

vironmental justice” is discussed. An interesting point not mentioned in relation to environmental justice is that the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act is one of the most comprehensive pieces of federal legislation when it comes to dealing with environmental justice.

The final paragraph of *Mountaintop Mining in Appalachia* highlights again an underlying bias. Sprinkled throughout the book are short biographies and descriptions of particular stakeholders, however none of them include anyone representing miners, company officials, industry representatives, or the land owners whose land is being mined—an obvious omission. The book would have been more balanced had there been equal time given to those stakeholders. To be fair to the authors, perhaps they attempted to get more participation and input from the industry side.

My recommendation is to read the book and draw your own conclusions. It is actually more of a case study of how to successfully oppose mining projects. The takeaway for those involved in mining, regardless of where and what type, is to be more involved in community outreach up front to make sure the mining project is designed in the most responsible manner possible.

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Catherine Holder Spude. *Saloons, Prostitutes, and Temperance in Alaska Territory*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015; 344 pp., 24 b&w illus., 3 maps, 3 tabs., 2 append., notes, bib., ind., cloth, \$25. ISBN: 9780806146607

Catherine Holder Spude has drawn upon her decades of experience and interest in Skagway, Alaska, to write a social and political history of its vice activities—drinking, gambling, and prostitution. With occasional reference to other Alaskan cities, particularly those in the panhandle, *Saloons, Prostitutes, and Temperance in Alaska Territory* is mostly a case study of Skagway from the gold-

rush of 1897-98 to the closure of its last bordellos in November 1917.

Skagway erupted into being in the summer of 1897 as the closest port and supply center for the Klondike stampede. The town’s raucous gold-rush years lasted until the turn of the century and produced the stereotypic western vice and violence, Skagway’s vice having the advantage of a particularly colorful kingpin in the person of Jefferson Randolph “Soapy” Smith. His lawlessness, and the vigilante justice it provoked in July 1898, personify Skagway’s frontier period.

With the completion of the White Pass and Yukon Route railroad at the end of July 1900, Skagway became, in Spude’s words, “a typical working-class railroad town struggling with many of the same issues facing all of America during the Progressive Era.” Among these was the matter of how best to confront the vices in an overwhelmingly masculine, working-class community. Spude writes that 1901 to 1906 were the peak years of Skagway’s vice district. The town’s demography in that era was almost completely Euro-American, consisting mostly of working-class bachelors, but with middle-class married couples and families increasing in portion. At first both classes saw the vice district as necessary, both economically for the taxes it produced, and socially as a necessary outlet for male, working-class exuberance.

The problem was keeping the vices away from middle-class women and children. So at first the goal, in Skagway and countless other western resource-based communities, was to banish the vices and their practitioners from proximity to the respectable elements through the creation of a restricted district.

In Skagway, this arrangement was established in 1901, with the saloons, dance halls, gambling establishments, bordellos, and cribs relocated from many parts of town and restricted to an uptown area along Seventh Avenue. Owners and workers in the vice trades were generally left to their own there, with the city profiting from vice by issuing liquor licenses to the establishments and by regu-

larly arresting and fining gamblers and prostitutes, both approaches amounting to taxation.

The Seventh Avenue restricted district remained too close to the center of town and to important public buildings to satisfy reformers, however. After much back-and-forth, town councilmen who were either vice district operators themselves or were sympathetic to the vices for tax purposes, were driven off the council. They were replaced by leaders willing to close the Seventh Avenue restricted district in 1909 and evict its occupants, who relocated the licentiousness less formally along Second Avenue on the outskirts of town near the wharfs and railroad shops.

The drive to first segregate and later eliminate Skagway's vices was led by middle-class reformers led by middle-class women, who, Edwardians believed, possessed the moral temperament and authority to do so. What changed over the two decades of the struggle was the form that moral leadership took. In the early years, middle-class female reformers fought the vices through moral suasion applied through the Women's Christian Temperance Union. These initial efforts were stymied by the city fathers' interest in profits and revenues from the vice district, and the working-class votes that defending the vices delivered.

Women reformers countered by entering politics directly. They obtaining suffrage in 1913, Spude argues, less as a natural right than as the best means to bring about moral reform. "By espousing women's suffrage, these middle-class women hoped to directly engage in changing the attitudes of the men making, interpreting, and enforcing the vice laws of Alaska. Why . . . beg [her husband] to do what was right when she could go to the voting booth and do it herself?"

The reformers believed that the saloon was the keystone of vice; removing it would bring down everything else. They understood the saloon to threaten the middle-class values of sobriety, thrift, and family. This thinking collided with the male, working-class perception of the saloon as social club and sanctuary. Skagway's reform-

ers prevailed, closing the town's saloons in 1916. Their victory came from without, however, in the form of Alaska's territorial prohibition. With gambling prohibited a decade before, only prostitution remained.

Meanwhile, another group of women became active in the struggle: the residents of the demimonde itself. As the local economy cooled, madams began to acquire the devalued real estate, replacing "man landladies" as the principal owners of bordellos and cribs in the restricted district. Three madams—Kitty Faith, Ida Freidinger, and Essie Miller—eventually owned most of the real property in Skagway's last restricted district, on Alaska Street. These women also ultimately yielded to the reformers, however. Organized vice ended in Skagway in November 1917, when federal marshals arrested the district's remaining madams, who were heavily fined and expelled from the town.

Spude concludes that the contest over Skagway's vice districts pivoted on class and gender, with middle-class women prevailing by adopting reform suffrage. Middle-class women gained political and social power at the expense of working-class men as the years passed and the boom days receded. Spude sees complex causes for vice ending in 1917, with Skagway's "demography, social attitudes, and declining economy, and the rise of the middle class, fear of labor, and the emerging political power of women all play[ing] a role." Nevertheless, she believes that "the change that occurred in Skagway, Alaska, can only be attributed to a morally minded middle class and the strong influence of the women's movement."

To arrive at her conclusions, Spude has ably undertaken an exacting effort. Social history of non-literate peoples is the hardest sort of history to write; the author must chase shadows and assemble fragments. Spude does this very well, often using scraps of evidence and astute inferences to give significant insights into the complex lives of her story's protagonists.

She has also chosen an important subject and

locale. "Mining history" certainly profits from studies that examine not just mining and miners, but the societies that they created or imported into the regions they developed, and studies of the supporting communities that facilitated mining: smelting centers, transportation hubs, seats of finance or government.

The book employs surprisingly little archaeological evidence, given the author's long association with Skagway's archaeology. Spude generally draws evidence from the written sources frequented by historical archeologists and public historians: newspapers, tax records, census data, Sanborn maps, and court proceedings.

The work contains little of economic history or of the history of community decline. Might the economic and accompanying population decline—from 1,336 male residents in 1900 to 195 in 1920—have been just as significant in the dwindling of the vice district as the moral desires of Skagway's reformers? Could factors outside of the community, such as national war aims, have been the reason for vice's final defeat? Under pressure from the military, the mayor of New Orleans closed that city's famous restricted district, Storyville, in the very same month as federal authorities in Alaska Territory terminated the one in Skagway.

Spude writes perceptively in her conclusion about the damage that the tourism of subsequent years, with its hooker-with-the-heart-of-gold and good-time-girl formulations, has inflicted upon an accurate comprehension of the historical realities of frontier prostitution. She believes that "to understand the actual story of reform and vice, and to do it justice, requires changing the image of the 'good-time girl' to that of a middle-class business woman fulfilling a role until the moral reform people convinced the rest of the town that the community no longer had a place for that particular Necessary Evil."

This identification of prostitutes as middle-class, capitalist entrepreneurs has been previously articulated in the historical literature about west-

ern vice districts (e.g., Paula Petrik's *No Step Backward: Women and Family on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier, Helena, Montana, 1865-1900*). One wonders about the universality of such a characterization, however.

Setting aside the opprobrium which such entrepreneurship brought down upon its "middle-class" practitioners, prostitution also had an internal class structure. The madam organizing, capitalizing, and profiting from the sex trade was usually an older woman who had retired from such activities herself. Her charges, "the girls of the line," however, had decidedly working-class roles. They exchanged physical effort in dance halls, saloons, bordellos, and cribs for wages, while surrendering a percentage of their earnings to "management."

These were two distinctly different relationships to the sex trade. Spude had little choice but to focus on the madams, the only ones leaving sufficient evidence thanks to their ownership of property and encounters with law enforcement. Alas, the lives of ordinary sex workers now a century gone are mostly beyond the reach of even so capable a chronicler as Catherine Holder Spude.

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Ronald M. James and Susan A. James. *A Short History of Virginia City*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2014; 158 pp., 61 b&w photos, 2 maps, bib., ind., paper, \$22. ISBN: 9780874179477

Books written over the past century and a half on Virginia City, Nevada, have described almost every aspect of the famous Comstock Lode and its role in the formation of the state of Nevada. Writings explore the discovery and exploitation of the world-class silver-gold deposit, the city built by the mineral wealth, and the people—from scruffy prospectors to wealthy mine owners and financiers—who made it all happen. Ronald and Susan James have added to this library of informa-