

ing argued against a pre-lapsarian state of reform grace, Crocker must allow that, in most of her seven cases, there was at least a shift from one kind of conservatism to another, or from mild variety to a severe one. These are not the dramatic changes in social relations that figure in the Hull-House-centred historiography. But perhaps in Crocker's smaller cities, subtler shifts were important ones. Where even a thin version of respect for immigrants or an old-fashioned variant of women's power was remarkable before the 1920s, so too would have been the repression in the 1920s of these small innovations.

With respect to the client-social worker relationship, the main change Stadum observes in the lives of "hard working charity cases" is that the 1920s cohort was less likely to get "practical services" from their social workers. Stadum's interpretation of these data shows very clearly the influence of present-day social work precepts. Today's social worker may be taught (at least in a feminist social work course) that the best the professional can offer is unobtrusively to assist clients in their own self-help initiatives. Compared with that approach, neither the sending of pre-determined grocery orders nor the scientific investigation of a poor woman's life is politically acceptable. As Stadum points out, in both of these older modes of social work practice, the hierarchy was the same. But this political judgement, with which I agree, unfortunately relieves Stadum from discussing the historical meaning of the change.

For historians of Canadian cities, both of these histories confirm that research in "marginal" areas is valuable. For example, Stadum's book echoes some of Suzanne Morton's more historically-situated findings about the lives of working-class Halifax women in the 1920s. And Crocker's depiction of the settlement

houses allows us to see that religious enterprises such as Winnipeg's All Peoples' Mission and Halifax's Jost Mission were representative of part of the North American settlement house movement. In other words, by analysing places other than the acknowledged centres of social change and people other than the well-known heroes, these American historians have demonstrated what all Canadians should know: that "central" is not typical.

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Kennedy, Elizabeth Lapovsky, and Madeline D. Davis. *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community*. New York and London: Routledge, 1993. Pp. xvii, 434. 16 black and white plates, bibliography, index. \$37.50(Cloth).

The development of contemporary gay and lesbian communities has been traced by historians of sexuality to the upper-class lesbian salons of Paris in the 1920s and to the military single-sex communities of the 1940s. Here we have a very important study documenting a competing predecessor, namely the working-class lesbian communities organized around downtown bars in the 1940s and 1950s. Kennedy and Davis' careful and massively detailed study of the women who socialized in Buffalo bars in the days before gay liberation argues that the young women who in the 1970s established lesbian-feminist communities eschewing the butch-fem roles of earlier lesbian cultures owe more to their foremothers than has hitherto been acknowledged.

The study is based on a relatively small number of lengthy and intensive oral his-

tories, usually gathered over a series of interviews. The authors clearly experienced difficulties in getting women to begin talking—many were suspicious of academic studies, some were afraid of exposure, others were simply not interested in recounting the details of a life that they now regard as a closed chapter. But once sitting down in front of a tape recorder, these women talked and talked, engaging in lengthy and sometimes self-critical analyses of the mores of the golden era of the "diesel dyke." The authors deserve credit for letting their sources do a great deal of the analysis, not just the storytelling.

During the period covered in this study (1940 to 1960), women who wanted to be part of the women-loving community had to choose between being butch, and hence adopting certain hypermasculine behaviours, or else being a fem and having to constantly defer to butches. This study shows that many of the women felt this to be unnecessarily restrictive: a good number changed roles depending on the situation, and some dressed butch but acted fem or viceversa. While playing around with the binary opposition, however, women did not seriously question it. The authors imply that it was only with the rise of a strong women's movement, in the late sixties, that it became possible for women to love other women without constructing themselves as either masculine or feminine. And yet, the butches were not simply imitating men: as the authors point out, they were very clearly distinct from those women who disguised their sex and passed as men. One of this book's most valuable contributions is revealing the complexities of the butch identity assumed by women who wanted to act like men and yet still be perceived as women, not men. Many butches, for instance, acknowledged that they wanted to be mothers, and some were. *And the butch* sexual style, which revolved around