ lodgings, Dailey found her correspondence with the girls in Grand Island. He contacted Davis’ parents and set out for Grand Island to retrieve the two young women. When he got there and located Davis, Mustard allowed her to go, but told Dailey there was no point in trying to shut down the house because Woods, who

---

<sup>28</sup> State of Iowa vs. Jennie Woods, 3-4.

<sup>29</sup> State of Iowa vs. Jennie Woods, 4.

was already awaiting trial, was in the process of bringing her more young women that night.<sup>30</sup>

At the turn of the century, women like Woods, the desperate and unredeemable prostitute, and men like Kline, the lazy and manipulative pimp, represented some of society's greatest fears. Girls like the young woman who Tucker found on Kline's front porch or Davis were coming to the city in search of work. As was the case with the young girl in Tucker's testimony, sometimes these women did not know where to begin their search for work and easily fell prey to men like Kline; it was probably no coincidence that the first person she asked for help in finding work took her straight to Kline. The same can be said for Davis and her interactions with Woods. While Davis was able to successfully find work and a safe place to live, her open dissatisfaction with her wages made her an easy target for someone like Woods. While other young women, like Kline's sister-in-law, Foster, had the moral fortitude to resist the temptations posed by prostitution, many women, like Davis, had easily been lured in by the promise of higher wages, an easier lifestyle, and greater independence.

These young and bright-eyed girls from the country were easy targets for the manipulative men and women of the city, but they were not the only victims of prostitution. The testimonies from District Court records reveal a strong concern for the effects that prostitution had on the family. Often times, prostitutes inhabited the same neighborhoods as poor working class families. On the most basic level, the late hours and noisy lifestyle of prostitutes acted as a disturbance to their surrounding neighbors. In the case against Kittie Wright, a woman charged with keeping a house of ill fame in 1904, her establishment just happened to be located above a family owned restaurant. J.A. Clark, who owned the

---

<sup>30</sup> State of Iowa vs. Jennie Woods, 3.

restaurant below her, complained of the constant noises and damages Wright and her clients made to their property. Clark also made it a point to mention he lived with his wife, his fifteen year-old daughter and his twelve year-old son.<sup>31</sup> While he did not come right out and say it, it was clear that Clark was concerned about the effects that his disreputable neighbor might have on his children. The young women boarding with Wright were a temptation to his young son, while both the men who visited Wright and the women who lived with her might try to lure his daughter into prostitution.

When people were not living in fear for their own children, they were concerned for the wellbeing of the children of prostitutes. In several instances, police officers explained that they had known certain prostitutes since these women were just children, no more than seven or eight years old.<sup>32</sup> In other cases, the women themselves admitted that they had been “inclined that way since childhood.”<sup>33</sup> If these women could not lead moral lives for themselves, how could they possibly raise children properly? In 1889, Babe Childers faced the charge of running a house of ill fame; in his testimony against her, local policeman Ira Miller, stated that Childers was living with her son, who he guessed to be about nineteen, and her daughter, who he supposed was between thirteen and sixteen years-old. Miller then noted that Childers’ daughter was not one of the women that he knew to be working as a prostitute, the implication being that she was not *yet* working as a prostitute.<sup>34</sup> This implication was not unfounded. In 1888, Chas A. Moore testified against his neighbor, Anna Buck, who had been charged with keeping a house of ill fame. Moore claimed that Buck had been running a house

---

<sup>31</sup> State of Iowa vs. Kittie Wright, 9094 3 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1904), County Office Archives.

<sup>32</sup> State of Iowa vs. Mabel Cole, 10008 5 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1909), County Office Archives.

<sup>33</sup> State of Iowa vs. Jennie Ross, 7824 3 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1898), County Office Archives.

<sup>34</sup> State of Iowa vs. Babe Childers, 4063 9 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1899), County Office Archives.

of ill fame and was concerned that Buck was employing both her daughter and her stepdaughter there.<sup>35</sup>

In many cases these two fears, the concerns about the effects of prostitution on neighboring children and the parenting abilities of prostitutes overlapped. Maggie Matrid was a prime example of this. Convicted several times of keeping a house of ill fame, Matrid was a mother, a wife, and a small time madam. In 1888, Matrid faced the charge of keeping a house of ill fame. Matrid claimed that because her husband had left her alone to support their four children she needed to hold dances in order to make ends meet.<sup>36</sup> She told policeman George P. Morgan that the county was paying her rent and that “she was compelled to do things that she would not otherwise do.”<sup>37</sup> Although Matrid claimed not to be a prostitute and denied having any knowledge of hosting prostitutes, local police and her neighbors testified to having seen known prostitutes in bed with men at Matrid’s home and even claimed to have seen Matrid in bed with men.<sup>38</sup> When police raided Matrid’s home, they found her upstairs in bed with her children and claimed that she had no knowledge of what was going on downstairs; when they took her down to the station, she brought her children with her.<sup>39</sup> Everyone who testified against Matrid mentioned the children in their testimonies. The witnesses did not seem to be openly passing judgment on Matrid at this point; instead, they appeared to be skeptically sympathetic to her situation. The constant mention of the presence of the children indicated a certain level of concern for Matrid’s parenting skills and how they would affect her children in the long run.

---

<sup>35</sup> State of Iowa vs. Anna Buck, 3041 5 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1888), County Office Archives.

<sup>36</sup> State of Iowa vs. Maggie Matrid, 3097 3 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1888), County Office Archives.

<sup>37</sup> State of Iowa vs. Maggie Matrid, 1.

<sup>38</sup> State of Iowa vs. Maggie Matrid, 2.

<sup>39</sup> State of Iowa vs. Maggie Matrid, 5.

In 1888, it is likely that Matrid got off with a fine of some sort, because a year later, in 1889, she was again charged with keeping a house of ill fame, this time with her associate, Maggie Stropp. Similar to the previous year, witnesses were concerned about the presence of Matrid's children and of what they were being exposed to. Her neighbor, S.J. Goldsmith, stated that he had "heard Mrs. Matrat call her husband an 'old cock-sucking son-of-a-bitch'; before the children."<sup>40</sup> In addition to the continuing fears about Matrid's children, neighbors were concerned about the effect that Matrid was having on their own children. Her neighbor, Hattie E. Abel, had these exact concerns; in her testimony she stated, "my little girl told me of the actions of the very worst that she has seen there."<sup>41</sup>

The court then brought forward Abel's ten year-old daughter Mable, to describe what she had witnessed in the Matrid household. Mable was most likely one the few children living in the neighborhood and it would not have been unheard of for her to seek out companionship with those closer to her in age. Children were very often a side effect of prostitution. Society frowned upon these children for a variety of reasons. One area of concern may have been that the children of prostitutes represented potential playmates for other children in the neighborhood. Parents most likely feared that the negative influences of prostitute parents might have an influence over their own children if they were faced with constant exposure to their immoral lifestyle.<sup>42</sup> Like many others who testified against Matrid, Mable noted the constant presence of young children. While others had estimated that there were only three or four children present in the home, Mable, who had spent a significant

---

<sup>40</sup> State of Iowa vs. Maggie Matrid and Maggie Stropp, 5008 5 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1889), County Office Archives.

<sup>41</sup> State of Iowa vs. Maggie Matrid and Maggie Stropp, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Mary Murphy, "The Private Lives of Public Women: Prostitution in Butte, Montana, 1878-1917," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 7, no. 3 (1984): 32.

amount of time in the Matrid home, stated that there were, in fact, five; she said there were “three little ones, quite small; the little girls are about three or four years old,” and that the oldest of the children was an eight year old boy.<sup>43</sup> This is significant because in the previous year, police officers had guessed that Matrid’s oldest child would have been a twelve year-old girl they found in her home.<sup>44</sup> If she was not, in fact, Matrid’s daughter, it is very likely that she was actually a young prostitute recruited by Matrid.

Mable described some of the behavior she had witnessed in the Matrid household...

I was there once, in the house, and there was a lady on the floor and a man, and the man was rolling over with her, scuffling awfully; the man was on top of the woman, and he says: ‘Now, who is on top?’ and a man came in and says: ‘Get up from here, you nasty bitch; if you don’t get up I will take the broom stick to you’<sup>45</sup>

From the offhanded way in which Mable described this incident, it is clear that Mable was not fully aware of what she was witnessing. The problem was that witnessing this sort of behavior would only work to familiarize her with it. Parents, like Abel, were understandably fearful that the exposure of their children to this sort of behavior would taint their moral wellbeing eventually lead them down a similar path. It is very likely that Abel was a working parent and as such it was difficult to constantly keep an eye on her daughter. As a mother, ideally she should not have to worry about her daughter playing with the neighborhood children, but the children of prostitutes represented a clear threat to others. It is clear that none of these children were fully aware of what they were witnessing, but by drawing them

---

<sup>43</sup> State of Iowa vs. Maggie Matrid and Maggie Stropp, 4.

<sup>44</sup> State of Iowa vs. Maggie Matrid, 5.

<sup>45</sup> State of Iowa vs. Maggie Matrid and Maggie Stropp. 4.

in and familiarizing their peers with the actions, language, and violence associated with prostitution, the threat of prostitution spread throughout the neighborhood and threatened to taint another generation.

Throughout the end of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, the people of Des Moines began to reassess their perceptions of prostitution. While they still acknowledged that it was a clear and ever present threat to society, they began shifting blame away from women as a whole and started identifying specific groups as the instigators of prostitution. Society despised unemployed men who knowingly recruited and profited from the efforts of women and viewed them as a primary cause for the perpetuation of prostitution. In some cases, the community also blamed landlords for promoting prostitution because of their willingness to turn a blind eye to its presence in their properties in order to protect their profits. Not surprisingly, society often blamed confirmed prostitutes for the continuation of prostitution because of their willingness to profit off the recruitment of young women into the fold.

While society began to redefine who was to blame for the continuation of prostitution, they also began to reshape their perceptions of who faced the most harm from prostitution. Young women were the obvious victims. In some cases, they were naïve and foolhardy, but in most cases they were young hard working women who were simply frustrated with the low wages offered to them by employers. A secondary victim of prostitution was the family as a whole. Greedy and unemployed men who profited off the sinful labors of women were seen as abusers of patriarchal authority, which worked to undermine the role of men in the community and in the home. In addition, the exposure of children to lewd behavior worked to corrupt them and undermine the level of control that

parents were able to maintain over the raising of their children. In determining that prostitution represented a clear threat to the family, the people of Des Moines near the turn of the century began reinterpreting their long held perceptions of prostitution.

## CHAPTER THREE: INTERPRETATION OF THE PROBLEM

Sitting in the dark and dingy courtroom, the reporter for the Des Moines Register and Leader could not help but notice the varied turnout for the Dickerhoff trial. Immaculately dressed men were seated next to those who looked as if they had just left the prisoner's box themselves. They had all gathered to witness the much-anticipated testimonies of Myrtle and Anna Tolman, the two young Lamoni girls whom John Dickerhoff and his wife had lured to Des Moines under false pretenses. First to the stand was Emma Boatwright, a known prostitute the prosecution intended to use to establish the sinful nature of the Dickerhoffs. It was sadly obvious to all in the room that the years of vice had taken their toll on Boatwright, making the young woman look ragged and world-weary. As the prosecution began its line of questioning, Boatwright hesitated, clearly uncomfortable sharing her story with this gawking crowd of strangers, but she took a breath and bravely answered the questions posed to her.

"Miss Boatwright, where did you live before coming to Des Moines?" asked the prosecutor, Mr. Miller.

"About eight miles east of the city," replied the girl.

"When did you first come to Des Moines?" asked Miller.

"In August, 1903," she replied.

"How old are you?"

"Eighteen years."

"How long have you been an inmate of a house of ill fame?" asked the attorney.

"Since I came to Des Moines last August."

After admitting that she had resided with the Dickerhoffs' on several occasions and briefly describing how they ran their establishment, Boatwright was allowed to leave the

stand. As she exited the room an anxious chatter erupted among the crowd, but was quickly silenced by the call for Myrtle Tolman to take the stand. There was a hushed gasp as Tolman entered the room; in comparison to the sad and tired Boatwright, Tolman was a handsome young woman with long wavy black hair. She was outfitted stylishly in a chic spring creation that set her apart from the dark and dirty surroundings. Gracefully taking a seat in the witness stand, Tolman answered the questions posed to her quietly yet forcibly. She explained that while living in Lamoni she had written to Mr. Dickerhoff in hopes of obtaining a position within his household. The prosecutor then brought forth several letters, which Tolman identified as her own, and allowed the jury to examine. She then described her experience upon her arrival in Des Moines:

'We went to the Dickerhoff house,' she said. 'Immediately after arriving here. After supper we were invited by Mr. and Mrs. Dickerhoff to attend the theater. We accepted the invitation and went. After the performance was over we returned to the house on Court avenue. Together with my sister I sat in the front room for a short time. Several young men entered the house at the same time and went to a rear room. While we were sitting in the front part of the house Mrs. Dickerhoff called me to the rear room, saying that she wished to speak with me. I went to her and was asked if I did not wish to entertain a gentleman.'

At this, the room seemed to let out a collective gasp; groups broke out into outraged chatter and some even began to jeer at the Dickerhoffs. Tolman waited patiently as the judge called the room to order. She then continued by explaining:

I replied 'certainly not,' and returned to where I was. I then called my sister, at the same time telling Mr. Dickerhoff that we were going out and would return in a short time. I was afraid that if I exhibited any fear or said that I would not return, he would refuse to let me go. My sister and I left the house and went to Valley Junction.<sup>46</sup>

Coverage of the Dickerhoff Trial dominated the local papers for weeks; ultimately the sympathetic jury sided with the young women from Lamoni, but stories about whether or not Mr. Dickerhoff had escaped prison or if Mrs. Dickerhoff would have to face jail time continued to run in the papers for weeks. The people of Des Moines had become emotionally invested in the trial, not only because it was a shocking scandal, which made for good gossip, but also because they believed people like the Dickerhoffs posed a real threat to their own families.

Unfortunately, only those whose lives had been directly affected by the presence of prostitution shared these initial realizations; these people included police officers, individuals who worked in or near neighborhoods inhabited by prostitutes, families who lived near prostitutes, and the young women who had the bad luck to be lured into prostitution. These individuals could only share their experiences through their testimony in the district courts and potentially with their neighbors, family members, and friends through gossip. The changing perceptions about the perpetrators and victims of prostitution began in the 1880s with those most affected; it was not until the 1890s that newspapers began to sound the alarm and alert the public to the dangers posed to their family by unemployed men and confirmed prostitutes. In the 1890s, not only did newspapers begin to publicize what had only been

---

<sup>46</sup> "Lamoni Girls Tell Story of Escape," Des Moines Register and Leader, May 26, 1904.

previously shared in testimony, but they also began to publish more investigative reports as well. This chapter will explore the ways in which newspapers presented this new understanding of prostitution, the differing ways in which writers interpreted the problem posed by prostitution, and the ways in which these media portrayals inspired public action.

In 1895, the Iowa State Register began publishing a series of exposés on the Tenderloin District of Des Moines. An article published on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1895, revealed what went on at a dance in the White Chapel neighborhood of Des Moines. The author described the small cramped two room house. It was ill lit, with only one small window and coats piled everywhere. The air was hot and stifling and reeked of beer and liquor. The twirling skirts of the dancing women kicked up clouds of dust and dirt that choked all present. The music was awful; with only an out-of-tune piano, a cracked violin, and a lame guitar the inept musicians played the same quadrille over and over. The dance floor could barely hold four couples and with far many more men present than women, they numbered off and took turns spinning the same women around the room.

The men at these dances were some of the lowest and most disreputable in Des Moines. With their hair combed over, dark rings around their eyes, and tobacco juice staining their chins, they drunkenly tried to outdo one another on the dance floor. In contrast, some young and finely dressed gentlemen partook in these dances as a lark. The men flirted and danced with any woman present. Their clothes did nothing to distinguish them, with some women dressed in white calico dresses and broken corsets and others in fine silk dresses that hung off their shoulders rather than their necks. The author described their garb as, “costumes...meant for the ball room and for the gutter.” The women present also varied in age and levels of experience. The author recalled one young woman, “a young girl- she could

not have been sixteen years of age- was there and she was pained at some of the vulgarity she saw,” and another woman who was clearly familiar with this sort of environment. The author described, “hags there too, women with blackened teeth and wrinkled faces filled with paint. They leered into the faces of men and in an undertone solicited that which the presence of officers prevented them from soliciting aloud.”

Many of the women smoke and chewed gum. In some cases they appeared to be drunker than the men. As they danced, the author began to note a change in the women.

A haggard look crept into the eye of the women as in dancing they forgot the pleasure they believed they were having and the look was always followed by a more complete abandonment to the embrace of the liquor filled partner who was all too eager to pass his arm about his companion at any stage in the quadrille.<sup>47</sup>

According to this author, while women initially entered these dances looking for fun and frivolity, as the night wore on they became more and more aware of the painful consequences of their short-term pleasure.

These dance halls acted as a forum in which young working women demonstrated their social freedoms. In many ways, dance halls acted as a gateway to prostitution. After interacting with prostitutes in dance halls, young women may have very likely become enticed by the fine goods, leisurely lifestyle, and seeming independence that prostitutes maintained. Realizing that their own honest labors would never result in this kind of luxury, some young women became what was known as “charity girls;” these young women exchanged sexual favors in return for gifts from their male suitors. While this term

---

<sup>47</sup> “About a Whitechapel Dance,” Iowa State Register, March 24, 1895.

technically differentiated these women from prostitutes, it would not be unreasonable to assume that “charity girls” would eventually make their way into full time prostitution.<sup>48</sup>

In the same year, evangelists began going out and surveying the White Chapel district of Des Moines in a similar fashion. They issued detailed reports of gambling dens and brothels that revealed much of the same information as the report about the dances. They watched the young men and women flood in and out of these sites of immorality and worried over how many lives had been forever destroyed by one night in Des Moines.<sup>49</sup> These fears motivated authors to warn the community, particularly parents, about what they saw occurring in the city. Events, like dances, which should have been innocent entertainment, instead put the moral well being of their children at risk. These articles worked to expose the reality of the slums of Des Moines and in many ways acted as an early call to action.

These articles worked to incite parents; in 1906, one mother wrote an editorial to the Des Moines Register and Leader about the effects of disorderly houses in Des Moines. She said,

If our daughter can walk out streets in safety only through the sacrifice of our neighbor's daughter, then our civilization is a failure. Any father or mother who claims that houses of prostitution are a "necessity" let him or her be a loyal citizen and stand ready to sacrifice a daughter for the city's good.<sup>50</sup>

Her concerns were not unfounded. Throughout the early part of the twentieth century, stories detailing the mistreatment of young women, sometimes due to the naiveté of their parents, flooded newspapers. Such was the case with Isabelle Harleas and Nellie Johnson, two

---

<sup>48</sup> Peiss, 66, 110-111.

<sup>49</sup> “William’s Slumming Trip,” Iowa State Register, August 31, 1901.

<sup>50</sup> “The Disorderly House,” Des Moines Register and Leader, July 27, 1906.

fourteen year-old girls who inadvertently found themselves working in a house of ill fame. Their mothers brought the girls to Des Moines under the assumption that they would be assisting with housekeeping in what they most likely thought to be a boarding house.<sup>51</sup> After their mothers had left, the proprietors of the house, Alice Miller and Sylvia Connor, informed the young women that they should “conduct themselves as the other inmates of the house.” The police managed to inadvertently save the girls during a raid on the house; the girls quickly informed the officers of their dilemma and they reunited them with their families in Mitchellville.<sup>52</sup> Stories like these not only struck fear into the hearts of parents, but also worked to both educate them and put them on guard.

In addition to warnings about the dangers their daughters faced in seeking employment, newspapers also cautioned parents about the company that their daughters kept. In 1905, the story about a pretty fifteen year-old girl named Cordelia Young gained quite a bit of attention. Young’s mother appeared in court to file “sensational” charges against Minnie Carroll, whom she believed was trying to abduct her daughter. Both the Young family and Carroll lived in Valley Junction when Carroll befriended the younger girl. Carroll eventually tried to convince Young to run away to St. Louis with her. She claimed to know a man in Des Moines who was an agent for a carnival company and had promised to make them famous actresses if they joined him.<sup>53</sup> It is unclear whether or not Carroll was actually trying to lure Young into prostitution or if she simply believed she would be joining a circus

---

<sup>51</sup> The article does not state what sort of establishment the mothers believed they were leaving their daughters in, but since a majority of brothels tried to pass themselves off as boarding houses it is not unreasonable to assume that this may have been the case as well.

<sup>52</sup> “Women Get Long Sentence,” Iowa State Register, November 1, 1901.

<sup>53</sup> “Woman Arrested for Enticing Young Girl” 1905.

in St. Louis and wanted her friend to accompany her.<sup>54</sup> Either way the community was alerted of her presence and efforts made to locate the man behind this scheme.<sup>55</sup> The fact that the community immediately assumed that Carroll was a corrupt woman trafficking young girls for some villainous man and not simply a naïve young woman with dreams of fame demonstrates how greatly society feared the spread of prostitution and the effect that it would have on their families.

In many cases, parents had a difficult time protecting their daughters when threats came from both their social circles and the workplace. Bertha Smorenberg was a perfect example of this dilemma. Described as a “winsome young woman,” she had been working in the dining room at the New American house in Pella when she was reunited with an old friend who convinced her to come to Des Moines to seek employment. Interestingly, bystanders claimed to have seen Smorenberg speaking with “a woman from Des Moines known as one of evil reputation,” and immediately feared, “that she was being procured for some Des Moines house of unsavory reputation.” Was it that Smorenberg was actually associating with a woman of ill fame or had she actually been meeting with a friend and this was the conclusion that her neighbors jumped to after she went missing? Either way, once she arrived in Des Moines, an officer stopped Smorenberg as she attempted to enter a house

---

<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately, at this time circus performers and actresses generally had fairly poor reputations because of the very public and objectified role that they played within society. Whether or not Young and her cohort were fully aware of the effects that this decision to join the circus would have on their reputations is unclear. Brenda Foley, Undressed For Success: Beauty Contestants and Exotic Dancers as Merchants of Morality. (Palgrave MacMillan: New York, 2005.) 14.

<sup>55</sup> “Woman Arrested for Enticing Young Girl,” Des Moines Register and Leader, November 1, 1905.

of ill fame. She then immediately, “came to her senses when the police took her in charge and she was willing to go back to the work she left.”<sup>56</sup>

Again, as in the case of Cordelia Young, there may have been a more reasonable conclusion as to why Smorenberg left Pella for Des Moines. It would not be unreasonable to assume that Smorenberg was frustrated by her job in Pella. While working at the New American house, she may have run into an old friend who informed her of the higher wages, more employment options, and greater degree of freedom available to women in Des Moines. Being young and a bit naïve, Smorenberg followed her friend to Des Moines and just like many women before her, sought out what she believed to be a boarding house, but was actually a house of ill fame. Instead of portraying the story in this manner, the author wrote it in such a way so as to fuel fears about women in the workplace, the influence of prostitutes over honest women, and the dangers faced by country girls coming to the city in search of work.

While work and socializing for young women posed serious concerns for parents in the early twentieth century, education also came to be seen as a threat to their daughters’ wellbeing. Near the turn of the century some parents began sending their daughters to college, but many worried about the level of freedom that would be afforded to them. Fay Epperson was a perfect representation of these fears. She had grown up in Ames, but recently migrated to Des Moines in order to attend business college and secure employment in the city. After three weeks without hearing from their daughter, her parents became concerned. Her father made the journey to Des Moines where he eventually tracked down the, “sadly

---

<sup>56</sup> “Saved Girl From Life of Shame,” Des Moines Register and Leader, November 23, 1904.

repentant,” young woman in a house of ill fame and escorted her home after her, “three weeks whirl in Des Moines amidst the dazzling glitter of the underworld.”<sup>57</sup>

All of these accounts used very descriptive and romantic language in their depictions of these young women so that they appeared to be sweet, but wayward victims. In the case of Cordelia Young, the reporter emphasized how young and pretty she was and noted the “sensational” charges being brought against Minnie Carroll.<sup>58</sup> The emphasis on Young’s appearance may not have been simply vain interest, but rather was meant to emphasize her youth and thereby her innocence and purity. Likewise, the “sensational” charges most likely were not meant to imply that they had been over exaggerated, but rather to emphasize the incredible danger that young women faced in being lured into prostitution. In the case of Bertha Smorenberg, the article began by stating, “Bertha Smorenberg of Pella can look upon November 22 as a crucial day in her life,” and later went on to emphasize the way the officer saved her in just in the nick of time and immediately came to her senses and realized the error of her ways.<sup>59</sup> The opening sentence highlighted the tremendous consequences that could have potentially come from her actions. The author emphasized her rural roots by associating her with Pella, implying that she was a sweet country girl who could easily be lured in and corrupted by the big city. The immediacy and pure luck of Smorenberg’s rescue would have potentially illustrated the difficulties associated with retrieving their fallen daughters and highlighted the need to protect them from these temptations in the first place.

---

<sup>57</sup> “Father Finds Girl In Notorious Resort,” Des Moines Register and Leader, November 9, 1904.

<sup>58</sup> “Woman Arrested for Enticing Young Girl,” Des Moines Register and Leader, November 1, 1905.

<sup>59</sup> “Saved Girl From Life of Shame,” Des Moines Register and Leader, November 23, 1904.

The way in which Smorenberg came to her senses in the end may have been a beacon of hope for parents, reassurance that if they raised their daughters with enough sense and moral fiber they would be able to resist the temptations posed to them, just as Anna Foster had resisted John Kline. In the case of Fay Epperson, the author lent some sort of legitimacy to the temptations these young women faced in describing them as “dazzling” and noted the way in which women inadvertently got caught up in the “whirl,” but in the end, like Smorenberg, she was “sadly repentant.”<sup>60</sup>

No story better reflected the romanticized perceptions of the threats posed to young women through prostitution than the story of poor Mary Quimby, a young who, “had a taste of fallen life and it is not what she thought it would be.” Her story began as follows:

Miss Quimby is a pretty miss, and maybe somebody has told her so. Whether for this or some other reason she left her home on the farm and came to Des Moines. Her uncle searched high and low for her, and he even feared that she might have met her death in some unaccountable manner.

A few weeks later,

A young farmer boy who happened to be in police court caught a glimpse of the young woman. Three weeks had given her a careworn expression, and her beauty was not as it had been, but the young fellow recognized her. Her name was among others, and they were charged with a crime that is common upon police records. The young man did not hesitate a minute. He went to the barn where he had left his team, and drove with haste to the farm of the girl’s

---

<sup>60</sup> “Father Finds Girl In Notorious Resort,” Des Moines Register and Leader, November 9, 1904.

uncle. 'I have found her,' he said, when he hailed the old man, and as he spoke the face of the uncle broadened into a joyous smile.

But when the young farmer informed the uncle where he had found his niece, he was less than pleased. Feeling that his niece had abused his trust and generosity over the years, he angrily informed the farmer that she might stay where she was and told him, "If you see her, sir, tell her that she may die there, and I hope that she will."

Thankfully, her uncle had a change of heart. The next day he called on the young farmer. "Do you suppose," he said, quietly, "Do you suppose we can find her again if we go over there?" The younger man was certain that they could and together they went to Des Moines. When they arrived there, they found the young girl and learned that the charge against her was not as bad as they had believed. The uncle spent hours pleading his niece's case and defending her character. He thought if maybe he could just bring her home with him then she could return to her virtuous ways. Eventually the police consented; they told the older farmer, 'If the girl will go she may, and the charge will be forgotten.' The young girl readily agreed to return home with her uncle, having been quite shaken by her unfortunate time in the city. While she was elated to be returning home, the girl could not help but be ashamed when face to face with her uncle. She could not help but wonder how he would ever accept her after what she had done, but her uncle did not see in her the siren of the slums, instead he only saw the daughter of his brother. An hour later he tenderly lifted her into the old spring buggy and they drove back to the home on the farm."<sup>61</sup>

Based on the lack of specific details about Quimby's reasons for going to the city and the very detailed narrative portions, it is very likely that this was actually a fictionalized

---

<sup>61</sup> "Girl Found Gold was Crude Brass," Des Moines Register and Leader, May 22, 1904.

account. While this story would have been a cautionary tale to both young women and their parents, that may not have been its primary purpose. The emphasis on Quimby's uncle makes it much more likely that this story was aimed at the parents or guardians of young women. While other accounts warned parents of the dangers their daughters might potentially face, this story seemed to be creating a sort of framework for ways in which parents should cope with the mistakes their children made. Rather than harshly casting their daughters aside, parents should instead find it in their hearts to forgive their daughters' indiscretions and do what they could to save them from a life lived permanently in sin.

The cautionary tales of girls like Mary Quimby, Cordelia Young, Bertha Smorenberg, and Fay Epperson did more than simply educate parents, they also inspired groups to take action against those institutions and individuals that posed a threat to young women. While in some cases private groups of citizens spearheaded these initiatives, often times they had some sort of religious affiliation. The Mission in White Chapel was one such organization. They held meetings six days a week, which acted more like a Bible study and encouraged prayer and gospel singing. Attendance at these meetings was often irregular and in some ways seemed to intimidate and antagonize the women, who claimed they could "scarcely bear" the singing; on one occasion, a newly reformed woman even ran from the room with her hands over her ears. The Mission also attempted to make house calls on fallen women, but in many cases these ventures proved unprofitable. The mission also attempted to infiltrate and influence the community through educating children, but they often had trouble making sure that children attended school regularly. They realized their mission was more effective with women who sought them out or with women whom they happened to have chance

encounters.<sup>62</sup> While many of their actions focused on reforming the women inhabiting the White Chapel district of Des Moines, they also acted as a sort of safety net for any newly fallen women. This may have been their most effective reformation technique, since young women, like Bertha Smorenberg and Fay Epperson, would have potentially been more receptive to redemption and had a greater chance of being taken back by their families.

In many cases, women within the community dominated these religious and social groups. One such group was the Young Women's Christian Association, or the YWCA. Recognizing the troubles faced by single women coming to the city, in 1905 they sought to solve some of these problems by offering women safe places to lodge. They created a new boarding house directory to which women would apply; the application process would require women to reveal their name, age, hometown, and verify their employment before they could be accepted for housing.<sup>63</sup> The YWCA recognized not only the challenges to young women faced coming to the city in search of employment, but also the threat posed to these women through the lack of safe housing, as discussed in chapter 2. The YWCA was supportive of young women's endeavors and independence, and worked to further encourage their efforts by finding them good and respectable housing.

In other instances, larger social issues motivated religious organizations. In response to the Dickerhoff trial, ministers took action in order to protect young girls. They formed a delegation of the East Des Moines ministers and began working with the Chief of Police in order to promote the prosecution of all people charged with enticing young women into houses of ill repute. While the ministers had been concerned for the wellbeing of the young women coming to Des Moines for some time, they felt compelled to take action after

---

<sup>62</sup> "The Mission in Whitechapel," Iowa State Register, May 12, 1901.

<sup>63</sup> "Offer Protection to Strange Girls," Des Moines Register and Leader, November 17, 1905.

becoming aware of the dishonorable motives of people like the Dickerhoffs; they resolved to play a larger and more active role in the protection of young women by ensuring that each and every case in which a young woman was unknowingly lured into a house of ill fame was prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. In order to do so, the ministers began working more closely with the police, keeping surveillance on the brothels, and generally keeping a better eye out for young women newly arrived to the city.<sup>64</sup> In this way, ministers made themselves the guardians of the community. It is also very likely that through their efforts they involved other members of their churches as well, making this a community effort against prostitution.

In 1908, the citizens of Des Moines went on a crusade to break up the “trust,” a group of men behind all of the gambling dens, liquor sales, and prostitution in Des Moines. These houses of vice had to close their doors and as a result hundreds of prostitutes found themselves homeless and destitute. The women of Des Moines took on the task of aiding these fallen women through the establishment of a rescue home. It was the women of Des Moines who first suggested that something be done about these abandoned women.<sup>65</sup> They took on the task of scouting potential locations, choosing a home, and appointing a head matron for the former prostitutes.<sup>66</sup> These proactive women recognized the opportunity to potentially reform hundreds of fallen women. With no place to go, the good Christian women could offer them shelter, show them the error of their ways, and hopefully guide them down a better path. Unfortunately, their plan was met with some resistance. Many of the former inmates of these dens of ill repute saw these refuge homes for what they truly were, a

---

<sup>64</sup> “Ministers Want to Improve Morals,” Des Moines Register and Leader, April 26, 1904.

<sup>65</sup> “Women Will Find a Refuge Home,” Des Moines Register, September 12, 1908.

<sup>66</sup> “Will Select Home For Fallen Women,” Des Moines Register, September 18, 1908 and “Matron Chosen for Rescue Home,” Des Moines Register, September 17, 1908.

subversive means of reform, and had absolutely no interest. They resisted the efforts to move them into these homes and the city responded by making residence in these homes compulsory.<sup>67</sup> While women played a more active role in the relocation of prostitutes, they continued to encounter difficulties in reforming those confirmed prostitutes who they believed posed one of the greatest threats to their family and society as a whole.

Other organizations, like the Humane Society's representatives, played an active role in the prevention of prostitution. In instances where young girls ran away from home the Humane Society helped to track these young women down and reunite them with their families. In some cases, they played a larger role in mediating situations that had the potential to lead young women down the wrong path. In 1904, sixteen year-old Laura Dixon ran away from home. When the Humane Society tracked her down in a disorderly house in Des Moines, she fought with them for some time, insisting that she was nineteen years-old and refusing to go with them. After a while, she broke down and explained that she had run away from home due to ill treatment. The Humane Society took her with them and made efforts to look into her family situation.<sup>68</sup> Abuse at home was likely to make children run away. Unfortunately, upon doing so, they often found themselves in equally terrible circumstances, just as Dixon did. By stepping in on the behalf of the child, the Humane Society was able to prevent the further spread of prostitution among the youth.

The changing perceptions of the perpetrators and victims of prostitution drove these public actions. As the knowledge of the effects of prostitution on the family spread out of their localized neighborhood and throughout the city and nearby countryside, Des Moines'

---

<sup>67</sup> "To Refuse Rescue Home," Des Moines Register, September 27, 1908 and "Rescue Home Compulsory," Des Moines, September 29, 1908.

<sup>68</sup> "Young Girl Found in Disorderly House," Des Moines Register and Leader, August 31, 1904.

residents became more actively involved in the fight against prostitution. One of the greatest proponents of this cause was the newspaper. Newspapers took these changing localized perceptions and spread them throughout the city. The language they used to describe these occurrences not only fueled parents' fear, but also worked to educate them on potential threats to their daughters and how to appropriately handle their children's missteps. While these changing perceptions of prostitution motivated religious and social reform efforts, many of these efforts fell short because they failed to address the institutions that perpetuated prostitution. People had identified new antagonists in manipulative men and irredeemable women. They understood that young women were being drawn to the city in search of employment, greater income, and more freedoms, but what they failed to realize was that it was the ways in which society could not fulfill these desires that perpetuated prostitution. The following chapters will discuss several ways in which society attempted to reform prostitutes through legal and social channels.

## CHAPTER FOUR: LEGAL REFORM EFFORTS

It was a cold November morning when S.L. Whitfield quickly made his way into the Cerro Gordo County courthouse in Mason City, Iowa. Shaking the snow off his coat as he entered the small office that they used for examinations, Whitfield nodded to the other men present, L.M. Snider, Andrew Casey, and Warren Fitzgerald, all well respected men within the community who had agreed on short notice to witness the interview of the young girl who had only been arrested a few days before. Whitfield was grateful that these men had come at all, especially since this was the day before Thanksgiving, but like himself and the rest of the community, these men hoped to better understand how the young Mrs. McCarl had made her way to Mason City and decide what should be done about her current situation.

As he readied his typewriter, the young woman was led into the room and seated across from him. She seemed sullen and fidgety, straining at assistance of the deputy and grimacing at the other men present. Whitfield smiled kindly at her, hoping to set her at ease. “What is your name?” he asked. Looking around the room, the young woman hesitated before looking back at Whitfield and mumbling, “Alice McCarl.” Whitfield paused to quickly type out her response, before looking back up at Alice and asking, “How old are you?” Although she appeared to be quite dirty and worn, Whitfield could not believe that the girl was more than nineteen years old. Again, she hesitated before quietly responding, “eighteen.” “Are you married,” he asked. “Yes,” Alice responded, somewhat proudly, “to Walter McCarl.” Pausing to record her response, Whitfield then asked, “When were you married?” After thinking for a moment, Alice said, “On December 28<sup>th</sup> of 1912.” “Where were you born?” he then asked, to which she responded, “Platte, South Dakota.”

As he typed out the date of her marriage, Whitfield noticed the men seated behind Alice exchange a sympathetic look, and he could not help but agree with them. The poor girl had not yet been married a year and now she found herself far from home and in a terrible situation. As the interview continued, Whitfield learned that Alice had come to Mason City five or six weeks previously with her husband and another man, Kenneth Luke. They had come via the railroad, stopping in Wagner, Tindall, Tabor, Scotland, Mitchell, and Canton, South Dakota, before crossing the border into Iowa and making their way to Mason City from Spencer. Spending only a night or two in each town, Alice had been forced into prostitution by her husband. In Tindall, South Dakota she had been arrested for sporting, but was then released the next morning. In Scotland, South Dakota, she had made seventy dollars in the span of two nights. The next night in Mitchell, she believed she had made about seventy-five dollars, although she could not say for certain, since her husband was the one responsible for the money. Alice and her husband would have continued in their travels, she explained, had they not met Kenneth Luke in Spencer, Iowa. Having told them that Mason City was a good place to make some money, Luke set Alice and her husband up in a room over the Bijou Theater and began bringing men to see her. Each man, generally Greek, paid Alice two dollars, of which she gave fifty cents to Luke and the rest to her husband.

Very disturbed by what he was hearing, Whitfield decided to shift the conversation. "How did you come to lead a sporting life?" he asked. "Well," Alice began, "I suppose my husband started me at that in South Dakota." "How did you come to leave South Dakota?" Whitfield asked. Suddenly looking rather put out, Alice explained, "my husband told me if I did not go with him he would get someone else." "And when did all this begin," Whitfield

asked. “When did you begin leading a sporting life?” After pausing a moment and quickly counting on her fingers, Alice responded, “Perhaps about three months ago.”<sup>69</sup>

A few months after this initial interview, after numerous testimonies had been taken in the case against the McCarls, and after Alice’s husband had been sent to the prison at Anamosa, Alice was given the opportunity to apply for parole before commitment. She had been sentenced to five years in prison, but if she could successfully complete one year of parole then her sentence would be commuted. The court made this decision based on the grounds that she was so young, her father was a hardworking German immigrant farmer, her mother had died when she was a small girl, and that prior to her marriage to McCarl, she had been a virtuous girl who was then forced into prostitution by her husband.<sup>70</sup>

In the early twentieth century, changing perceptions concerning prostitution began to take hold in the legal system as well, influencing the sentencing of women convicted of crimes associated with prostitution. As was the case with Alice McCarl, often times, the legal system would blame not only the husband, but other contributing factors as well, such as age and family life, for luring women into prostitution. In order to correct these factors, the courts used parole before sentencing more frequently, most likely in the hope of giving these women the opportunity to lead a more prosperous life or reform themselves, rather than go to prison. Through an examination of parole and pardon records, this chapter will focus on the ways in which the legal system attempted to combat prostitution through the reform of young at-risk women and analyze some of the shortcomings of these efforts.

---

<sup>69</sup> S.L. Whitfield. Exam of Alice McCarl, November 26, 1913, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>70</sup> J.C. Robinson. “Application for Parole,” February 12, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

In the early twentieth century there was a shift in the gendered perceptions of sexual crimes. While women generally bore a majority of the burden for crimes like prostitution, keeping houses of ill fame, adultery, and other crimes associated with prostitution, such as larceny and theft, society held men responsible for both keeping houses of ill fame and adultery. Society also held men almost exclusively responsible for crimes like rape, seduction, and solicitation. In Des Moines, between 1909 and 1916, forty-one people received pardons for having committed some sort of sexualized crime; of these forty-one individuals, eight were men and thirty-three were women.<sup>71</sup> This dramatic difference in rates of pardon between genders would seem to indicate a bias toward women. It was very likely that like society, the legal system was also influenced by changing perceptions about the perpetrators and victims of prostitution and began to show more sympathy toward female offenders.

Along with changing gendered perceptions of these crimes, the legal system began to take into account other factors that may have led women into prostitution. These factors tended to focus heavily on family life. In her 1986 book, *Cheap Amusements*, Kathy Peiss argued that immigrant parents tended to have difficult relations with their American born children, particularly their daughters. These difficulties stemmed from conflicts over the allocation of their daughters' income, or as Ruth Rosen pointed out in her 1977 book, *The Maimie Papers*, from strict adherence to cultural values.<sup>72</sup> One example of this would be the difficulty that immigrant families, especially Italian, Irish, and Jewish, had forgiving their

---

<sup>71</sup> Pardon Records, 1909-1913, Boxes 1-4, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll: Criminal Correspondence (Paroles, Pardons, Requisitions, Suspensions, Discharges, etc.), State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA and Pardon Records, 1914-1916, Boxes 1-4, Gov. George W. Clarke Correspondence, Criminal (Paroles, Pardons, Requisitions, Suspensions, Discharges, Etc.), State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>72</sup> Peiss, 39.

daughters' sexual transgressions. In many cases, families disowned these young women and with no one else to turn to, they sought out those individuals who had led them astray in the first place.<sup>73</sup> While none of the records explicitly identify their concerns over the parenting techniques of immigrant families, they take special care to emphasize when women did come from immigrant families.

The court systems also saw the absence of a parent as another contributing factor in leading young women astray. Not only did these children lack the parental guidance, whether it be male or female, but they also coped with the emotional trauma brought on by the loss of a parent. In addition, these young children often had to carry part of the familial burden left by their parents' absence. These tasks included additional work around the house and care for younger siblings. In many cases, the daughters of this family took on these extra tasks and often had to abandon their education or look for work outside of the home in order to support the family. In the early twentieth century, court systems began to acknowledge this burden and feared that these experiences may have been a leading factor in drawing young women into prostitution. Such was the case with Maimie Pinzer, a prostitute and the subject of Rosen's 1977 book. In letters to her confidante and sponsor Maimie reflected that difficulties coping with her father's murder during her youth contributed to her fall into prostitution.<sup>74</sup>

A final societal concern that was also reflected in changing legal perceptions of prostitution was the burden that these young women faced through their difficult family lives, specifically the employment of women. Again, Maimie Pinzer acknowledged that she had experienced these challenges and they had contributed to her own downward spiral into prostitution. After the death of her father, Maimie's mother forced her to drop out of school

---

<sup>73</sup> Rosen, xxiv & xxii.

<sup>74</sup> Rosen, xx-xxi.

in order to help out around the house. Maimie resented that she was not being compensated for her efforts and began working in a department store during her spare time in order to earn some extra income. While working, Maimie began flirting with men she met there and after spending several nights at a man's house her mother had her arrested. The court declared Maimie to be an incorrigible child and sent her to a Magdalenian home; while there, she received almost no useful reform efforts and was actually exposed to more of the prostitution subculture through her interactions with young women in similar situations. Maimie acknowledged that it was the death of her father, her strained relationship with her mother, and the responsibilities she took on as a result of these incidents that caused her to act out in rebellious ways, which ultimately led to her life as a prostitute.<sup>75</sup>

These strained relations and feelings of resentment ran through most of Maimie's letter as a constant theme, and can just as easily be seen in the lives of many women who turned to prostitution. A prime example of this would be the case of Hazel Harvey. Hazel was a twenty-three year old woman from Burlington, Iowa whose father had died when she was only eight years old; her mother had remarried and Hazel herself had already been married and divorced because her husband mistreated her. She was working at a hotel, where she met other young girls and men and went to dances and shows. It was while she was employed at the hotel, in April of 1912, that she was arrested for lewd use of a public building and received three years in jail. Although Hazel was adamant that she would do whatever was necessary in order to gain parole and denied being a prostitute, the man she was caught with claimed that was not the case and she was denied parole.<sup>76</sup> Even though

---

<sup>75</sup> Rosen, xxi-xxii.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Hazel Harvey, February 10, 1913, Box 3, Folder Harvey, Hazel, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library. Des Moines IA.

Hazel was denied parole, her case and the questions posed to her during her interviews indicated major shifts had been taking place within the legal system and the ways in which they handled sexualized crimes. With changing societal perceptions and thorough interviews with these women, like the one described earlier in this chapter with Alice McCarl, the legal system began to recognize a pattern in the women who turned to prostitution, specifically that a poor family life made women more susceptible to falling into prostitution. The courts adapted their methods in order to reverse some of the negative effects of disordered family life on young women.

The legal system responded to these changing societal perceptions of female offenders of sexualized crimes through the increased use of parole and parole before commitment. The women received prison sentences, but if the court system judged that these women had been negatively influenced by their home lives or those closest to them, specifically their husbands, they then offered these women parole before commitment. The goal of parole before commitment was to separate these women from the negative influences in their lives that they had previously been unable to escape. Theoretically, if they could place these women in respectable positions in good homes and remove them from the negative influences in their lives, then these women would naturally reform themselves. The court gave them the opportunity to work as some sort of domestic in the homes of well-respected families. If after a year they had behaved properly, worked hard, and demonstrated that they desired of a better life then their sentence was commuted.

While this system of parole before commitment was a major step forward in helping women to escape prostitution and had the potential to act as a fairly successful reform effort, this method also revealed several flaws within this system. These flaws can be seen through

an examination of several cases of parole before commitment. The first would be the case of Alice McCarl. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Alice was a young woman from South Dakota. Both of her parents immigrated to the United States from Germany and set up a farm in a small town Harrison, located just outside of Platte.<sup>77</sup> While living in South Dakota, her family's financial status often waivered between poor and well to do, most likely due to the uncertainties associated with farming. Her mother died when she was twelve years old, and although she did not specify in her interviews, letters from her referees said that her mother had been sick for many years and Alice had been forced to leave school after the third grade in order to care for her.<sup>78</sup> Her mother's illness also resulted in the family paying for an unsuccessful operation, which put the family deeply in debt and left them almost destitute.<sup>79</sup>

A few years after the passing of her mother, her father brought Alice into Platte to work in a friend's hotel. He hoped that she would be able to learn something about the hospitality industry and be able to help support herself and the family by working off the farm. It was here that she became acquainted with Walter McCarl. Before meeting McCarl, many described Alice as an upstanding young woman, but after meeting McCarl, Alice's life took a turn for the worse. McCarl was not a very well respected man around Platte and was generally known for being unemployed.<sup>80</sup> Three months after her marriage to McCarl, Alice

---

<sup>77</sup> Alice McCarl. Statement of Inmate, February 20, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA and Gerritt Beltman. "Letter from G. Beltman," March 9, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>78</sup> McCarl, "Statement of Inmate," 1914 and Chas. J Davis. "Reference Letter from Chas. J. Davis to Iowa Board of Parole (Sam Woods, Secretary)," September 28, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>79</sup> Davis, "Reference Letter," 1914.

<sup>80</sup> Davis, "Reference Letter," 1914 and Whitfield, "Examination of Alice McCarl," 1913. In the letter, Davis mentioned that McCarl's brother was still in Platte and might try to lead

began leading a sporting life. In her initial examination after her arrest in Mason City, Alice admitted that her husband had introduced her to prostitution after they married. She acknowledged that she left South Dakota and came to Iowa with him to practice prostitution because he had told her that if she did not go with him then he would find someone else.<sup>81</sup>

After her arrest in Mason City, all of these factors clearly worked in Alice's favor. The court saw her as a sweet country girl whose family had fallen on hard times. In a reference letter from Chas J. Davis, the former mayor of Platte and friend of Alice's family, he stated, "When she came to town she was a poor country girl believing everyone was good. A case of a girl raised without a mother to care for her and love her and tell her the truth of the world."<sup>82</sup> When she left the farm and tried to continue to support herself and her family, she unknowingly walked right into the waiting arms of the unscrupulous Walter McCarl. McCarl perfectly represented the type of man that society had learned to fear. He was willfully unemployed and knowingly profited off the illegal labors of those he could manipulate, like young Alice. Unfortunately for Alice, she had not learned to fear men like McCarl, possibly due to the fact that she had had to sacrifice her education to care for her ailing mother, her mother had been too sick to educate her daughter, and her father had been too distracted over his dying wife to be aware of the threat that men like McCarl posed to his daughter. It was these factors that made Alice a prime candidate for parole before commitment. If she could only escape the negative influences in her life, and have the

---

Alice astray if she returned. Based on this statement, I made the assumption that the McCarl family generally did not have a very good reputation in Platte. In the initial examination of Alice in 1913, she and her husband had only been in town five or six weeks, but her examiners knew that her husband was unemployed and Alice herself stated that he was not employed.

<sup>81</sup> Whitfield, "Examination of Alice McCarl," 1913.

<sup>82</sup> Davis, "Reference Letter," 1914.

opportunity to work in a supportive and nurturing environment, then maybe, the court system believed, she could turn her life around and become a productive member of society.

After her arrest for keeping a house of ill fame in Mason City, the Iowa Board of Parole took these factors into consideration. In her application for Parole before Commitment, the county attorney, J.C. Robinson made sure to emphasize all of these factors, focusing specifically on her youth, the death of her mother, the fact that she was far from home, and that she had been a “virtuous girl,” up until her marriage to McCarl. Robinson also mentioned that Alice had never been convicted of a felony before her arrest in Mason City, and that “it is her intention to lead a good and virtuous life if given an opportunity; she states that she will never have anything to do with Walter McCarl in the future. The defendant was not induced to plead guilt by any promise of leniency or parole.” He ended the application by stating that, “It appears from my investigation of her case that the good of society will not suffer if she is paroled before commitment.”<sup>83</sup>

All of these factors worked in Alice’s favor, because on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1914 she was released on parole in the employment of Mrs. J.W. Adams. Mrs. Adams had been approved by County Judge, K.J. Lancelot, who believed that she was a “fit and proper person to have the supervision and care of Alice,” and was confident that she would faithfully comply with the conditions set forth in the above agreement.”<sup>84</sup> Mrs. Adams agreed to employ Alice as a housekeeper, pay her two dollars a week if her work warranted it, and to continue employing her so long as she behaved properly and worked hard. She also stated that,

---

<sup>83</sup> Robinson. “Application for Parole,” 1914.

<sup>84</sup> K.J. Lancelot. “Employment Agreement,” March 6, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

Also agree to take a friendly interest in the said person, to counsel and direct her in that which is good, and I will promptly report to the Board of Parole any unnecessary absence from her work, any tendency to low or evil association, or any violation of the conditions of her parole.<sup>85</sup>

In her parole agreement, Alice promised to go directly to the home of Mrs. Adams after her release and notify the Parole Board of her arrival, and not to change her residence without first notifying the Parole Board. She also agreed to mail in a report on the first of every month detailing her work schedule, earnings, expenditures, include a general report of her surroundings, and have this report approved by Mrs. Adams. In addition to this, Alice also had to agree to “conduct [herself] honestly, avoid evil associations, obey the law, and totally abstain from smoking cigarettes, and from the use of intoxicating liquors or places where it is sold, and [she] shall avoid all places of evil repute.” In her agreement, it was made clear that even though she was on parole, Alice was still considered a ward of the state and could be retaken at any time. In order to regain custody of herself she would need to complete no less than one year of parole. The Parole Board also inserted a special condition for Alice. She had to agree that while on parole, she would not marry without the written consent of the parole board.<sup>86</sup> Alice had stated that she would like to divorce McCarl and while the Parole Board most likely supported this decision, they probably also hoped to prevent her from entering into another disastrous marriage.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Lancelot, “Employment Agreement,” 1914.

<sup>86</sup> Iowa Board of Parole. “Parole Agreement,” March 9, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>87</sup> Bertha Boydston. “Letter from Bertha Boydston,” July 2, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA. There are no documents before the parole agreement in which Alice stated that she would like to divorce Walter McCarl, but in July she told Ms. Boydston that was her intention and it

Initially, Mrs. Adams was very optimistic about Alice. In her letter to the Parole Board on March 18, 1914, she informed them that at first, Alice had seemed nervous, but after the first few days she took to them and seemed quite interested in the work. She also stated that she believed “if we can keep her from keeping bad company we will get along all right.”<sup>88</sup> From March through May, Mrs. Adams forgot to send letters to Parole Board updating them on Alice’s progress, which might indicate that Alice was doing well in Mason City, but by June she began to fall into her old habits.<sup>89</sup> In June, Mrs. Adams wrote to the Parole Board expressing concern over Alice’s behavior and wondering if it would be acceptable for her to receive the attentions of a local man. The parole board was so concerned by Mrs. Adams’ letter that they felt it necessary to send a representative of their office, Miss. Boydston, out to Mason City to meet with both Mrs. Adams and Alice.<sup>90</sup>

When Bertha Boydston arrived at the home of Mrs. Adams on July 1, 1914, she found the proprietress very upset over Alice’s recent behavior. Apparently, Alice had been keeping late hours, telling all sorts of falsehoods and trying to deceive Mrs. Adams. She had also been attending public dances and had even gone to nearby Clear Lake several times without the knowledge or permission of Mrs. Adams. Mrs. Adams had even caught Alice with letters and a dress that had been purchased for her by a man from Scotland, South Dakota, a town in which Alice had prostituted herself before her arrival, and eventual arrest, in Mason City.

---

is very likely that she had already been considering this option when she signed her parole agreement in March.

<sup>88</sup> Mrs. J.W. Adams. “Letter from Mrs. Adams,” March 18, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>89</sup> Iowa Board of Parole. “Checkup Letter,” May 27, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA..

<sup>90</sup> Iowa Board of Parole. “Letter Concerning Visit to Mrs. Adams,” June 27, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

Her work was also suffering. Mrs. Adams felt as if she could not leave the girl unsupervised and she claimed ignorance of even the most basic household tasks. Over the last few months Alice had also become very resentful of Mrs. Adams and became quite disrespectful when Mrs. Adams tried to instruct her.<sup>91</sup>

Miss Boydston then tried to sit down and talk with Alice herself, but the girl was quite resistant. For the most part, she responded with nothing more than “yes,” and “no.” Alice admitted to going to dances and that she had been seeing several men and going to their homes. She also informed Miss Boydston that she wanted to get a divorce, but was unsure as to how she should go about it. Miss Boydston volunteered to speak to the County Attorney on Alice’s behalf, but she was concerned that Alice wanted to seek a divorce while seeing so many men.<sup>92</sup>

Poor Mrs. Adams was at her wits’ end and insisted that she could not keep Alice more than six months if her behavior and work did not improve. As she was leaving, Miss Boydston pulled Alice aside and informed her in no uncertain terms that she could no longer go out at night without the consent of Mrs. Adams, and that if the Parole Board continued to receive such reports it was very likely that they would revoke her parole. After their talk, Alice seemed very repentant and Miss Boydston tried to soothe Mrs. Adams by assuring her that Alice would surely behave herself, but Mrs. Adams was very skeptical.<sup>93</sup>

On September 16, 1914, Mrs. Adams penned a very lengthy letter to the Parole Board explaining that she no longer believed that she would be able to keep Alice under control. She blamed this primarily on the negative influence of the people that Alice insisted on

---

<sup>91</sup> Boydston, “Letter to Iowa Board of Parole,” 1914.

<sup>92</sup> Boydston, “Letter to Iowa Board of Parole,” 1914.

<sup>93</sup> Boydston, “Letter to Iowa Board of Parole,” 1914.

associating with. The night before, Mrs. Adams had given Alice permission to go to a picture show with a female companion, believing that they would be home by 9:30. Mrs. Adams had even spoken with this young woman, warning her not to lead Alice astray. Mrs. Adams did not know whether this young woman was defiant or if she wished to see how far she could push Alice, but either way, Alice did not return until the following morning. Mrs. Adams concluded the letter by adding,

I think the girl really is better than her associates. She is weak mentally many things go to indicate that fact. Does the State of Iowa have a set of questions for such cases that would determine how serious this may be. I have observed her very carefully from many view points. She is not vicious and apparently happy and contented.<sup>94</sup>

Miss Boydston's descriptions of Alice are indicative of the general sentiment that society held for young women involved with prostitution. Rather than holding Alice accountable for her bad behavior, Miss Boydston blamed Alice's associates and her naiveté.

Just three days later, on September 19, 1914, Alice ran away from the Adams' household. Mrs. Adams reported that the night before she had been acting quite strangely, but Mrs. Adams thought this was simply because she had refused her request to go visit a friend. That night, Alice was downstairs chatting with the family around nine o'clock; Mrs. Adams then went to lock the doors at ten and when she woke up the next morning she found

---

<sup>94</sup> Mrs. J.W. Adams. "Mrs. Adams Letter to the Parole Board," September 16, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

a letter reading, “Dear Mrs. Adams please send my sister all my clothes I don’t want to get five years.”<sup>95</sup>

Alice had clearly decided that she was not capable of completing her parole. Whether she was tired of abiding by their rules, or simply thought they would revoke her parole based on her behavior up until that point, she decided to take her chances and make a run for it. After her disappearance, the Parole Board notified all the proper authorities and a fifty-dollar reward was offered for the return of Alice McCarl. She was eventually caught in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin and returned to Anamosa.<sup>96</sup> During her time at Anamosa, Alice was rebellious and violent. She applied for parole a year later, but was denied based on her bad behavior and her performance during her parole before commitment.<sup>97</sup> Alice’s case demonstrated that one of the basic flaws of this parole before commitment system was the simple fact that not all women wanted to be reformed.

A second flaw within this parole before commitment method can be seen through an examination of the case of Anna Lind. Unlike Alice, Anna was not convicted of a sexualized crime. Anna was a twenty year-old woman who was married and had one child and lived in the country with her parents. One night, her husband had come to her with some of his own clothing and instructed her to get dressed and come with him. Anna was stunned to see him,

---

<sup>95</sup> Mrs. J.W. Adams. “Mrs. Adams Letter to the Parole Board,” September 19, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>96</sup> Warden C.C McClaghry. “Letter to Parole Board about Alice’s Arrest,” September 28, 1914, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>97</sup> “Interview with Alice in Anamosa,” Conducted by Mr. Dennis, July 29, 1915, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, State Archives of Iowa and Iowa Board of Parole. “Response to Request for Interview,” June 15, 1916, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

since he had walked out on her weeks previously, but she went with him anyway. When they arrived in town, he instructed her to break in to a store while he waited in the car. Someone alerted the police and since Anna was found in the store she was convicted of breaking and entering and sentenced to the maximum sentence, which was ten years, while her husband went free.<sup>98</sup>

Based on the poor reputation of her parents, the potentially abusive relationship with her husband, and the fact that she was now a young single mother, the Parole Board decided, “that the proper thing to do is to get a job for her in some good home away from that community,” and offered her parole before commitment.<sup>99</sup> The court sent her to live with what they believed to be a nice married couple, the LeRoys’, in Manchester, Iowa and she quickly got to work as a housekeeper.

Initially, Anna did quite well with the LeRoy family, but she quickly became uncomfortable when she realized that Mr. LeRoy had not explained to his wife where Anna had come from and why exactly she was working for them. Mrs. LeRoy began asking all sorts of questions about her past and Anna was more than willing to answer them, except that Mr. LeRoy had told her not to tell Mrs. LeRoy where she had come from. Anna immediately wrote to the parole board explaining her discomfort and requesting to return to Anamosa.<sup>100</sup>

The Parole Board quickly wrote to Mr. LeRoy and instructed him to inform his wife about

---

<sup>98</sup> Iowa Board of Parole. “In Matter of the Commutation of Sentence of Anna Lind,” 1913. Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>99</sup> K.J. Lancelot. “Letter to Sam Woods,” November 23, 1910, Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>100</sup> Anna Lind. “Letter to Sam Woods,” December 14, 1910, Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

Anna's origins.<sup>101</sup> Mr. LeRoy spoke to his wife and offered Anna a raise, perhaps as some sort of apology. She consented to do her best to finish out a year there, but warned the Parole Board that she might break down and wondered if they could possibly find her a better place to work.

Just weeks later, on February 10, 1913, Anna was awoken by Mr. LeRoy entering her room, undressing himself, and climbing into bed with her. She immediately wrote to the Parole Board asking for their assistance. She wondered if she could leave Manchester and return to Anamosa or Des Moines because she was so fearful of staying with Mr. LeRoy, but at the same time, she feared that leaving would be a violation of her parole agreement.<sup>102</sup> A few days later, a similar incident occurred between Anna and Mr. LeRoy. The next day she angrily wrote to the Parole Board saying, "I am writing you again in regards of the matter I wrote you before But it is getting worse in place of better you people ask me to have a moral life how can you expect me to live up to my parole under the circumstances I am here."<sup>103</sup>

A few days later, Anna left the LeRoys' of her own accord and returned to Anamosa. The Parole Board was shocked by her letters and did their best to set her up with a very respectable family near Anamosa, but the damage had already been done.<sup>104</sup> Anna was so broken by her experience with the LeRoys' that she began leading a sporting life and eventually became very ill. She was soon returned to Anamosa, where she had to undergo

---

<sup>101</sup> Iowa Board of Parole. "Letter to Mr. LeRoy," December 15, 1910, Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>102</sup> Anna Lind. "Letter to Mr. Barn," February 11, 1913, Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>103</sup> Anna Lind. "Letter to Mr. Woods," February, 1911, Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

<sup>104</sup> Marquis Barr. "Letter to Mr. Woods," February 11, 1911, Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

several operations as her health continued to decline. In the spring of 1913, her ten year sentence was commuted down to three years and she was able to go home and spend the last years of her life with her family.<sup>105</sup>

The case of Anna Lind demonstrated that it was not only unemployed men and confirmed prostitutes who posed a threat to at-risk women. Dangers could be found in even the most respectable looking households and the threat that they posed to these young women teetering on the edge could be just as lethal. It should also be understood that the members of the Parole Board and the larger legal system took their responsibilities to these women very seriously and did not intend to simply pass them along or sweep them under the rug. In the case of Anna Lind, many of the parties involved demonstrated concern over her home life and insisted that she be given parole before commitment. K.J. Lancelot, who had also spoken on Alice's behalf, stated,

It would be a bad thing to send Anna back in the home there. Her husband who is a worthless fellow is near there, her folks have a very bad record and are not able to support her....The only reason that can possibly be advanced toward letting her go back would be her love for her little boy but that would hardly be enough in my estimation to overcome the difficulties she will face. She seems to have a pretty fair record at home and I believe that the proper thing to do is to get a job for her in some good home away from that community.<sup>106</sup>

In its Parole Agreements, the Parole Board also emphasized its commitment to the reform of young women by offering them any support they might need. Statements like, "The Board of

---

<sup>105</sup> Iowa Board of Parole. "In Matter of the Commutation of Sentence of Anna Lind, 1913.

<sup>106</sup> Lancelot, "Letter to Sam Woods," 1910.

Parole has a continued interest in the subject of this parole, and [she] need not fear nor hesitate to freely communicate with the Secretary in case [she] loses [her] situation or becomes unable to labor by reason of sickness or other disability,” and, “During this period of parole, [she] may rely upon the aid and counsel of the said Board and the Secretary,” intended to offer these women constant support and understanding.<sup>107</sup> The Parole Board understood that this was a difficult transition for these women to make and that life was unpredictable, and as in Anna’s situation, they should not fear that their parole would be compromised so long as they did their best.

While this focus on offering women parole before commitment was a significant step forward in combating some of the major causes of prostitution, in some ways it was a flawed system. This was due primarily to the fact that it relied on a theoretical framework. Theoretically, all women should want to be reformed and welcome the opportunity to live a better life. Theoretically, families that appeared to be respectable should offer safe and supportive homes to vulnerable young women. Unfortunately, this system did not function as successfully in reality. In reality, some women had no interest in reforming themselves, as was the case with Alice McCarl. In reality, it was difficult to ensure that these young women ended up in safe and nurturing homes, as was the case with Anna Lind. Chapter five will continue this discussion of reform efforts, but will focus primarily on those reform efforts made by social groups and analyze their methodologies, some of the successes and challenges they faced, and the similarities and differences between legal reform efforts.

---

<sup>107</sup> Iowa Board of Parole, “Parole Agreement: Alice McCarl,” 1914.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIAL REFORM EFFORTS

As he sat down to write his thirteenth and final Superintendents' Report for the Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission, Frank Cramer could not help but reflect on all the changes that had occurred over the past thirteen years. The Sunbeam Mission had opened its doors on December 23<sup>rd</sup> of 1893 and had kept a light on for all those “discouraged, disheartened, and sinful living men and women.”<sup>108</sup> As the superintendent of the Mission, Cramer and his wife, who everyone affectionately referred to as Little Mother, had worked tirelessly to provide the downcast men and women of Des Moines with food, clothing, and shelter on the condition that these individuals would do some kind of labor in return. Over the past thirteen years they had saved many downtrodden men and women from lives of idleness and sin and for Cramer the closing of the Mission was bittersweet.

He began to shuffle through the many letters of thanks that his wife always saved. On top was a letter from Clara, a young woman who had been removed from the State Industrial School when they realized she was in a delicate “condition.” Then there was a letter from E.J., who had struggled with drugs and alcohol.<sup>109</sup> After many stints in the county jail, the police decided it was best to bring her to the Mission as a last resort, hoping she could receive the help she so desperately needed. The Mission and the Cramers had welcomed both of these women, and hundreds more just like them, with open arms and had done the best they could to help them combat and overcome those factors and individuals who attempted to drag them down into lives of sin.

As he wrote, Cramer heard his poor ailing wife call out from the other room. He paused to check on her, but saw that she had only called out for him from her restless

---

<sup>108</sup> Frank L. Cramer, *First Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, (Des Moines, 1895), 1.

<sup>109</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 15.

slumber. Stroking her hair off her temple and tucking the cover more tightly around her, Cramer could not help but consider the toll for all the work they had done. Over the past thirteen years, his wife had worked tirelessly for every soul who came through the Mission. Every day she had risen at five in the morning and did not lie down again until ten thirty that night. Many nights her sleep was interrupted by the needs of an inmate and she was lucky to get even a few hours of rest.

But no one would have ever known the strain she was under, for during the day she cheerfully led cooking, sewing, educational, and Sunday School classes, made calls to jails and hospitals, led gospel meetings, sorted clothes and other donations, and attended to any other needs that occurred throughout the day. Over the last four years this work had taken its toll on her and that is why Cramer was sitting at his desk tonight. Mrs. Cramer had become increasingly ill and frail and after consulting some of the best physicians in the state, they had decided to close the Mission's door. Mrs. Cramer had not been pleased, but the doctors had insisted and Cramer himself had begged her to think of herself. And so it had been decided, that on January 1<sup>st</sup> of 1907 the Mission would close its doors for good. With that Cramer began writing his final Superintendent's Report and said goodbye.<sup>110</sup>

Sunbeam Rescue Mission has been an Ever Open Door for unfortunate women-women who have sinned, or who have been sinned against. Some of these have been victims of a base betrayal and many of them are reapers in the awful harvest fields of sin where appetite and lust have done their worst and the feet of these victims take hold on hell.

---

<sup>110</sup> Frank L. Cramer, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, (Des Moines, 1907), 3.

These women have been cast out by former friends, often despised and rejected by their seducers. Some of them are without God and without Hope, with hearts aching almost to the point of breaking, and have sometimes prayed for a death that did not come...<sup>111</sup>

Opening their doors in 1893, the Sunbeam Mission was one of the most successful public reform efforts in Des Moines throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Initially, the Cramers meant to provide aid to the unemployed men of the city, but very quickly adapted their mission to include the prostitutes of Des Moines, so much so that by their third year they focused almost exclusively on aiding fallen women. While the Mission was centered on spiritual guidance, it succeeded where others had failed by identifying the primary hurdles that women faced and working to combat those. Through an examination of their annual reports, this chapter will explore the ways in which the Sunbeam Mission succeeded in its endeavors by instituting reform efforts that worked to combat some of the actual causes of prostitution.

In 1893, the good Christian women of Des Moines became concerned by the overabundance of unemployed men in the city. In order to combat this, they opened the Sunbeam Mission in December of 1893.<sup>112</sup> They sought to “rescue the perishing, To permanently elevate those in need by affording them encouragement and an opportunity to help themselves.” In their first year, they had seven hundred and ninety one individuals profess their conversion to live a more Christian life; of those individuals, two hundred and

---

<sup>111</sup> Cramer, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 1.

<sup>112</sup> Frank L. Cramer, *First Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, (Des Moines, 1895), Cover.

twenty two of them actually lived in “happier homes, enjoying the necessities and some of the comforts of the life from money earned by their own labor, and are sleeping in cleaner beds with cleaner and better clothed children about them.” Twenty-seven of those who had come to the Mission had united themselves with a church and twenty-eight of the homeless men they had helped now held steady employment. In their first year, their focus on the needy women of Des Moines appeared to be secondary. Initially, they had some difficulty retaining women. In their first year they only saved nine of “these unfortunates, who were utterly friendless and suffering from their sins.”<sup>113</sup>

In March of 1895, the Sunbeam Mission began to shift its focus through the opening of a Women’s Department. The Mission opened this department, which they called “The Door of Hope,” in order to help, “unfortunate and fallen women.”<sup>114</sup> This department had two primary goals in their efforts to reform these women. Their first area of interest was on the *regular* inmates.<sup>115</sup> These women came off the streets and out of brothels. They could be quite difficult to reform, primarily because many of them sought out the Mission not because they truly wished to lead a better life, but because they simply needed food and shelter. They came to the Mission hoping to recuperate, and expected to return to their previous lives once they regained their strength. In order to combat this problem, the Mission insisted that these regular inmates obey all of their rules and strive towards a more productive life, or else there could be no place for them at The Door of Hope. Through these strict measures, The Door of

---

<sup>113</sup> Cramer, *First Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 1.

<sup>114</sup> Frank L. Cramer, *Second Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, (Des Moines, 1896), 1.

<sup>115</sup> Italics in original

Hope had been able to reform a few regular inmates and place them in good homes or send them back to their relatives.<sup>116</sup>

Their second area of interest was in the *temporary* inmates. They saw these as the, “girls that have not tasted the dregs of abandonment and prostitution.” These young women had left their country towns in search of work in the city. When they arrived in the city, they often had trouble securing employment or found themselves in a poor work environment. The Door of Hope realized how difficult it was for these single and friendless young women in the city. They knew that, “it is not strange, therefore, that these girls, having spent the last penny, without home and without friends, conclude they must beg or lead lives of sin.” They also feared that these young women might be taken advantage of, knowing they might, “be led into the life of sin by the deception of some lecherous villain always on the alert for some unwary victim.” The Door of Hope recognized that all these women needed in order to avoid a life spent in prostitution was “a home and an encouraging word and a helping hand at the very ‘nick of time,’ it may mean their soul’s salvation.” They took these women in and offered them free room and board and helped them to find a better situation, whether that meant sending them home or helping them find more secure and respectable employment.<sup>117</sup>

At the end of their second year, The Sunbeam Mission and The Door of Hope had overseen two thousand four hundred and eighty six hours of labor by both men and women. This labor was a way by which the inmates helped to earn their keep and to support the Mission. More importantly, the second annual report included three new categories in their statistics pertaining solely to women. They had offered nightly shelter to three hundred and seventy eight women. They had admitted thirty two regular inmates into The Door of Hope.

---

<sup>116</sup> Cramer, *Second Annual Report of The Sunbeam Mission*, 2-3.

<sup>117</sup> Cramer, *Second Annual Report of The Sunbeam Mission*, 3.

They had furnished one hundred and forty two women with homes and other forms of aid and they had sent sixteen fallen girls home or had secured good homes for them.<sup>118</sup> This was an enormous difference from the previous year in which women did not make up a single category of their own and only nine women had been saved.<sup>119</sup>

Founded by the socially conscious citizens of Des Moines, organizations like The Door of Hope aimed to attack the newly identified problems posed by prostitution. Initially the founders of the Mission believed that unemployed men posed the greatest problem to society; they worried that the idleness brought on by unemployment would lead men to take up bad habits, such as gambling and drinking, and would have a negative effect on their moral wellbeing. It was not until they had become more immersed in their reform efforts that the founders of these organizations realized the full extent of the difficulties that women faced living within the city. They acknowledged that villainous men posed a real threat to the newly arrived women from the country, but what they did not see was that these villainous men had the potential to rise up out of the unemployed masses; by serving both men and women, organizations like the Sunbeam Mission and The Door of Hope worked to combat one of the primary perpetrators of prostitution.

In their second annual report, the Mission also acknowledged the second group of individuals who posed a threat to newly arrived women of the city. While The Door of Hope did not explicitly state that the confirmed prostitutes, or regular inmates as the reformers called them, sought to lure young women into prostitution, it was very likely that they realized this was a possibility. As they acknowledged, reforming these women was often

---

<sup>118</sup> Cramer, *Second Annual Report of The Sunbeam Mission*, 5.

<sup>119</sup> Cramer, *First Annual Report of The Sunbeam Mission*, 1 & 4.

quite difficult, but in doing so, they greatly reduced the number of potential threats to the young women flooding into the city from the countryside.

In their third year, the Sunbeam Mission and The Door of Hope continued down much the same path. With The Door of Hope, they continued to acknowledge that their primary goal was to save those women who could not support themselves on their wages alone or those young women who could not find work upon their arrival in the city. They also continued to argue that the “fallen woman” represented the group that was “harder to reach than all other human beings,” because she had been, “abandoned by everything that is good, pure, true and womanly, and equally sorrowful because she is abandoned by all who could (if they would) be an influence for good in the lives of such.” As with previous years, The Door of Hope refused to take any woman who did not come to the Mission of her own free will, was not sober enough to understand what they asked of her, or who refused to abide by their rules.<sup>120</sup>

In order to continue reaching these women, The Door of Hope expanded outreach efforts. They began visiting the “chapel districts,” referring specifically to the White Chapel district of Des Moines, which was known for being overrun by prostitution. Reformers from the Mission would invade these neighborhoods and hold meetings late into the night, in hopes of enticing fallen women into reform. In particular, they favored this invasion technique because it had the potential of drawing in “fallen men,” as well.<sup>121</sup> As the years went on, they would continue to expand these efforts with their gospel wagon, which would travel through the chapel districts with reformers singing songs, preaching the Lord’s word,

---

<sup>120</sup> Frank L. Cramer, *Third Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, (Des Moines, 1898), 3.

<sup>121</sup> Cramer, *Third Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 3.

and rescuing those in need.<sup>122</sup> They would also handout small colorful flyers and meal tickets, which directed people to the Mission.<sup>123</sup> In more extreme cases, when they heard of a young woman in desperate circumstances, it was not uncommon for Cramer, or some other Mission member, to go out into the brothels and personally rescue these young women.<sup>124</sup>

In addition to expanding their outreach efforts, The Door of Hope also expanded their reform techniques within the Mission, focusing specifically on education and promoting industry. They had added a workroom for the male inmates and a sewing room for the female inmates. They had also included a library and reading spaces for all of the inmates. In addition, the Mission and Door of Hope worked to keep their doors open and reform their inmates with their wood yard. This wood yard sold firewood to the surrounding community, which helped to support the Mission, and also put the inmates of the Mission to work, giving them a purpose and a sense of pride in their work.<sup>125</sup>

The Mission had also worked to expand its charitable efforts to include the larger community as well. They did this by opening a clothing repository, which relied heavily on donations from the surrounding community.<sup>126</sup> In making these donations, the community was able to feel more involved with the Mission's reform efforts and their donations surely went a long way toward lifting the morale of the inmates who made their way to the Mission

---

<sup>122</sup> Frank L. Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, (Des Moines, 1904), Cover. It is very likely that the gospel wagon was in use before the tenth year, but the annual reports from years four through nine have been lost. Chapel districts refer to the White Chapel neighborhood of Des Moines, named for the White Chapel murders in London, and was inhabited primarily by houses of ill fame and gambling dens.

<sup>123</sup> Cramer, *Third Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, Insert.

<sup>124</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 8-9. This was taken directly from Vivian's letter to the Mission in their tenth annual report, but it seems very likely that Cramer would have done the same for other women in the same situation.

<sup>125</sup> Cramer, *Third Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, Cover.

<sup>126</sup> Cramer, *Third Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, Cover.

and The Door of Hope. In addition to all of these features, the Mission also had grown to include meeting rooms for gospel services, lodging rooms for men, a lunch room for their inmates, a night shelter for those women in need of a temporary home, baths for women, store rooms, and a free dispensary.<sup>127</sup> The expansion of both the Mission and The Door of Hope in these ways indicated that not only was the Mission supported by the community, but that there was also a large population of individuals seeking reform.

Unfortunately, the annual reports from 1899 to 1903 have been lost, but in some ways this allows us to more clearly see the dramatic transformation of the Mission over a five-year span of time. By the time of their tenth annual report, published in 1904, the Mission had undergone some major changes. They had expanded their offerings to include a public restaurant, a kindling factory and a wood yard, fumigators and baths, a cooking school and a sewing school, industrial classes, street and slum meetings, a gospel wagon, musical entertainments, an employment agency, a reading room, educational classes, social evenings for the inmates, weekly excursions to the parks, a day nursery for children, laundry, Bible classes and a Sunday school.<sup>128</sup> All of these additions indicated a strong emphasis on education and a work ethic, with their cooking, sewing, and industrial classes and the employment agency. These classes would not only have given the inmates useable life skills, but they also would have helped to increase their sense of value and self worth.

Interestingly, the Mission had also begun to not only include, but advertise, more social activities for the inmates. This could very likely be a part of the socializing aspect of reform, as a means of acclimating their residents to more tame and respectable forms of

---

<sup>127</sup> Cramer, *Third Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, Cover.

<sup>128</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, Cover.

entertainment. In other ways though, these social events could have also acted as a tool for community building and creating a sort of familial environment among the inmates.

In addition, the women's department, which was now called The Open Door, had more fully identified those groups most affected by prostitution and expanded their efforts to reach them. These included young women newly arrived to the city: families, fallen women, and unemployed men. While young women and families often bore many of the consequences of prostitution and fallen women and unemployed men continued to perpetuate the evils of prostitution, the reform efforts of the Mission worked to aid all four of these groups.

With their initial objective in 1893, the Mission had unintentionally already begun to combat the problems posed by unemployed men. In putting these men to work and teaching them useful skills and offering them a greater sense of community through religious involvement, the Mission helped to give these men a greater purpose and the skills necessary to become contributing members of society.<sup>129</sup> Granted, their efforts could be considered fairly ineffective in combatting the problems associated with those men committed to leading a life filled with vice, but for those who had simply fallen into this lifestyle through unemployment or bad luck, the Mission offered an alternate path. Also, in helping to reform men through spirituality and education, the Mission hoped to greatly reduce the number of men seeking out prostitutes.

As could be expected, The Open Door's reform efforts focused primarily on saving women, but its techniques proved to be effective in reforming both the temporary and the regular inmates. This was demonstrated in their work with Vivian. She had come to the city

---

<sup>129</sup> Cramer, *First Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, Cover-1.

and through her “ignorance and weakness,” she soon found herself in bad company.<sup>130</sup>

Cramer, the superintendent of the Mission, had heard of Vivian and her troubles. He came to visit her when she was in one of the many brothels of Des Moines, and talked to her about possibly leading a better life.<sup>131</sup> She returned with him to The Open Door and over the next three years Vivian began to lead “a Christian life.” Unfortunately, one day a great temptation from her past came back into her life and Vivian again fell prey to “that wicked passion which had been [her] downfall,” in the beginning. Not realizing how greatly her friends at the Mission had been shielding her from the temptations of the world, Vivian “fled from them and sought for that which [she] thought would satisfy [her].” She walked sixty miles, stole a ride on a freight train, and at the end of her journey she found herself alone in Omaha.<sup>132</sup>

While in Omaha, Vivian found herself again working as a street walker, a ballahoo, and as a Kootche Kootche dancer in street fairs.<sup>133</sup> She eventually made her way to Sioux City, where she ended up in a house of ill fame. After eight months, she came to her senses and wrote to Cramer, begging for his help. Believing that Vivian had been lost forever, Cramer was both delighted and relieved to hear from her, even if it meant knowing that she had returned to her previous life. Having been the one who had saved poor Vivian from the brothels of Des Moines nearly four years earlier, he rushed to Sioux City without a second

---

<sup>130</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 8.

<sup>131</sup> While Vivian and Mr. Cramer did not exactly specify where she was staying when he came to speak to her about leading a better life, it would not be unfair to assume that she was in some sort of brothel, gambling den, or house of ill fame.

<sup>132</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 8.

<sup>133</sup> According to Atcheson L. Hench’s 1945 article in the *American Speech* journal, a ballyhoo, or ballahoo, is part of a barker’s spiel and is a form of noisy advertisement. I was not able to find a clear definition of a Kootche Kootche dancer, but given the context, it might be fair to assume that it was some sort of provocative dance meant to gain public attention at events like street fairs and very likely would not have been considered to be very respectable. Atcheson L. Hench, “A Possible Clue to the Source of 'Ballyhoo' and Some Queries,” *American Speech*, 20, no. 3, (1945), 184.

thought. Once there, he had some trouble locating her, and then to make matters worse, the landlady refused to let Vivian leave with Cramer. After a rather embarrassing incident, Cramer was able to safely retrieve Vivian and return her to the Mission. Years later, Vivian found herself in a safe, happy, and supportive new home outside of the Mission, and was eternally grateful that the Cramers and everyone else at the Mission had never given up on her.<sup>134</sup>

What Vivian symbolized was the epitome of the Sunbeam Mission's reform strategy. She represented both the newly arrived innocent and the fallen woman. While she was willing to be saved, she also demonstrated that reformation was a long, difficult, and uncertain process. These staples of the Mission's reform strategy, which included long term reform and continued emotional support, helped not only to reform Vivian the first time she fell, but also to bring her back into the fold after again falling prey to temptation. As Vivian's experiences demonstrated, the Mission believed it was fundamental to a woman's success in the fight against prostitution to offer them long-term care and support throughout the ups and downs of their recovery.

As historians have argued, it was often the lack of emotional support and a nurturing family environment that led women into prostitution.<sup>135</sup> The Mission also recognized this was a pattern in the women who came to them. This was the case with Pearle, who the Mission described as "a tender-hearted and kindly dispositioned girl, [who] after overcoming

---

<sup>134</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 9. Vivian's letter mentioned that there was an embarrassing incident between Cramer and the landlady and he had to withstand much humiliation in order to retrieve her, but she does not say more than that. There are no dates on the excerpts of the letters used in the Annual Reports, so it was my own assumption that Vivian was writing to the Cramer's years after this incident, after she had been placed in a better home, as thanks.

<sup>135</sup> Rosen, *The Maimie Papers*, xxxi.

many unfortunate conditions which had handicapped her in her early life,” found her way to the Mission and was able to achieve reformation. The same could be said for Mae, who had been just a child when she had lost her mother and thereby her only source of support; the Mission took her in and provided her with the early training she needed in order to lead a decent life. And then there was Bessie, who had been led into bad company due to the negative environment in which she had been raised.<sup>136</sup> Aware of the importance of family, reformers sought to correct the effects of childhood by providing the sort of nurturing and support that these women so desperately needed.

Another pillar of the Mission’s reform efforts was forgiveness. As Ruth Rosen pointed out in her 1977 book, *The Maimie Papers*, families, especially immigrant families, had a difficult time forgiving their daughters’ sexual transgressions. They often ended up disowning their daughters, and as a result, these young women turned to those who had led them astray in the first place.<sup>137</sup> When Vivian had written to Cramer from Sioux City eight months later, he could have just as easily written her off.<sup>138</sup> Who would have blamed him for being angry? He, his wife, and many of his friends had invested much of their time and energy into Vivian’s recovery over the past three years, and she had turned her back on them and thrown away all of their hard work for a good time.<sup>139</sup> Instead, Cramer and those at the Mission found it in their hearts to forgive Vivian, and instead of being angry with her, they simply rejoiced that she was alive and wished to return. They welcomed her back into the Mission, where she continued her recovery, and if anything, her relapse most likely helped her to fully grasp the dangers of prostitution and truly commit to her reform. Again, this was

---

<sup>136</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 11.

<sup>137</sup> Rosen, *The Maimie Papers*, xxiv.

<sup>138</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 9.

<sup>139</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 9.

all due to the fact that the Mission continued to forgive and support those women who erred. They understood that this was a long and difficult process and that the chances of these fallen women recovering increased exponentially when they surrounded themselves with people who loved and supported them.

A more unusual, but very successful, reform technique employed by the Sunbeam Mission and The Open Door, was motherhood. While many other institutions refused to accept women who came to them in a “delicate condition,” the Mission welcomed these women with open arms. Their only requirement was that these expecting mothers agree to keep their babies and raise them as their own. Through this method, the Mission was been able to save many young women and children from a life of destitution. Such was the case with Clara, a young woman who had originally been an inmate at the state industrial school. When the school’s directors realized that she was pregnant they had expelled her. Clara then retreated to a nearby barn and began living there until a farmer discovered her; he called the police and they brought Clara to the Mission.<sup>140</sup> Or there had been Edna, a troubled young woman who had been an inmate of the rural reform school, but had immediately been shipped off to the State Maternity Home when they had realized she was expecting. When she had arrived at the State Maternity Home, they had also sent her away, claiming that she was too diseased. Again, the Mission accepted Edna and her soon to be child with open arms.<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>140</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 15. The annual reports do not explicitly state that a farmer discovered Clara, only that she was taken from the barn by the police and brought to the Mission. It seems more likely that a local farmer discovered her in his barn and then called the police.

<sup>141</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 13.

Like the industrial schools, many reform institutions actually turned away pregnant women. Cramer, and others who supported the Mission, knew that without any kind of help these women often turned to dangerous abortions or resorted to infanticide.<sup>142</sup> These women could barely survive on their own; how could they possibly care for a child if they could not even support themselves? Instead of turning their backs on these women, the way so many other institutions had, the Mission took them in and used their maternal instincts to fuel their desire for reform.<sup>143</sup>

Over the years, Cramer and everyone else at the Mission had realized that a mother's love had the potential to be one of the strongest motivators for a woman's reform. Having a child filled these women with a renewed sense of maturity and responsibility. These women felt the need to work hard and better themselves so that they could provide a better life for their children.<sup>144</sup> In some ways, the birth of a child also helped to enhance a woman's spiritual reformation. Such was the case with Emma, a young girl who had come to them in a time of desperate need. Her newborn baby had acted as the ultimate inspiration for her return to Christ. She wrote to the Cramer's: "I do not know how I can ever thank you for what you and the Mission have done for me. I am a changed woman and happy and contented with what God gives me. My baby is well and healthy and is the means of my finding Christ. I think if it had not been for him [the baby] I should never have listened to God."<sup>145</sup>

The Mission also offered these women the opportunity to then form their own families through the connections they made while at the Mission and after they left the

---

<sup>142</sup> Rebecca Yamin, "Lurid Talkes and Homely Stories of New York's Notorious Five Points," *Historical Archaeology*, 32, no. 1, (1998): 84.

<sup>143</sup> Cramer, *Third Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 1897, 3.

<sup>144</sup> Cramer, *Third Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 3.

<sup>145</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 16.

Mission. Many women later wrote to the Cramers expressing gratitude and joy at finding successful matches either through men they had met while living at the Mission or through men they had met once they had been placed in employment outside of the Mission. In many cases, these women found that it was best to be honest with their soon to-be husbands about their past lives. Such was the case with Florence, a woman who had been taken from the brothels of Des Moines and had bravely struggled to reform herself. She later wrote to the Cramers saying, "I am to be married. I told him all, and did not keep anything from him, so I know we will get along all right."<sup>146</sup>

After those at the Mission believed that a woman was truly reformed, another of their staple reform techniques centered on removing the women from the city, which had led to their downfall in the first place. In some case, women, such as Minnie, one of the beloved former inmates of the Mission, entered into loving and successful marriages. She later wrote to the Mission from "a far away state," to let them know that she and her husband had just purchased a piece of land and had begun construction on a three-room house. After her time at the Mission, Minnie had also rekindled her relationship with her estranged mother and had invited her to come live with her and her new husband.

In other cases, where young women had not been able to reconcile with their families or find a suitable match, the Mission worked to find them employment in a loving and nurturing home. Such was the case with Ethel. After her time at the Mission she wrote to the Cramers to inform them of her progress. She said, "I cannot thank you enough for your kindness to me, and also for your kindness in getting me this place. They treat me just like one of the family... This is such a good home. They are all so kind to me and I will never forget

---

<sup>146</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 10.

your kindness to me."<sup>147</sup> In ensuring that these young women found a safe and nurturing place of employment, the Mission believed that they would have a much easier time maintaining a Christian lifestyle and continuing to live as a positive, contributing members of society.

While both Minnie and Ethel, and many former inmates like them, found considerable success after their time at the Mission, they missed the Mission terribly. Minnie wrote, saying...

Give the girls my love. I think of them often. I would like to be there to go out into the park with you all, but I am too far away. I will never forget the good time I had while I was in the Mission. They will long be remembered by me. I think of you so much for what you have done for me. When I think of all I went through it seems like a dream, for now I am trying to live a good Christian life. I would like to see you and be with you, for I know I will never have as a nice a time as I spent in your home.<sup>148</sup>

Due to the education, support, and affection given to these women, the Mission was able to achieve a tremendous amount of success. Since they opened their doors in 1893, two hundred and ten young women had come through the Mission. Of those women, one hundred and twenty two had kept in contact with the Mission and had begun leading good Christian lives. Sixty one of these women had successfully gone through the Mission but had not kept in touch the way the others had; while Cramer had not heard from these women, he had faith that they continued to do their best to lead good Christian lives. While they had had many

---

<sup>147</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 10.

<sup>148</sup> Cramer, *Tenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 10.

successes at the Mission, there had been those women who could not be saved. Six women had been committed to the insane asylum, four had died, and sixteen had fallen again.<sup>149</sup>

In 1907, the Mission was forced to close its doors, not because of lack of interest or failed efforts, but simply because of the enormity task its founders had taken on. Over the past thirteen years, Cramer and his wife had worked tirelessly for every soul who came through the Mission. Every day, they had risen and five in the morning and did not lie down again until ten thirty that night. Many nights their sleep was interrupted by the needs of an inmate and they had been lucky to get even a few hours of rest.<sup>150</sup>

The Sunbeam Mission succeeded where other reform efforts had not because the founders successfully identified the factors that had most dramatically inhibited the battle against prostitution. Like the rest of society at the turn of the twentieth century, the Mission had identified those parties that worked to perpetuate prostitution, but their reform efforts expanded beyond ostracizing those culpable parties. Instead, the Mission did what it could to assist in the reform of these perpetrators and focused a majority of their effort on giving women the tools they needed in order to choose a life outside of prostitution. These tools included not only education and employment, but also an understanding that they could be a part of a loving and supportive environment and could be a contributing and valuable member of their community.

---

<sup>149</sup> Cramer, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 3.

<sup>150</sup> Cramer, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Sunbeam Mission*, 3.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

As Jerry Gardineer sat on his porch, still waiting for the reporter from Des Moines Tribune-Capital, he could not help but feel nostalgic when looking out at his old neighborhood. He could still see it just the way it used to be; the houses and business that had once been lit up and full of people now looked forlorn and run down. What had once been a loud, rough and tumble neighborhood of Des Moines was now consumed by peace and quiet. The only thing that ever disturbed his peace was the occasional clatter of a motorcar as it rumbled down the street or the hum of some legitimate business. While Jerry had to admit that since he had gotten older he tended to appreciate the quiet, he still sometimes missed the hustle and bustle of the old White Chapel district. Many of the locals had been close friends with the miners and farmers who worked in the mines and fields surrounding Des Moines. Jerry could not help but smile when thinking about the scrapes they got into. This was the sort of place where brawls broke out every night, but no one bothered to call the police. He chuckled as he remembered one night when the police had ventured down on to Fifth street, the most dangerous of all the streets in White Chapel, to arrest a big burly Irish butcher for causing a fight. When they arrived, the giant Irishman had simply plucked to two policemen off their wagon and rode off with it for himself!<sup>151</sup>

But those days were long since gone. Looking around now, Jerry could not believe how many public buildings now stood where saloons and houses of ill fame had once been. In fact, the new federal building now stood on the site of what had been the first saloon on

---

<sup>151</sup> “Gone Is White Chapel District Here But Old Signs Recall ‘Glorious’ Days,” The Des Moines Tribune-Capital, August 21, 1929.

the east side of the river.<sup>152</sup> After several police raids and social reform efforts in 1901, 1903, and 1906, the Public Safety Department finally managed to close a majority of the illegal establishments in the White Chapel district of Des Moines in September of 1908. Just a few years later, the institution of municipal prohibition had succeeded in closing the doors of all the saloons in Des Moines.<sup>153</sup> In the eighteen months that had followed the closing of the saloons in 1908, the Public Safety Director, John L. Hammery, had stated that there had been a significant drop in crime.<sup>154</sup> Jerry knew that this must be true, and maybe it was for the better, but he could not help but fondly remember the booming and bustling White Chapel district that had been his home for so many years.

As the citizens of Des Moines transitioned out of the Progressive Era and into the Great Depression, they began to reflect fondly on what had previously been a source of shame for their city. The effects of prohibition caused them to reminisce about the freedom of days gone by. As they moved further into the Great Depression, their memories of the White Chapel neighborhood began to become tinged with something akin to admiration. In the fall of 1931 the City Housing Department ordered the sole reminder of the city's red light district to be destroyed. As the local papers covered the imminent destruction, their emphasis

---

<sup>152</sup> "Gone Is White Chapel District Here But Old Signs Recall 'Glorious' Days," The Des Moines Tribune-Capital, August 21, 1929.

<sup>153</sup> "Gone Is White Chapel District Here But Old Signs Recall 'Glorious' Days," The Des Moines Tribune-Capital, August 21, 1929, Rider Richmond, "Passing of Old White Chapel District Recalls Palmy Days of Late Nineties: Brick Tenements Once Were Hangout for Scarlet Vice," Des Moines Register, October 31, 1931, "All Disorderly Houses Closed: Police Make Order That Women Must Move," Des Moines Register and Leader, September 1, 1906, and "Whitechapel For A Park: The 'Q' Railroad Plans to Buy the Section and Convert It Into a 'Breathing Spot,'" Iowa State Register, October 23, 1901.

<sup>154</sup> "Gone Is White Chapel District Here But Old Signs Recall 'Glorious' Days," The Des Moines Tribune-Capital, August 21, 1929.

was not on the danger that this neighborhood had posed to young women coming to the city or to families, but instead on the ways in which people had succeeded within these slums.

One of the most memorable characters of the White Chapel neighborhood was Jeanette Allen. Known as the “queen of Pelton avenue,” Jeanette operated one of the most successful establishments in the district. After a rather scandalous trial and incurring tremendous debt, Allen left Des Moines and headed to Alaska. Four years later she returned with \$80,000 and paid off all of her debts, making her a local hero in many ways.<sup>155</sup> Other heroes included the officers who patrolled White Chapel. In an interview with the former Police Captain Albert G. Miller, he recalled two of the bravest officers he had ever known, Clay Lewis and Ira Miller. These men worked a regular beat in the White Chapel neighborhood and at one time they brought down six armed robbers trying to crack a safe in a saloon. While Miller acknowledged the bravery of the men who patrolled this neighborhood, he admitted that, “there was not so much major crime in the district, however, as you might expect.” Miller’s statement was contradictory to what we know to be true about White Chapel. Crime was a serious problem in this neighborhood, as demonstrated by the district court records, newspaper accounts, citizen led reform efforts, and the recollections of people who actually lived in the neighborhood.

The stresses of prohibition and the Great Depression had led the people of Des Moines to romanticize their perceptions of the neighborhood and its former inhabitants. Instead of seeing all of the battles they had won in White Chapel, the citizens of Des Moines simply reminisced about the freedoms that White Chapel had embodied. While their

---

<sup>155</sup> Rider Richmond, “Passing of Old White Chapel District Recalls Palmy Days of Late Nineties: Brick Tenements Once Were Hangout for Scarlet Vice,” Des Moines Register, October 31, 1931, and “Jeanette Allen Come Back Rich: Former Notorious Character Returns to Settle,” Des Moines News, December 13, 1901.

appreciation for the successful legal and social measures taken to limit the presence of prostitution in Des Moines might have been clouded by their current struggles, the fact that the city voted to demolish the White Chapel neighborhood twenty years after the prostitutes had been forced out was indicative of major shifts in societal perceptions of prostitution and vice. The citizens of Des Moines had decided that this was not a piece of their history that was worth preserving. Rather than promote the progress that they had made by rehabilitating the neighborhood, the people of Des Moines decided to destroy whatever memory remained of their sordid past. Whether or not they consciously acknowledged it, the choice to demolish the White Chapel neighborhood seemed to indicate their continued level of commitment to the removal of prostitution and vice. While it would be unrealistic to assume that they had completely eradicated vice from the city, the choice to demolish the White Chapel neighborhood could be seen as a statement that there was no longer an official stomping grounds for vice and crime within Des Moines.

The successful expulsion of prostitution from the city and the demolition of White Chapel was a result of the changing perceptions of prostitution that arose out of the early Progressive Era mindset of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The increased industrialization and urbanization of the nineteenth century began pulling young women off the farm and into cities looking for work and independence. Motivated by fear for their daughters and families, reformers began reshaping their perceptions of who was to blame for prostitution and who was most harmed by prostitution. Instead of blaming young women for prostitution, concerned citizens turned their attention to the unemployed men and irredeemable women who preyed on the young women of the city and perpetuated the damaging cycle of prostitution. These shifting perceptions prompted a series of social and

legal reforms that privileged young wayward women and targeted the presumably vicious men and irreparably damaged women who continued to promote prostitution and appeared to be beyond redemption. Legal measures, such as parole before commitment, tended to favor young women. The courts considered factors such as family life and previous offenses and used these as a justification to give young women more lenient sentences. In addition, concerned citizens began constructing reform missions that targeted the factors that they believed to be most influential in perpetuating prostitution. Reformers, like those with the Door of Hope, began to provide education to promote respectable employment, emotional support and guidance that had so often been lacking in the lives of these women, and offered long-term care to those who sought their aid in order to ensure that their permanent reformation.

While it would be unreasonable to assume that these efforts eradicated all prostitution from Des Moines, they did greatly reduce the level of crime and poverty within the city.<sup>156</sup> Redefining their perceptions of prostitution offered Iowans' the chance to radically undercut the power that vice and crime held within their communities. The reshaped perceptions of prostitution defined prostitution, and the vice associated with it, as a direct attack on the family. The personal attack that prostitution posed to the home only further motivated Des Moines' residents to institute the social and legal changes necessary in order to inhibit the presence of prostitution in their communities. Ultimately, the changes brought on by

---

<sup>156</sup> "Gone Is White Chapel District Here But Old Signs Recall 'Glorious' Days," The Des Moines Tribune-Capital, August 21, 1929. After the successful closing of the brothels in White Chapel in 1908, John L. Hammary, the superintendent of public safety, stated that, "there was less crime in the eighteen months following the closing of the district than there was in the six months preceding [its closing]."

societies' altered perceptions of prostitution led to a major campaign against vice in Des Moines and the eventual demolition of the White Chapel neighborhood.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Primary Sources:

- “About a Whitechapel Dance,” Iowa State Register, March 24, 1895.
- Adams, Mrs. J.W. “Letter from Mrs. Adams,” March 18, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- . “Mrs. Adams Letter to the Parole Board,” September 16, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- “All Disorderly Houses Closed: Police Make Order That Women Must Move,” Des Moines Register and Leader, September 1, 1906.
- “Allege Traffic in American Girls: Are sent to China practically for sale as slaves,” Des Moines Register and Leader, October 18, 1905.
- “Arrest of a Notorious Cyprian! Angelic Company of Nymphs!” Iowa State Register, June 27, 1866.
- Barr, Marquis. “Letter to Mr. Woods,” February 11, 1911, Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, State Archives of Iowa.
- Beltman, Gerritt. “Letter from G. Beltman,” March 9, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- Boydston, Bertha. “Letter from Bertha Boydston,” July 2, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library. Des Moines IA.
- Cramer, Frank L. “Eleventh Annual Report of Sunbeam Mission, The Open Door, Des Moines Iowa.” Geo A. Miller PTG. Co., Des Moines, January 1, 1904. State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- . “First Annual Repot of Sunbeam Rescue Mission or Des Moines, Iowa, 212 Walnut St.” Iowa Printing Co., Des Moines, January 1, 1894. State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- . “Second Annual Report of Sunbeam Rescuse Mission and Door of Hope.” Iowa Printing Co., Des Moines, January 1, 1895. State Historical Society of Iowa Library,

Des Moines IA.

- . “Tenth Annual Report of Sunbeam Mission The Open Door.” Geo A. Miller PTG. Co., Des Moines, January 1, 1903. State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- . “Third Annual Report of Sunbeam Rescue Mission and Door of Hope.” Iowa Printing Co., Des Moines, January 1, 1896. State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- . “Thirteenth Annual Report of Sunbeam Mission, The Open Door, Des Moines, Iowa.” Geo A. Miller PTG. Co., Des Moines, January 1, 1906. State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- Davis, Chas. J. “Reference Letter from Chas. J. Davis to Iowa Board of Parole (Sam Woods, Secretary),” September 28, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- “Father Finds Girl In Notorious Resort,” Des Moines Register and Leader, November 9, 1904.
- “Girl Found Gold was Crude Brass,” Des Moines Register and Leader, May 22, 1904.
- “Gone Is White Chapel District Here But Old Signs Recall ‘Glorious’ Days,” The Des Moines Tribune-Capital, August 21, 1929.
- Gov. Beryl F. Carroll: Criminal Correspondence (Paroles, Pardons, Requisitions, Suspensions, Discharges, etc.), Boxes 1-4, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- Gov. George W. Clarke Correspondence, Criminal (Paroles, Pardons, Requisitions, Suspensions, Discharges, Etc.), Boxes 1-4, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- “Interview with Alice in Anamosa,” Conducted by Mr. Dennis, July 29, 1915, Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- Interview with Hazel Harvey, February 10, 1913. Box 3, Folder Harvey, Hazel, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- Iowa Board of Parole. “Checkup Letter,” May 27, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

- . “In Matter of the Commutation of Sentence of Anna Lind,” April 1913. Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, State Archives of Iowa.
- . “Letter Concerning Visit to Mrs. Adams,” June 27, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- . “Letter to Mr. LeRoy,” December 15, 1910. Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, State Archives of Iowa.
- . “Parole Agreement,” March 9, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- . “Response to Request for Interview,” June 15, 1916. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- “Jeanette Allen Come Back Rich: Former Notorious Character Returns to Settle,” Des Moines News, December 13, 1901.
- “Jewish Girl Victims: Of White Slave Traffic,” Des Moines Register and Leader, October 18, 1905.
- “Lamoni Girls Tell Story of Escape,” Des Moines Register and Leader, May 26, 1904.
- Lancelot, KJ. “Employment Agreement,” March 6, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- . “Letter to Sam Woods,” November 23, 1910. Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.
- Lind, Anna. “Letter to Mr. Barn,” February 11, 1913. Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa, Library. Des Moines IA.
- . “Letter to Mr. Woods,” February, 1911, Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, State Archives of Iowa.
- . “Letter to Sam Woods,” December 14, 1910. Box 4, Folder Lind, Anna, Gov. Beryl F. Carroll Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa, Library. Des Moines IA.
- “Matron Chosen for Rescue Home,” Des Moines Register, September 17, 1908.
- McCarl, Alice. Statement of Inmate, February 20, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library. Des Moines IA.

McClaghry, Warden C.C. "Letter to Parole Board about Alice's Arrest," September 28, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

"Ministers Want to Improve Morals," Des Moines Register and Leader, April 26, 1904.

Mrs. Adams. "Apology from Mrs. Adams to Iowa Board of Parole," September 19, 1914. State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

"Offer Protection to Strange Girls," Des Moines Register and Leader, November 17, 1905.

"Rescue Home Compulsory," Des Moines Register, September 29, 1908.

Rider Richmond, "Passing of Old White Chapel District Recalls Palmy Days of Late Nineties: Brick Tenements Once Were Hangout for Scarlet Vice," Des Moines Register, October 31, 1931.

Robinson, J.C. "Application for Parole," February 12, 1914. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

"Saved Girl From Life of Shame," Des Moines Register and Leader, November 23, 1904.

"Scribner's Row As It Stands Today," Des Moines Register and Leader, July 12, 1908.

State of Iowa vs. Alice Landre, 1, (9th Circuit Court 1897).

State of Iowa vs. Anna Buck, 5, (9th Circuit Court 1888).

State of Iowa vs. Babe Childers, 9, (9th Circuit Court 1899).

State of Iowa vs. Charles Bueche, 1, (9th Circuit Court 1904).

State of Iowa vs. Jennie Ross, 3, (9th Circuit Court 1898).

State of Iowa vs. Jennie Woods, 2, (9th Circuit Court 1898).

State of Iowa vs. Jennie Woods, 4, (9th Circuit Court 1899).

State of Iowa vs. John Kline, 1, (9th Circuit Court 1892).

State of Iowa vs. Kittie Wright, 3, (9th Circuit Court 1904).

State of Iowa vs. L.P. Miller, 14, (9th Circuit Court 1888).

State of Iowa vs. Lizzie Brubaker, 1, (9th Circuit Court 1909).

State of Iowa vs. Louis Hubbard, 1, (9th Circuit Court 1891).

State of Iowa vs. Mabel Cole, 5, (9th Circuit Court 1909).

State of Iowa vs. Maggie Matrid, 3, (9th Circuit Court 1888).

State of Iowa vs. Maggie Matrid and Maggie Stropp, 5, (9th Circuit Court 1889).

“The Disorderly House,” Des Moines Register and Leader, July 27, 1906.

“The Mission in Whitechapel,” Iowa State Register, May 12, 1901.

“The Social Evil,” The Iowa State Register, April 14, 1871.

“They Ply Their Foul Traffic Even In Des Moines and In Iowa, Claiming Many Innocent Victims,” Des Moines Register, November 8, 1908.

“To Refuse Rescue Home,” Des Moines Register, September 27, 1908.

“Whitechapel For A Park: The “Q” Railroad Plans to Buy the Section and Convert It Into a ‘Breathing Spot,’” Iowa State Register, October 23, 1901.

Whitfield, S.L. Exam of Alice McCarl, November 26, 1913. Box 03, Folder McCarl, Alice, Gov. George W. Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines IA.

“Will Select Home For Fallen Women,” Des Moines Register, September 18, 1908.

“William’s Slumming Trip,” Iowa State Register, August 31, 1901.

“Woman Arrested for Enticing Young Girl,” Des Moines Register and Leader, November 1, 1905.

“Women Get Long Sentence,” Iowa State Register, November 1, 1901.

“Women Will Find a Refuge Home,” Des Moines Register, September 12, 1908.

“Young Girl Found in Disorderly House,” Des Moines Register and Leader, August 31, 1904.

#### Secondary Sources:

Fink, Deborah. *Open Country, Iowa: Rural Women, Tradition and Change*. Albany: State

- University of New York Press, 1986.
- Hench, Atcheson L. "A Possible Clue to the Source of 'Ballyhoo' and Some Queries." *American Speech* 20, no. 3 (October 1, 1945): 184–186. doi:10.2307/486722.
- Odem, Mary E. *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920 (Gender and American Culture)*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Peiss, Kathy Lee. *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986.
- Rosen, Ruth. *The Maimie Papers*. Feminist Press, c.1977, 1977.
- Seagle, William. "The Twilight of the Mann Act." *American Bar Association Journal* 55, no. 7 (July 1, 1969): 641–647.
- Taylor, Douglas. "Ballyhoo." *International Journal of American Linguistics* 23, no. 4 (October 1, 1957): 302–303.