

and carefully researched book shows; women who led the abolitionist movement adroitly integrated their household and church activities with their reformist activities. In developing strategies to eradicate slavery, these "ordinary" women traversed the divide between public and private to experience their own unique politicization.

Bazaars and Fair Ladies: The History of the American Fundraising Fair, by Beverly Gordon. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998. xxvii, 285 pp. Illustrations, graphs, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.

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Beverly Gordon argues that the history of women's fund-raising fairs has remained invisible to researchers despite the fairs' tenacity in American culture from their inception in Baltimore in 1827 to the present day. In *Bazaars and Fair Ladies*, she traces their 200-year development, using bazaars in two communities—Madison, Wisconsin, and Northampton, Massachusetts—as representative of a general phenomenon, with numerous additional examples of fairs from other communities in the Northeast and Midwest. A professor in the Department of Environment, Textiles, and Design at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Gordon focuses on artifacts, such as the booths at the fairs and the products they sold, the costumes worn by saleswomen, and decorations in the hall. She examines these artifacts for the information afforded by the materials and their design and construction. Eighty-three images, mostly illustrations from nineteenth- and twentieth-century women's magazines such as the *Ladies Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Woman's Home Companion*, embellish her survey. Among these are a Red Cross tent used for a booth; dolls and handkerchiefs made by volunteers; exotic fans, parasols and lanterns imported for sale or auction; price lists for Confederate Memorial Bazaar products; quilters demonstrating needlework skills in colonial costume; and paintings and flags on display.

Gordon begins with a survey of antebellum benevolent and anti-slavery fairs designed to earn profits for civic projects or social causes. Comfortable matrons sponsored the sale of homemade aprons, jellies, cakes, potholders, lemonade, wine, and ice cream by attractive young single saleswomen. Gordon asserts that the male shoppers were ensnared by the sexual allure of "bewitching salesmen" (36) to purchase trinkets they did not need. Men ignored the social expectation that woman's place was in the home, not challenging behavioral norms by engaging in commerce.

The Civil War occasioned spectacular Sanitary Fairs at which parades, children's concerts, art shows, costumed characters, high prices, and auctioned donations yielded huge profits. Mary Livermore organized the first of these in Chicago, attracting 25,000 participants, and inspired even grander functions to surpass her \$78,000 receipts. Boston's fair earned almost \$250,000, Brooklyn's \$400,000, and Philadelphia's \$1,000,000. New Yorkers surpassed them all, collecting two million dollars for the Union cause. The organizers cooperated with businesses to enhance profits, inviting donated machine-made consumer products, restaurant food, and professional landscaping. This distanced the operation from female hands but resulted in magnificent spectacles that won women great respect from their communities.

The heyday of the fairs stretched from the post-Civil War era to the turn of the century. Women's rights advocates adopted the fair to finance woman suffrage campaigns; fraternal orders used it to fund social services; and women's clubs, youth groups, veterans, church members, and workers alike embellished the fair with raffles, folk dance festivals, celebrity participants, living tableaux, and historical re-enactments.

The evolution of the fund-raising bazaar continued into the twentieth century. Professor Gordon sees rummage sales, which caught on around 1900, and thrift shops, initiated by the Junior League of St. Louis in 1921, as descendants of the nineteenth-century fair. In the 1920s, fashion shows emerged as a women's fund-raising technique, and in the 1960s the art show enjoyed the spotlight. Now, fairs most successfully offer chef's aprons, angel knickknacks, trinkets for office desks, and Christmas decorations.

This overview suggests a long and healthy tradition that has been overlooked by historians of volunteerism, women, and community life. The author, however, is not trained as a historian and has not emphasized some of the dimensions of interest to historians, who might wish for analysis woven throughout rather than confined to the first chapter. Sporadic attention to the context of fund-raising fairs leaves readers with extensive background in some eras, such as the role of the antebellum lady, but Gordon's indifference to America's expansionism in the 1890s and isolationism between the world wars leaves unexplained the themes embraced by fairs of those eras. Surprisingly, Gordon devotes only a page to World War II, while other American wars enjoy her close attention. Despite these omissions, Gordon persuades readers that fund-raising fairs merit more attention than they have previously received, and the wealth of primary and secondary sources cited here invites an awakening of historical consideration.

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