

use of land by municipal corporations provided the go-ahead for constructing essential and extensive public works. In the 1880s and early 1890s, for example, courts gave cities the right to appropriate private property beyond their limits for waterworks and other public utilities. Finally, Schultz recognizes the important links between sanitation improvements and the reform impulse. For most reformers cleanliness provided the answer to many of the social and moral problems that afflicted urban America.

In the preface Schultz warns readers that in this "extended essay" they "will discover much that is missing" (p. xvii). What is most significantly absent are the women, both individuals and groups, who made large contributions to constructing an urban culture. Also absent are strong examples from the pre-Civil War decades that would demonstrate once and for all that this culture was truly "a product of the entire nineteenth century" (p. xv). The evidence is heavily weighted to the post-Civil War years; hence, readers are still left wondering if the great mass of Americans who lived in farm communities as late as 1860 were even touched by city sparks.

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Black Women In White: Racial Conflict and Cooperation in the Nursing Profession, 1890-1950. By Darlene Clark Hine. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. Pp. xxiii, 264. Illustrations, appendix, tables, notes, bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$35.00; paperbound, \$12.95.)

Black Women In White represents the first part of a planned study of black health care professionals and black health. It is devoted to nurses because Darlene Clark Hine found them more crucial to health care in the black community than physicians. The book focuses less on black nurses' efforts and experiences as care givers than on black responses to racism in health care and the health professions in the era of Jim Crow.

The first half of the book examines the history of black hospitals and nurse-training institutions in the United States, covering black-run voluntary hospitals created when mainstream hospitals barred black patients and physicians, white-run hospitals caring for black patients, and the all-black nursing schools connected with them and with black colleges and universities. In 1928, 80 percent of black trained nurses had graduated from all-black schools.

The second half of the book traces the development of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN), founded in 1908. The early NACGN showed some of the elitism abounding in the new white nurses' organizations of the era, but it also at-

tacked discrimination against black nurses and promoted plans for nursing service to black communities. In the 1930s new leaders made integration their paramount goal. During World War II the NACGN won wide support for a successful struggle against quotas on black nurses in the army and their total exclusion from the navy. The American Nurses Association moved to integrate its membership in 1948, and two years later the NACGN dissolved.

Hine has delved deeply and imaginatively in published and archival sources and recent works in nursing history. Her work has a breadth and analytical focus lacking in previous histories of African Americans in nursing, all written by insiders. Hine shows the impact of racism on black nurses, yet her relentless focus on institutions and a tendency to adopt, rather than explain, the points of view espoused by their leaders obscures two important topics: the nursing experience of black women in white (relegated mainly to one chapter late in the book) and their distinctive response to racism.

Comparisons could reveal what is distinctive. Black hospitals and nurse-training schools need to be compared with other local black organizations, the NACGN in its successive phases with other national race-betterment and protest organizations and with other professional nurses' organizations. Placing the NACGN in those two contexts might help explain its unusual decision to disband. African American nurses need to be compared with white nurses. Did the differences in experience and outlook that divided elite and rank and file among white nurses exist among black nurses, or were they unified by whites' racism and their communal loyalty? Nurses and outsiders often interpreted nursing as womanly service. How much or little did black nurses differ from white in their view of their work? Rephrased, the question is important for women's history: how far did women's visions of their roles and possibilities transcend the barriers of race and racism?

Black Women In White is a thought-provoking, well-researched pioneer work. It should not be the last word, but it is a welcome beginning.

SUSAN ARMENY examined American nursing in her dissertation, "Resolute Enthusiasts: The Effort to Professionalize American Nursing, 1880-1915" (University of Missouri-Columbia, 1983). She is assistant editor of the *Journal of American History*.

Elite Oral History Discourse: A Study of Cooperation and Coherence. By Eva M. McMahan. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989. Pp. xxii, 167. Figure, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.50.)

It is generally accepted that Allan Nevins introduced historians to the tape-recorded interview as a research device when he