

innovations and levels of contribution with the likes of Adolph Strauch, George Kessler, Warren Manning, Wilhelm Miller, Genevieve Gillette, and Annette Hoyt Flanders. For a few of the landscape architects featured, *Midwestern Landscape Architecture* is quite possibly the only published material about them and their professional contributions to the subject.

Each chapter illuminates the personal and professional background, ambitions, philosophy, and regional influences that shaped the featured designer, and effectively conveys the evolution and development of the individual's once groundbreaking ideology and practice. Although the book is well illustrated with period photos and maps, additional illustrations and schematics would be welcome. Tishler and the contributors to *Midwestern Landscape Architecture* have artfully tailored a book that clearly and enthusiastically tells the intended story, providing an opportunity to build upon it with additional works presenting more contributors to design in the Midwest, such as, for example, John Nolen and his 1920s design of Mariemont, Ohio.

Since its introduction in 2000, *Midwestern Landscape Architecture* has proven a benchmark resource, documenting the remarkable contributions to midwestern landscape design. For perhaps the first time, both the highly recognizable and not so recognizable landscape architects are observed and presented as equals. The volume's authors evaluate the contributions of landscape architecture that were significant not only for the Midwest but for the nation as a whole.

The Freedom of the Streets: Work, Citizenship, and Sexuality in a Gilded Age City, by Sharon E. Wood. Gender and American Culture Series. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. xiii, 321 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$59.95 cloth, \$22.50 paper.

Reviewer Anne M. Butler is trustee professor of history, emeritus, at Utah State University: Her books include *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West, 1865-1890* (1985); *Uncommon Common Women: Ordinary Lives of the West* (coauthor, 1996); and *Gendered Justice in the American West: Women Prisoners in Men's Penitentiaries* (1997).

In *The Freedom of the Streets: Work, Citizenship, and Sexuality in a Gilded Age City*, Sharon E. Wood contends that by examining a small municipality—in this case Davenport, Iowa—it is possible to illuminate how the lives of ordinary citizens meld into the broad fabric of American culture. Wood explores how women—from the “respectable” class as well as the “vice” community—and the emerging patterns of American urban life came together, specifically in regard to paid employment.

Wood expresses an additional interest in the leisure culture of youth, although that seems the least developed element in an otherwise superb study.

Wood argues that nineteenth-century women perceived that in taking up political action and public lives, they could amend the horrendous working conditions for prostitutes and challenge an ancillary sentiment that prostitution proved paid labor for all females was inherently immoral. These bold notions invariably placed women, who were not yet enfranchised, on a collision course with men, whose greater power and opposing views made them reluctant allies or formidable adversaries in the struggle to reshape public policy and social attitudes.

Wood's Davenport is no simple "small-town America," but rather a complicated, teeming community, struggling in a changing urban climate that brought a new set of women into the paid labor force, a reality that clashed with the cherished gender values of some. Women as paid workers—regarded with suspicion by the general populace, with hostility in the business district, and with indifference by unions—began to grasp the critical connection between fair-practice employment and female suffrage. Women activists stepped forward—determined to do what politicians and employers would not—to develop creative ways to support the growing female labor force. Accordingly, they designed self-help solutions to assist women workers, build their confidence, and counter the forces aligned against them. Local women, cognizant of the geography of gendered space within the city, formed associations and urban havens for women who needed relief from the multileveled censure they encountered in the Davenport business world. Male employers, legislators, and religious leaders did not always endorse these activities or the revamped attitudes they suggested. The resulting gender clashes prodded the societal imagination of women, spurred the concrete programs they developed, and energized the strength of male resistance, as issues of prostitution reform legislation hung like a civic haze over all.

Dealing with a wealth of ideas such as these, Wood has written an important book for the following reasons. First, her study reinforces regional and local history as a key ingredient in understanding national events. Wood uses Davenport as a social and political laboratory in which to examine the increasing national phenomenon of a paid labor force of women. While economic opportunities for women changed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the American boulevard generally declared its discomfort with the gender implications of this shift, and Davenport was no exception. Wood's

argument that the Davenport community in its size and inner geography mirrored the common American experience more than such large, glitzy-ritzy centers as New York City seems credible. This is a thorough and deeply nuanced portrayal of Davenport, one that imbues the town and its inhabitants with verve. It also suggests that Wood's conclusions about Davenport might well be applied to other American communities. Thus, this book successfully fulfills the most critical purpose of local history: to use scholarly research and analysis to tease out the patterns of a region, patterns that in turn transcend their local boundaries and bond with broad implications about the course of the national experience.

Second, this book advances the study of prostitution and links disparate groups of women, demonstrating how some reached across the barriers of class. The efforts of Davenport women to rearrange prevalent attitudes about the sexuality of working women and to change public perceptions about prostitution moved beyond traditional "reform" campaigns. Wood convincingly demonstrates that, counter to some assertions, not all middle-class women were driven by narrow "moral" values when they organized to coerce legislative responses to prostitution. Some, like Davenport's Dr. Jennie McCowen, envisioned substantive changes in public policy as ways to fundamentally improve the lives of prostitutes and in the process elevate the status of working women. Although women with the vision and skill of a McCowen were appreciated among those who benefited from such thinking and efforts, without the power of the ballot, the strongest activists were destined to failure in a number of public ways. The reader feels their disappointment, for Wood's depiction of individual women is compelling. From mill hand to physician to prostitute, Wood treats her subjects with historical dignity, academic respect, and insightful analysis.

Third, this book melds civic policy with religious mission in an original fashion. Drawing on the connections between "wayward" girls and the Good Shepherd home, conducted by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Wood binds secular and religious records in a useful way. Too often, the history of Roman Catholic nuns has been neglected, set outside the context of womanhood or society at large, and, when mentioned, described with sappy pious phrasing. Wood brings a refreshingly scholarly treatment to the subject. She shows that the nuns were realistic and proactive in their dealings with so-called criminal women, and the secular women who passed through the convent gates had mixed responses to their time living among cloistered nuns.

This book is meticulously researched, using an impressive array of archival materials and an interesting assortment of images. It is, above all, written in a gracefully sophisticated manner with art and style in language usage. Wood has produced a first-rate study crafted into the most elegant and convincing of writing, with conclusions based on solid standards of scholarship. This is a book that raises the bar in terms of regional urban history, especially as it concerns labor, prostitution, and the interactions of women across economic class and religious affiliation. On several levels, *The Freedom of the Streets* is a striking and outstanding contribution to the scholarly literature.

Sharon E. Wood won the 2006 Benjamin F. Shambaugh Award for *The Freedom of the Streets: Work, Citizenship, and Sexuality in a Gilded Age City*. With this award, the State Historical Society of Iowa recognizes the most significant book on Iowa history published each year. — Editor

Impertinences: Selected Writings of Elia Peattie, a Journalist in the Gilded Age, edited and with a biography by Susanne George Bloomfield. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005. xx, 335 pp. Illustrations, notes, works cited, bibliographies, index. \$20.00 paper.

Reviewer Carolyn Stewart Dyer is professor of journalism and mass communication at the University of Iowa. She has written a number of articles on nineteenth-century newspapers.

Susanne George Bloomfield discovered writer Elia Peattie during a search for stories of the West written by people with firsthand experience. The Omaha work of this prolific journalist, novelist, poet, and playwright was a significant find for its illumination of turn-of-the-century midwestern urban life and journalism.

For *Impertinences*, Bloomfield selected 44 of Peattie's editorials, essays, columns, and stories from more than a thousand pieces published between 1888 and 1896 in the *Omaha World-Herald*. Peattie's writing intimately portrays community institutions and practices, the good works of individuals, and the social dynamics of Omaha as its population quadrupled between 1880 and 1890 and declined during the recession of the 1890s.

Peattie's Omaha pieces painted vivid three-dimensional pictures of daily work, home, and institutional life among the underclass. For the wealthy, however, she had mostly scorn, presented in parody-like

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