

Honors Proposal
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Reform became a popular field through which women left the private sphere for public life between 1870 and 1920. Reformers bought into the Victorian ideal of True Womanhood, which set up women (at least white women) as the moral guardians of society, subsequently making it their responsibility to reform the ills of their respective cities. Prostitution quickly became one these reform projects in Memphis. In the late 19th century, a red-light district, named for the red-lanterns that signified the nature of the establishments, developed on Gayoso Street in Memphis, Tennessee. Largely overlooked by the police force, Gayoso Street degenerated as crime and prostitution went on the rise, causing the burgeoning female reform movement in Memphis to take notice. By researching both reformers and prostitutes in Memphis, I want to explore the convergence of race, class, and gender relations inscribed upon the female body and subsequently gain an understanding of the white, middle to upper class reformers' relationships with the prostitutes they attempted to help. Within this framework, I put forth that by embracing the Victorian gender ideology, Memphis women reformers who addressed prostitution limited themselves. Believing that women were morally superior and subsequently accountable for sexual control, these reformers reinforced the sexual double standard and thus the subordination of women. Essentially conservative, Memphis reformers adhered to racialized definitions of womanhood, which compromised their ability to change the lives of prostitutes. These reformers offered forgiveness and rescue to prostitutes deemed worthy by their race and class - that is, white or middle class - and condemned prostitutes outside of this contrived hegemony, despite their good intentions.

Historiography

After becoming interested in this topic, I decided to participate in a Directed Inquiry in the Spring of 2007 with Dr. Garceau-Hagen in which I was able to engage a portion of the literature on this topic.

Female Reformers and Activists:

In examining the existing literature on female reformers and activists from the 1870s to the 1920s, Jill Ker Conway and Estelle Freedman represent two distinct perceptions of this period and its consequences for women's rights. Both authors attempt to answer why feminism declined in the period after suffrage was gained. In two landmark essays, Conway argues that female social activists of the Progressive Era did not take their cause far enough and simply perpetuated previously conceived stereotypes of the female gender, reaffirming the merits of inequality. Through buying into traditional notions of True Womanhood, the majority of these social reformers in the Progressive era did not promote the idea of gender equality or even support suffrage.¹ Subsequently, Conway maintains that feminism lagged after 1920 because after suffrage was gained and the cultural popularity of reform ended, a majority of these women had no cause to support. In contrast, Estelle Freedman argues that these same social activists succeeded because they retreated into a separate female culture. Freedman believes that this separate women's culture developed through a strong network of female reformers who believed in True Womanhood and therefore did not interfere in the public sphere outside of their moral reform activity. She blames the downfall of feminism after 1920 on those women who did not maintain that separate culture but instead moved into the public and thoroughly masculine realm

¹ Jill Kerr Conway, "Women Reformers and American Culture, 1870-1930." *Journal of Social History* 5:2 (1971-72): 164-77.; Jill Kerr Conway, "Utopian Dream or Dystopian Nightmare?: Nineteenth-Century Feminist Ideas about Inequality," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 96:2 (1986): 285-94.

of partisan politics, where they lost political strength.² For the purpose of my project, Conway's thesis reflects my critique of many of the Memphis female reformers.

To introduce her thesis, Conway separates female activists in this period into two separate groups. In her article "Women Reformers and American Culture, 1870-1930," she divides women into "the sage or prophetess who claimed access to hidden wisdom by virtue of feminine insights" and "the professional expert or the scientist, a social identity highly esteemed in American culture but sexually neutral."³ These distinctions allow Conway to address the questions surrounding the effects that gaining suffrage had on first wave feminism. In particular, she makes an argument as to why first wave feminism became politically inactive after suffrage was gained. She claims that during the period from 1870 to 1930, the sage/conservative-sentimental reformers of the Progressive era overtook the women's movement. In particular, "the sage had great resonance for American popular culture" because she did not challenge existing gender roles. Reformers like Jane Addams became "great public figures" by championing commonly held ideals about women's role as moral guardians. Conway blames this group of female reformers for first wave's feminism's lack of influence after 1920. She claims that because they failed to dramatize another "model of feminine excellence besides the gentle, intuitive woman," their influence waned. With this foundation, "only a drastic reformation of the issues surrounding the question of sameness or difference between women and men seemed likely to alter this pattern."⁴ I hope to utilize this same construct to analyze and

² Estelle B. Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930," *Feminist Studies* 5 (Fall, 1979), 512-529.

³ Conway, "Women Reformers and American Culture, 167. She takes this paradigm in a different direction in her article "Utopian Dream or Dystopian Nightmare?," where women are divided into the "utopian-radical, concerned with changing the social and cultural boundaries of the gender system in profound ways" and the "conservative-sentimental," who were "concerned with elaborating and expanding women's claim to authority and influence *because* they function only in the domestic sphere and were excluded from the moral hazards of male life. Conway, "Utopian Dream or Dystopian Nightmare?," 294.

⁴ Conway, "Women Reformers and American Culture," 168, 174- 175.

critique female reformers in Memphis. In particular, Conway's thesis enlightens my argument that because the female "sage" reformers were trapped by their own social identity, it prevented them from seeing the humanity in the women they were trying to help and the larger necessity for women's political and social equality.

Sex-work:

Kevin J. Mumford explores the developing sex-districts and leisure culture of New York and Chicago in the early twentieth century, using a concept he titles "interzones." Mumford defines "interzones" as areas where "cultural, sexual, and social interchange" took place. In his introduction, Mumford immediately acknowledges that race and sexuality are "constructions" but he goes beyond this argument, claiming that to understand this idea, a historian needs to ask "what precisely are the phenomena of their creation?" He claims that race and sexuality are "made up of many phenomena," including three that he focuses on: "ideology, institutions, and human interactions."⁵ Mumford argues that these constructs cannot simply be understood at the individual level but their true power must be acknowledged by examining race and sexuality at the institutional level.⁶ Similarly, by examining women's reform groups in Memphis, I will be exploring institutionalized understandings of race, class, and gender. These reform groups were institutions of social control that feared another economic institution: prostitution. By examining both women's reform groups and prostitution in Memphis at the institutional level, I will be better able to explain their problematic relationship, which largely stemmed from different gender ideologies.

⁵ Kevin J. Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), xvii.

⁶ Mumford, *Interzones*, xix.

For the purposes of my project based in Memphis, one of Mumford's strongest arguments comes from his observations about racism in the situations of black and white prostitutes during this period. During the Progressive era, prostitution was referred to as "white slavery." This term was developed by a particular type of moral reformer who argued that single, white women from rural areas were in grave danger of being duped into prostitution by predatory men if they moved to urban centers. Moral reformers instilled fear in white society and thus, a passion to save the pure innocence of white women susceptible to being lured into sex-work, resulting in racialized reform. The term "white slavery" allowed reformers to believe that these women were not voluntarily prostitutes. They did not have the same perspective about African-American prostitutes. One legacy of slavery was the image of black women as over-sexualized, an idea that had justified the white master's sexual abuse of their female slaves, but this same concept transferred to the Progressive era. That is, female reformers who based their understanding of morality on true womanhood and Victorian sexual ideals viewed African-Americans as sexually dangerous. This was reflected both in the punishment of African-American men who had interracial relations with white women, and in reformers' focus on reforming white women prostitutes, over African-American prostitutes.

Ultimately, by the 1910s, Mumford found that "black women were disproportionately represented among the ranks of prostitutes" in both Chicago and New York.⁷ His concept of racialized reform will be particularly useful for my project because a large proportion of prostitutes in Memphis were non-white. According to Mumford's evidence, if the Memphis prostitutes were largely white, there might have been a greater effort at reform or at least a more effective one. Understanding women's clubs in Memphis as racialized reformers furthers my

⁷ Mumford, *Interzones*, 20, 14, 16-17, 38.

critique of the concept of True Womanhood and moral reform, as it is connected to notions of white supremacy.

Alan Hunt introduces the concept of “heterosocial space” in the cities as “the shifting and changing sites where young women and men come into contact” and have the possibility of engaging in sexual activity.⁸ Through examining vice commission reports from 1902 to 1919 in the United States and Canada, he discusses the different levels of reform and reaction during this period. Hunt claims that the vice reports, although different in their method, all had similar purposes, which was to highlight and abolish “commercialized vice.” He then states that vice reports typified the institutional control of “heterosocial space” during the Progressive era. Hunt asserts that the reforms aimed at stopping prostitution were more than simply moral repugnance at the act. Instead, prostitution became “an organizing metaphor” for unacceptable gender behavior and a target “for moralization and regulation.”⁹ In Memphis, Gayoso Street acts as the “heterosocial space” that moral reformers were attempting to control. Similar to Hunt’s findings, moral reformers in Memphis viewed prostitution as a challenge to traditional gender norms and white womanhood. I will utilize Hunt’s theory of “heterosocial spaces” to clarify the activities taking place on Gayoso Street and how they gained such infamy among the middle to upper class white reformers.

Furthermore, Hunt’s theories led my research into another theorist’s work: Marilyn Frye. By exploring the dualistic means of oppression towards women, Hunt reflects Marilyn Frye’s argument seen in her chapter on “Oppression.” Examining the freedoms of women in the modern context, Frye utilizes the construct of the “birdcage” to explain the several different facets of oppression on women. She asserts that each woman is placed within a cage by virtue of

⁸ Alan Hunt, “Regulating Heterosocial Space: Sexual Politics in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 15, no. 1 (2002): 1-2.

⁹ Hunt, “Regulating Heterosocial Space,” 2.

her gender and each metal bar represents some aspect of her social identity she must overcome to gain equality. Women are not simply oppressed because of their gender but also because of their race, class, or sexuality.¹⁰ Frye's argument is particularly important to my research because she provides a construct for explaining the multi-faceted oppression that non-white prostitutes during the Progressive era dealt with. They were not only discriminated against because of their work but also because of their race and class. Their fellow sisters deemed them as unworthy of reformation because of their skin color. Hunt and Frye demonstrate one of the larger purposes of my project and that is to show the many facets of oppression that as Frye points out, still exist today.

Laura Hapke turns a sympathetic eye to the prostitute of the Progressive era. Utilizing newspapers and literature of the period, Hapke explains the public perception of sex-workers and points out the contrasting perceptions of white prostitutes and non-white prostitutes. Discussing moral reform, Hapke argues that these dual perceptions seeped into the goals of women's reform clubs, arguing that "reformers" would insist "on seduction" as the cause of prostitution but they would only allow this kind word to the wealthier, white prostitutes.¹¹ To those prostitutes subordinated by race and class, writers discussed them in animalistic terms. Hapke works against these stereotypes of the period by opening up the identity of non-white prostitutes to include their roles as mothers, friends, and workers. She talks about their tough working conditions, the ways in which these women died, and the lack of concern by the society around them.¹² I hope to conduct similar reclamation in my own research, recovering the humanity of these non-white prostitutes and critiquing those reformers who failed to move beyond their racist

¹⁰ Marilyn Frye, "Oppression," from *The Politics of Reality* (Trumansburg, N.Y.: The Crossing Press, 1983), 1-16.

¹¹ Laura Hapke, "The Late Nineteenth-Century American Streetwalker: Images and Realities," *Mid-America* 65, no. 3 (1983): 155-156.

¹² Hapke, "The Late Nineteenth-Century American Streetwalker," 157 and 159.

and controlling notions of gender and sexuality. Although sources are scarce, I will use three different narratives of prostitutes located in Memphis, New Orleans, Saint Louis, and Philadelphia and, like Hapke, attempt to reclaim their humanity. In addition, I will gather information from the Memphis census reports for 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920 to outline prostitute's living conditions.

Marilyn Wood Hill focuses her work on the relationships between female prostitutes in New York City. Hill points to a separate culture that those involved in the commercialization of sex created as a system of support for one another. She talks about the acceptance of women as leaders within the public sphere, pointing to the powerful influence of madams and their ownership of brothels.¹³ These different historical routes led her to argue that “prostitution and its historical conditions offered a “significant degree of autonomy and control in their [lower-class women involved in sexual commerce] professional lives.”¹⁴

Similarly, Kathy Peiss discusses the development of a separate working class culture during this period. Although Peiss does not discuss prostitution in great detail, she demonstrates the development of a separate working class culture through the growth of leisure activity. Peiss argues that in locations like theatres and saloons, the working class socialized together, defining their own understanding of gender, race, and class. Their ideas about gender and sexuality were particularly subversive to hegemonic society as they were more fluid than Victorian ideals.¹⁵

Both Hill and Peiss point to the threat of these separate notions of gender and sexual identity and morality seen within the lower classes. I hope to utilize their theories to inquire into

¹³ Marilyn Wood Hill, *Their Sister's Keepers: Prostitution in New York City, 1830-1870* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 324.

¹⁴ Hill, *Their Sister's Keepers*, 324.

¹⁵ Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).

the culture of the lower classes in Memphis. The idea that the lower classes threatened the upper classes' notions of morality and virtue helps to further explain the dysfunctional relationship between the reformers and their targets in Memphis.

Finally, any research on prostitution must acknowledge the works of Judith Walkowitz.¹⁶ With her research, Walkowitz creates a complicated construct, which is described by reviewer Graham Russell Hodges as “a multilayered discourse with poststructuralism to demonstrate that sexuality was a contested site for struggles of class, gender, and race.”¹⁷ She conceptualizes that the female body, as a site of contested values and prostitution, was one area where these issues surfaced. Because of Walkowitz's theories, I have been compelled to explore the concept of the female body as a contested site of power relations through feminist theory. Walkowitz harkens back to French theorists Michel Foucault and Luce Irigaray in that all three scholars explore the notion of the body as a site of power relations. The power struggle between sex-workers and reformers over notions of womanhood and sexuality resulted in a power struggle over women's bodies. Reformers judged the worth of a woman by different aspects of her body including her sexual activity, womb, and skin color. In my analysis of prostitution in Memphis, I will bring in all three scholars to discuss and explore this complicated issue, hopefully fleshing out, through historical fact, the relation of woman to her body, and her body to society.

Archival Sources:

To focus my project in Memphis, I will be utilizing several different primary sources. By choosing to study prostitution, I immediately must acknowledge the difficulty of finding primary sources to answer questions about prostitution itself. By virtue of its legality, prostitution and

¹⁶ Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

¹⁷ Graham Russell Hodges, “Flaneurs, Prostitutes, and Historians: Sexual Commerce and Representation in the Nineteenth Century Metropolis,” *Journal of Urban History*, 23, No. 4 (1997): 496-497.

those involved in it are forced to maintain a sense of secrecy and thus, there are not many sources speaking directly to prostitution in Memphis from the perspective of those involved. Subsequently, I will be utilizing three different narratives to gain this perspective. I have three narratives written by prostitutes from different regions in the United States during the Progressive era. Within these narratives, Memphis will be represented but not as thoroughly as other cities like Saint Louis or New Orleans. Still, I believe these women's voices to be invaluable in my study, as they will help me to understand the prostitute's point of view. These firsthand narratives will be complimented by utilizing census records, court records, and real estate deeds to gain a statistical picture of sexual commerce in Memphis.

The process of studying reformers in Memphis is more easily tackled. Focusing on two main women's groups, The Young Women's and Women's Christian Association and the Nineteenth Century Club, I will be utilizing archival material ranging from newspaper articles to meeting minutes to understand these different organizations. Furthermore, I have the words of the women reformers themselves in the form of published books and speeches. The majority of my archival material is located in two locations: The Memphis and Shelby County Room and the Shelby County Archives. I will not be studying African-American women's clubs in Memphis because I have not found evidence of their involvement in the reform of prostitution in Memphis. Also, because I am focusing on the relationship between upper class white women and lower class African-American women, the work of African-American women's clubs is outside the scope of my research.¹⁸

¹⁸ In my bibliography, I have cited several sources that speak to the development of the African-American women's club movement during the progressive era. I want to acknowledge this development alongside white women's clubs during the same period even though I will not be focusing on their work in my thesis.

New questions:

In thinking about the overarching questions of my project, I compiled a list of inquiries, some derived from these sources and others formulated because of what current research lacks. My main focus will surround one question: what was the relationship between the female reformer in Memphis and the sex-workers they were trying to save? This question can be broken down into a subset of four questions. What role did race play in the reform process? How did conservative gender and sexual mores shape the reform process? Did Memphis female reformers recognize their racialized and classist reform system? And finally, did the female reformers in Memphis understand their roles in the women's rights movements? Exploration of these questions will be organized into four main chapters:

- I. Memphis from 1870 to 1920: Crime and Reform
- II. Gender Roles and Sexuality: Understanding Masculinity and Femininity in Memphis from 1870 to 1920
- III. Sex-Work in Memphis: Commerce on Gayoso Street
- IV. Eradicating Prostitution: The Many Factions of Reformation in Memphis.

During the Progressive era, conflicting notions of gender were complicated by the racial and caste systems in place and were played out in the effort to control female sexual expression outside marriage. Prostitution was one issue through which the female body became a site for contested values. With my research, I hope to study the relationship between the female reformers in Memphis and their targets. I intend to demonstrate the many different aspects of oppression that non-white sex workers in Memphis dealt with and subsequently, the lack of understanding between themselves and those trying to reform them. The larger significance of my work will hopefully shed light on the growing women's movement, demarcating the

difference between women's rights activists and moral reformers, and revealing the limits of moral reformers as agents of social change. I hope to rediscover the humanity and womanhood of lower class, non-white prostitutes during this period, challenging the hegemonic historical narrative to include their battle to be viewed as worthy of consideration. This study of prostitutes and reformers in Memphis will show that when examining the matrix of gender oppression, race and class caste systems can never be left out of the analysis.

Finally, as a historian sensitive to power relations, I want to be clear about my identity when researching and writing this thesis. Like the reformers I critique, I am a white middle class woman and I will never be able to fully understand the experience of the non-white prostitutes during the Progressive era as I have not lived their reality. By simply acting as a researcher and turning a sympathetic ear to their stories, I have created a hierarchical relationship between my subjects and myself. Thus, I must acknowledge the limitations of my research. Still, I hope that through acknowledging the limitations of my identity and the power relations between the researcher and subject, I can at least glean some insight into these women's stories. My goal is to include their narratives in the historical timeline as untouched as possible by the caste system I have created by choosing to study their lives.

Annotated Bibliography

- Additions made to this bibliography have been marked by an asterisk

Secondary Source Material

Memphis in the Progressive Era:

Bond, Beverly G. and Janann Sherman. *Memphis in Black and White*. Great Britain: Arcadia Publishing, 2003.

As part of the "Making of America" series, *Memphis in Black and White* is a simple and wide-ranging history of the bluff city. It begins with the first settlements in this region around

1000 AD and ends with the revitalization of Memphis at the end of the 20th century. This book is useful first, to place the city in historical context and second, to gain an overview second on the particulars of reform in Memphis. The discussion of reform in Memphis during the early 20th century was one of the first sources I examined to gain a lead on primary source materials.

* Capers, Gerald M. *The Biography of a River Town: Memphis: Its Heroic Age*. Memphis: Burke's Book Store, 2003.

* Dowdy, Wayne. *Mayor Crump Don't Like It: Machine Politics in Memphis*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2006.

Miller, William D. *Memphis During the Progressive Era: 1900-1917*. Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1957.

Written in 1957, this book reflects that era, in that the author, William Miller, holds a racist bias throughout most of the text. As such, this book is not useful to my project as a secondary source but more as a guide into primary source material. Discussing Memphis during the Progressive era, Miller provides several newspaper articles from which I have been able to gain a lot of information.

* Trost, Jennifer. *Gateway to Justice: The Juvenile Court and Progressive Child Welfare in a Southern City*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005.

Reformers during the Progressive Era:

Anderson, Kathryn. "Practicing Feminist Politics: Emily Newell Blair and U.S. Women's Political Choices in the Early Twentieth Century." *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 3 (1997): 50-72.

In this article, Kathryn Anderson discusses the life of Emily Newell Blair, a female politician who navigated the perils of both separate women's political and volunteer organizations and partisan politics, mostly during the early 20th century. This dual construct that Anderson utilizes to discuss female reformers is useful to my project. With her representation of the life of Emily Newell Blair, Anderson demonstrates the merits of women's success in the public sphere through a two-fold method of maintaining ties to separate women's organizations and also working within the male-dominated partisan politics. Anderson praises Blair because of her ability to navigate this difficult world. I hope to utilize this dual construct to explore the lives of female reformers in Memphis.

* Brown, Elsa Barkley. "Womanist Consciousness: Maggie Lena Walker and the Independent Order of St. Luke." *Signs* 14 (1989): 610-633.

Conway, Jill Kerr. "Women Reformers and American Culture, 1870-1930." *Journal of Social History* 5, no. 2 (1971-72): 164-77.

-----". "Utopian Dream or Dystopian Nightmare?: Nineteenth-Century Feminist Ideas about Inequality." *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 96, no. 2 (1986): 285-94.

These two articles by Jill Kerr Conway give clear criteria from which I hope to further analyze female reformers in Memphis. Discussing the reformers of the early 20th century in the United States, Conway argues that female social activists of the Progressive Era did not take their cause far enough and simply perpetuated the female gender ideology of woman as moral guardian, which reinforced the notion of separate spheres, and thus reinforced gender inequality. She separates the reformers into two groups: the moral reformers and the activists. To Conway, the moral reformers were soft in their reform agendas and did not make a lasting impression on the urban centers they were trying to revolutionize. In contrast, the activist reformers, although less popular, incited lasting change in the cities they tried to help.

* Cott, Nancy F. *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1987.

* Deutsch, Sarah. "Learning to Talk More like a Man: Boston Women's Class-Bridging Organizations, 1870-1940." *The American Historical Review* 97, no. 2 (1992): 379-404.

* Frankel, Noralee and Dye, Nancy S. eds. *Gender, Class, Race and Reform in the Progressive Era*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991.

* Giddings, Paula J. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1984.

* Harley, Sharon. "For the Good of Family and Race: Gender, Work, and Domestic Roles in the Black Community, 1880-1930." *Signs* 15, no.2 (1990): 336-349.

* Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race." *Signs* 17, no. 21 (1992): 251-274.

* -----". *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1910*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993.

* Rynbrandt, Linda J. "The "Ladies of the Club" and Caroline Bartlett Crane: Affiliation and Alienation in Progressive Social Reform." *Gender and Society* 11, no. 2 (1997): 200-214.

* Taylor, Traki L. "Womanhood Glorified": Nannie Helen Burroughs and the National Training School for Women and Girls, Inc., 1909-1961." *The Journal of African American History* 87 (2002): 390-402.

* Turner, Elizabeth Hayes. *Women, Culture, and Community: Religion and Reform in Galveston, 1880-1920*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Wedell, Marsha. *Elite Women and the Reform Impulse in Memphis*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1991.

For the purposes of my project, this book will be a definitive secondary source on female reformers during the Progressive era. Wedell discusses several different important women reformers including women involved in the Young Women's and Women's Association (YWWCA) as well as those in the Nineteenth Century club. These groups represent the two types of female reformers in Memphis, separated by economic and social class.

* White, Deborah Gray. *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves: 1894-1994*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999.

Prostitution and the Working class in the United States from 1870 to 1920:

Clement, Elizabeth Alice. *Love For Sale: Courting, Treating and Prostitution in New York City, 1900-1945*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

In this book, Clement examines prostitution in New York City during the early and mid twentieth century. Her most useful analysis is the economic aspect of prostitution and the development of sexual commerce at the turn of the century. She also includes information on the transforming sexual values in the early 20th century. Although her book is set in New York, her larger paradigms are useful for my project.

D'Emilio, John and Estelle B. Freedman. *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Intimate Matters is a comprehensive history of sexuality in America from 1600 to the modern day. D'Emilio and Freedman divide their book into four separate periods, including 1880-1930. This is particular useful for my project as the book gives a general overview of the sexual mores of this period. D'Emilio and Freedman problematize sexuality, demonstrating with their research that it is not a fixed entity in American culture. I will use this book to contextualize my own findings about sexuality and sexual morality in Memphis at the turn of the century.

Hapke, Laura. "The Late Nineteenth-Century American Streetwalker: Images and Realities." *Mid-America* 65, no. 3 (1983): 155-62.

With this article, Laura Hapke utilizes an analysis process I hope to mimic in my own research. She turns a sympathetic eye toward prostitutes, showing their dehumanization by society at large. She utilizes newspapers, court dockets, and even the words of the reformers themselves to demonstrate the stigmas placed upon prostitutes and subsequently, the failure to enact effective reform.

Hunt, Alan. "Regulating Heterosocial Space: Sexual Politics in the Early Twentieth Century." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 15, no. 1 (2002): 1-34.

In this article, Alan Hunt provides an extremely useful paradigm for understanding sexual exchange at the turn of the century. Hunt compares the moral theological discourse and the medico-moral discourse, showing how ideas about sexuality came from both secular and religious authorities, who tried to regulate the urban social spaces where men and women interacted.

Mumford, Kevin J. *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Kevin J. Mumford's book presents a useful paradigm through which a student of this period can understand constructs of race and sexuality. Mumford introduces the concept of an "interzone," which is defined as a location where social and sexual interchange take place, ranging from brothels to department stores. I hope to employ this construct in my own project.

Odem, Mary E. *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Mary Odem discusses a different aspect of sexual reform from the 1880s to 1920. She discusses the movement to raise the age of sexual consent, and its effect on female sexuality. Odem argues that this reform movement resulted in unnecessary policing of adolescent female sexuality during this period. Although she does not discuss prostitution or its reform in detail, Odem's focus on the age of consent and the sexual purity movement enlighten my own work. By comparing the two movements, I will hopefully be able to find parallel focuses on the female body and further explain why reformers in Memphis chose to reform prostitution in the way they did.

Peiss, Kathy. *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986.

Although *Cheap Amusements* does not discuss sex-work or prostitution as an occupation, Peiss' focus on the development of a working class culture during the Progressive era informs my own research. She argues that the working class culture became a threat to middle class white moral standards when urban, working class, youth developed more sexually expressive mores that allowed single women to exchange sexual favors for financial favors (such as drinks, movie tickets, or entry fees at dance halls). I hope to demonstrate that same tension between the classes in Memphis and its effect on the reform projects undertaken by the middle to upper classes.

Peiss, Kathy ed., *Major Problems in the History of American Sexuality*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002.

This book is a collection of essays and documents that span from around the 1700s to the modern day. This overview of American sexuality provides a clear context for my project. In particular, Peiss provides several primary sources on prostitution and working class sexuality.

Documents:

- 1) A Government Agent Explains White Slave Traffic, 1911
- 2) Reformers Condemn "Tough Dancing," 1910
- 3) Emma Goldman Analyzes "The Traffic in Women," 1911

Rosen, Ruth. *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1982.

Rosen's book was one of the foundational studies on prostitution in the 1980s. She started the investigation of sex-work, particularly at the turn of the twentieth-century in the United States. Because she does not focus her work on particular location, Rosen's book presents more of an overview of prostitution during this period. Still, her book gives a clear analysis of the growth of an urban sexual commerce and reformation.

Walkowitz, Judith R. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Walkowitz's work is a definitive analysis of prostitution at the turn of the century. As it is set in London, the book will not provide factual information for my project but it does present an excellent conceptual argument. She discusses theories about space and power in London and demonstrates the marginalization of women during this period. Her in depth analysis and innovative use of theories is something I hope to mimic in my own work.

Theorists:

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.

Michel Foucault produces a useful construct from which one can understand the subjugation of a human being. In this book, Foucault discusses the idea of a "docile body." That is, the bodies of persons in subordinated groups are subjected to controls aimed at reinforcing the power of the state. He claims that certain bodies are more easily controlled given their subordinated social situation. Utilizing this theory, I hope to inform my understanding of how reformers viewed sex-workers and consider the prostitute's body where power relations got played out.

Frye, Marilyn. *The Politics of Reality*. Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing Press, 1983.

Frye will compliment these other two theorists by providing a means through which race and class can enter into the analysis. With her essay "Oppression," Frye clearly demonstrates how women are oppressed from several different angles. In particular, women of color and of the working class deal with more than one level of oppression and have more to fight in order to gain equality. This is particularly important when analyzing prostitution, its causes, and the women involved within it, as these women were rarely of the dominant race or class. I hope to

utilize Frye to aid in my interpretation of the reformers' understanding of women who differ from them by race and class.

Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which is Not One*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985.

A feminist theorist, Irigaray is well respected within her field. Irigaray argues that women are absent from that which is considered to be real: the male body. She argues that as women's sexual desire and sexuality are repressed; their bodies are viewed as places of nothingness rather than a place of power like a male's body. This is relevant to prostitution in that when women use their sexuality for their own profit, it is seen as no longer repressed, and thus negative. Although her argument is extremely complex, I hope to draw upon some of her theories to explain the female body as a location of negative power play.

Primary Source Material

Memoirs:

- 1) Anonymous, *Madeleine: An Autobiography*. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004.
- 2) Rosen, Ruth ed. and Sue Davidson, eds. *The Maimie Papers*. New York: The Feminist Press, 1977.
- 3) Wiltz, Christine. *The Last Madame: A Life in the New Orleans Underworld*. New York, NY: De Capo Press, 2001.

These three memoirs represent experiences of women with sex-work in America around 1900 in four different cities: Memphis, New Orleans, Saint Louis, and Philadelphia. Since there is not a memoir of a prostitute in Memphis, these three different experiences at least give a prostitute's perspective on sex work and reformers in different regions of the United States. I hope to utilize these sources to humanize sex-workers during this period and contrast their words with the goals of the reformers.

Shelby County Archives:

These archives house a range of documents needed to assess the state of prostitution in Memphis, 1870 to 1920, including land deeds. I will be utilizing land deeds and real-estate records to determine the ownership of the red-light district. This will inform my analysis of class in prostitution and help to determine whether sex-workers had a separate culture. It will also inform the term "sexual commerce," by revealing the economic structure of prostitution in Memphis.

Memphis and Shelby County Room:

The Women's and Young Women's Christian Association Papers:

Recently compiled by archivists in the Memphis and Shelby County room, this collection of papers includes newspaper articles, minute books, and speeches left by members of this particular group. The WYWCA was particular to Memphis, TN and they worked on two fronts:

to keep working class women out of prostitution and to give refuge to women who had already fallen prey to sex-work.

The Nineteenth Century Club papers:

The Memphis and Shelby County room keeps a small collection of papers on the Nineteenth Century Club. The majority of the information they have comes from newspaper articles due to the secret nature of the club itself. Still, these newspapers explain not only the historical actions of the club but also Memphis' reaction to their work.

Articles from the *Commercial Appeal*, 1890-1920

I am utilizing the *Commercial Appeal* to research popular notions about gender and sexuality through advertising, and to establish reactions to the reforms aimed at sex-work in Memphis. I have articles discussing the problems of the red-light district (located on and around Gayoso Street) and articles arguing over the proper way to reform these issues. The *Commercial Appeal* has also been useful in establishing a time-line for reformers' activities, and for facts about the owners of the red-light district.

Articles from the *Memphis Morning News*, 1902-1904:

This publication only lasted for a few years before it was taken over by larger papers but it is particularly useful because it includes a study of crime in Memphis. From this publication, I can gain some statistical facts about sex-work and related crime in Memphis during this period.

Memphis Census Reports, 1880, 1900, 1920, and 1920:

Census reports will provide firsthand information on the number of sex-workers in Memphis and their households, as well as their vital statistics, such as age, race, ethnicity, and marital status. It will also contain clues to their economic status, such as whether they owned or rented their residence.

Memphis Police Reports, 1880-1920:

Although biased, these reports will give me an idea of how law enforcement dealt with sex-workers in Memphis. They will also inform my analysis on the division of classes and how that affected the treatment of sex-workers.

Meriwether, Lide. *Soundings*. Memphis: Boyle & Chapman, 1872.

This book, published and widely acclaimed in the 1870s in Memphis, is one of my key primary sources. Lide Meriwether was a female reformer at the beginning of the movement in Memphis. She was particularly passionate about reforming prostitution in Memphis and in particular, about helping sex-workers themselves. This book is her charge to her fellow socialites to recognize the problem of prostitution in Memphis and to help their fellow woman.

An analysis of this diatribe will start my project and set in motion my investigation of the female reformers of this period in Memphis.

Honor Code: I have neither given nor received any aid on this assignment, nor have I witnessed such a violation of the Honor Code.

Signature: