survive with a common spoken language. By more closely examining Edmund Booth's editorials, Lang might have established his position on immigration and, by extension, tested Baynton's hypothesis. These are some of the larger questions that Lang's work points toward that would help to situate his work in the larger context of the history of deafness.

Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed, by Stephen O'Connor. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. xxi, 362 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $16.00 paper.

Reviewer Joan Gittens is professor of history at Southwest Minnesota State University. She is the author of *Poor Relations: The Children of the State in Illinois, 1818–1990* (1994).

Stephen O'Connor's *Orphan Trains* is a judicious assessment of nineteenth-century child saver Charles Loring Brace, whose controversial Emigration Plan relocated a quarter of a million city children to rural America between 1854 and 1929. At a time when most agencies advocated institutionalizing children in order to reform them, Brace insisted that the only thing wrong with most children was the dreadful environment in which they lived. His equation was simple. These children needed to get out of New York. Farmers in the West needed workers. Link the two, and it would improve the prospects for both. For 75 years, children made the long journey from New York to western towns, accompanied by workers from Brace's Children's Aid Society (CAS). When they arrived at their destination, they were put on display in a local church, where the population could view them and choose a child to take home. Some children were adopted, but the CAS did not require that or consider a placement a failure if the child was treated more like a worker than a family member. There was no legal contract and no follow-up. What became of children once they were placed was not the CAS's responsibility. The CAS was pleased to hear from children and always made extravagant claims about how they fared, but for many years, until outside pressure forced a reassessment, the organization made no effort to supervise the children's situations. From the first trip west, when a CAS worker put nine small leftover children on a train from Dowagiac, Michigan, to Iowa City 200 miles away and then returned to New York, it was clear that the CAS considered its work accomplished when the children were relocated.

Charles Loring Brace was lauded in his day, but a wide range of observers also ferociously criticized the CAS. Catholics complained that their children were pirated away and turned into Protestants. Western critics accused Brace of dumping New York's problem chil-

dren in other states. A later generation of social workers was appalled by the CAS's cavalier placement of its charges, insisting on a level of oversight that would offer the children protection and an ongoing relationship with the placement agency. The embattled organization responded to its critics with improved oversight, but it was never completely successful in quelling disapproval.

O'Connor tells the story of the orphan trains in a beautifully written book that is notable in two respects. First, he does a superb job of presenting Brace as a compelling intellectual, someone far more complex and uncertain than might be apparent from the somewhat simple-minded emigration scheme he devised. Second, he tells the stories of the children, successes and failures, as much as possible from the spotty records available. His writing is imaginative and compassionate, honoring Brace for his genuine affection for the children he tried to help and crediting him with helping to pioneer the foster care system. Yet he recognizes how abysmally the CAS failed to understand the vulnerability of its charges and how shamelessly it touted its successes, with little evidence to substantiate its claims.

Readers of Iowa history will be especially interested in the stories of children placed in the Midwest and in the protests made by western states regarding the emigration program. But the heart of the story is not regional. It is an intellectual history of an enterprise that was part genius and part folly, one that continues to haunt the American imagination.

Altering American Consciousness: The History of Alcohol and Drug Use in the United States, 1800-2000, edited by Sarah W. Tracy and Caroline Jean Acker. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004. vii, 414 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. $70.00 cloth, $26.95 paper.

Reviewer Elaine Frantz Parsons is assistant professor of history at Duquesne University. She is the author of *Manhood Lost: Drunken Men and Redeeming Women in the Nineteenth Century United States* (2003).

Altering American Consciousness, a collection of 15 essays dealing with substance use throughout the history of the United States, manages to be both ambitious and solid. The essays are quite cohesive; a body of themes, questions, sources, and theories appear repeatedly. The largest common theme is the changing consensus on the meaning of addiction, and on what sorts of uses of alcohol and other drugs are social problems. Many of the essays deal with competition among professional and governmental groups for ownership of the addiction problem. Certain important contemporary scholars, such as Larry Levine, Robin Room, and David Musto, and crucial historical figures such as Harry