

as a highly commendable feature of this study. Still, the author's conclusion that slave ownership reflected, among other factors, Kentucky culture and economics of the era remains less than satisfying. Historians have not been willing to excuse Thomas Jefferson for his slave-operated plantation by virtue of the "product of his times" argument; the Quaker John Woolman, as some have noted, mounted unpopular anti-slavery protests as early as the 1750s.

If Doyle falters in this area, she more than compensates in her conclusions about the growth of social justice initiatives by Spalding's congregation. Doyle's gracefully written summary links the past to the present, demonstrating that Spalding's complex legacy led her religious daughters to activism that tran-

scended state, region, and country and promoted the best impulses for the well-being of all peoples. *Pioneer Spirit: Catherine Spalding, Sister of Charity of Nazareth* convinces the reader that through her dramatic and productive life Spalding merited this fine scholarly biography. It shows as well that women in sisterhood had an impact on frontier Kentucky, influenced the religious and secular narrative of the nation, and continue to shape modern America.

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### *Good Hearts* *Catholic Sisters in Chicago's Past* By Suellen Hoy

(Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006. Pp xiv, 242. Photographs, notes, index. Paperbound, \$22.00.)

Suellen Hoy, guest professor of history at the University of Notre Dame, has written an important collection of essays on the history of the nuns of Chicago. Hoy's work takes us on an intellectual journey, following the path of the nuns from the 1846 arrival of five Sisters of Mercy (the first community of nuns in the city) to the highly visible efforts of the nuns who took part in the civil rights demon-

strations of the 1960s. Along the way, she establishes a rightful place for these women in the historical discussion of urban women activists. As American academics have been largely uncomfortable with, or ignorant of, the role of religious leaders in shaping our modern cities, historians have not yet adequately documented these stories. Hoy's collection goes a long way towards remedying this over-

sight. As she forcefully argues, the service provided to the poor by Catholic sisters predates the labor of Jane Addams's Hull House and deserves more recognition than it garnered previously.

Hoy's compelling first chapter, "The Journey Out: From Ireland to America," covers the female chain migration of Catholic sisters leaving Ireland. Readers learn of the status-driven system by which women with few prospects in their homeland were recruited for religious work in America, but only if they had a dowry. Impoverished women wishing to join the religious movement could sign on as lay sisters, providing domestic labor to the communities but without the status of so-called choir sisters. Hoy's work here adds nuances to our understanding of Irish immigration, especially the immigration of Irish women. Her final chapter, "Marching for Racial Justice in Chicago in the 1960s," opens up the history of activist nuns who marched in the streets of Chicago, protesting the racist policies of the Illinois Club for Catholic Women as well as segregation in the public schools. Here, we see nuns breaking out of a cloistered life and pursuing social justice. Hoy's account of the sisters' outreach programs, including the Marillac House settlement and Sister Mary William's Rendu House (operating out of Rockwell Gardens public housing project), prove riveting.

Hoy's work leaves many questions unanswered. Because the chap-

ters are all previously published articles, readers are left with both a repetition of themes and a less than thorough discussion of the place of nuns in the history of Chicago. A glossary would have made the work more accessible to a non-Catholic audience; the addition of a conclusion would have tightened the book's varied contents. I would have liked to see chapters reworked to include more of Hoy's thoughts on the place of these nuns in urban history generally. Individual actors do not jump from the pages as they might; provocative figures like Saint Katherine Drexel and Sister Mary Williams do not emerge as full-blown historical figures. The rich photographic record included here partially makes up for such issues. Perhaps the nature of the primary sources (Hoy explains that the sisters did not document what they did or seek glory for the work) leads to the flattened nature of these biographical sketches. Readers would also benefit from a broader discussion of Catholic visions of social justice and aid to the poor. What motivated this urban activism, and what were the limits of the change the sisters proposed?

Despite these lingering questions, this work, or portions thereof, will prove of great benefit to undergraduate and graduate courses on urban activism. Assigned alongside the likes of Maureen Flanagan's *Seeing With Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933* (2002), it will help students and

scholars to gain a nuanced picture of Chicago women's active roles in their city.

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### *The Chicago Black Renaissance and Women's Activism*

By Anne Meis Knupfer

(Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006. Pp. x, 244. Illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. Paperbound, \$20.00.)

This valuable study documents the ways in which social class, gender, and professional and organizational affiliation influenced women's activism during the Chicago Renaissance. While much work on these topics has centered on the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, Anne Meis Knupfer's important volume chronicles Chicago during the period from 1930 to 1955—a time of flourishing art, theater, music, and intellectualism in the city's African American community. Chicago writers emphasized the idea that black art needed to combine aesthetics and function and to serve the cause of black freedom. The period also coincided with the arrival and assimilation of thousands of rural migrants from the South.

Knupfer argues that black women's activism crossed political, social, and cultural boundaries in linking black art, literature, music, history, and community outreach to

greater transnational struggles. Examining the efforts of club women, members of black sororities, school teachers, artists and writers, founders of cultural and social institutions, and ministers she argues that a pan-African intellectual activism fueled the arts and social protest of local black women and created the momentum necessary to sustain the Chicago Black Renaissance.

In the chapter, "Women's Activism in Public Housing," Knupfer expands this argument to include the crucial role played by activist working-class and poor women through their involvement in tenant associations in two housing projects, the Ida B. Wells Homes and the Algeld Gardens Homes. Most residents of public housing from the 1930s through 1950s, she informs, were not on public relief or assistance but were gainfully employed. Yet social institutions such as the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) and the South Parkway