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Review Essay

Revising the Newsboy

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Vincent DiGirolamo (2019). *Crying the News: A History of America's Newsboys*. New York: Oxford University Press, 698 + xxi pp., illustrations, notes, name index, subject index, $40.95 (cloth), $29.95 (paper), $27.99 (ebook).

Karen Staller (2020). *New York's Newsboys: Charles Loring Brace and the Founding of the Children's Aid Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 354 + xlvi pp., illustrations, notes, index, $40.95 (cloth), $27.99 (ebook).

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The street child in nineteenth-century New York was an ongoing topic of fear and loathing. The precise number of these often-homeless "urchins," "gamins," and "waifs" was frequently debated, but most agreed it was substantial. By the 1850s, Police Chief George W. Matsell and the Rev. Samuel Halliday separately estimated that 5,000 to 10,000 youth nightly lived on New York's streets. By 1893, the social reformer and writer Helen Campbell concluded that little had changed in the conditions of Gotham's most precarious children.[1]

The most significant figure who attempted to address the problem was Charles Loring Brace. Early on, he warned New Yorkers that homeless children represented a metaphorical and future powderkeg, "that the fires of a social revolution were slumbering just beneath their feet."[2] In 1853, he and a group of Protestant reformers founded the Children's Aid Society (CAS), an organization Brace led as the first secretary until his death in 1890. By then, the CAS operated twenty-one industrial schools, five night schools, six lodging houses, one brush shop for disabled youth, four summer charities, a dress-making and typewriting school, a laundry, and two free reading rooms. CAS schools instructed more than 10,000 students annually with a daily average of more than 4,000. Their best-known institution—the Newsboys' Lodging House—housed more than 100,000 boys during its first 35 years. By 1890, the CAS "emigration" project, later described by historians as the "orphan train movement," had placed approximately 75,000 children on farms in the West (Staller p. 6).

Brace has long remained a subject of considerable attention by American historians.[3] Karen Staller and Vincent DiGirolamo are the most recent to join the debate. Both historians are among the first to exploit the Victor Remer Historical Archives of the Children's Aid Society collection in the New-York Historical Society. Previous studies of the CAS needed special permission to use archival and manuscript records of the institution, and consequently were heavily dependent

on annual reports and published records of the CAS. The Remer Archives include more than 1,000 boxes and 800 bound volumes of previously little-use records relating to the CAS lodging houses, industrial schools, convalescent homes, health centers, farm schools, and placement, foster care, and adoption programs which operated from 1853 to 1947. Most of these records were only processed and available since the year 2000.[4]

Staller seeks to resurrect Brace's reputation. She adopts a two-fold strategy throughout *New York's Newsboys*: first, she decenters the placing-out or emigration programs of the CAS; and second, she emphasizes and concentrates upon the importance of the Newsboys Lodging House and other social service programs of the CAS. In particular, Staller is critical of earlier historians who portray Brace and his CAS colleagues as arrogant interventionists, coercing children and disrupting families in the name of benevolent reform. Staller explicitly relies on the earlier work of historian Bruce Bellingham and others who challenge this so-called "social control scholarship,"[5] particularly that resting "on assumptions that the poor were passive, agentless recipients of charity worker actions." Staller notes that "this is particularly problematic when applied to studies of vagrant adolescents" (p. xv).

Staller resorts to interdisciplinary sociological scholarship, including her own, to buttress her reinterpretation.[6] Brace repeatedly worried that the failure to address youth homelessness and precarity would produce a "dangerous class." In the aftermath of New York's antidraft riots of 1863, he quoted himself from a decade earlier:

> It should be remembered that there are no dangers to the value of property, or to the permanency of our institutions, so great as those from the existence of such a class of vagabond, ignorant, and ungoverned children. This 'dangerous class' has not begun to show itself as it will in eight or ten years, when these boys and girls are matured. . . . *Then let society beware, when the outcast, vicious, reckless multitude of New York boys, swarming now in every foul alley and low street, come to know their power and use it!*[7]

Brace believed the racial and class violence he witnessed during the 1863 riots rendered his earlier statements prophetic.

Staller, however, emphasizes that considerable sociological research confirms how youth homelessness indeed generates later criminal activity. The "longer unaccompanied youth experience homelessness," she summarizes, "the higher the probability of committing a crime" (p. xliii, note 4). She cites other studies demonstrating that 25 to 30 percent of recent homeless youth "agreed to be sexual" in exchange for money or a place to spend the night (p. xliii, note 43). This sociology, according to Staller, confirms that Brace's fears were not unwarranted.

Staller is especially critical of "philanthropic abduction narratives" (p. 16) which blame Brace for the "orphan train movement" (pp. xiv, 7). Specifically, she charges that "all of the scholarship on CAS at the nexus of the juvenile delinquency and the placing out system rests on a simplistic and reductionist narrative trope. It goes like this: Brace opposed the asylum system but was an avid and enthusiastic supporter of placing out" (p. 7). Even historians such as David Rothman, Thomas Bender, Christine Stansell, and Steven Mintz who she praises elsewhere are called to task in this regard. Instead, she insists that "CAS's placing out system was not an unwelcome or hostile intrusion on happily functioning families but, in fact, reproduced normative family practices of delegating custodial care during times of economic or personal hardship" (p. 16).

Staller is right that many historians of the placing-out program misappropriate the term "orphan trains." "During the orphan train era itself," admits author Stephen O'Connor in *Orphan Trains*, "none of these agencies ever actually used the term in their official publications." "Placing out" was commonplace usage, and various social service organizations employed "Emigration Department," "Home-Finding Department," and "Department of Foster Care."[8] The Foundling Hospital referred to "baby" and "mercy" trains.[9] More importantly, these agencies recognized

that less than half the children on such trains were in fact orphans; as many as 25 percent had two living parents. Approximately half the children were never sent west but rather to New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. O'Connor muses that an early twentieth-century journalist may have coined the term "orphan trains," but the label only became widespread after the CBS miniseries *The Orphan Trains* in 1979. The "poetic resonance and degree of recognition" of "orphan train," concludes O'Connor, make the term "all-but-inevitable" for frequent and inaccurate misuse.[10]

Staller argues that the orphan train myth obscures the historical importance of Brace and the CAS. The CAS not only departed from other charitable organizations, but transformed social work practice and service. While numerous social welfare historians consider Brace to be a key figure—even the "founder"—of the foster care system in the United States, most locate the origins of foster care in the placing-out and emigration programs of the CAS. Brace and the CAS, however, recognized the complexity of the child poverty and adopted a flexible, youth-centered response. The most important program was not placing-out children and teenagers, argues Staller, but rather the Newsboys Lodging House (NBLH), which "was unlike anything else on offer at the time" (p. xxxvi). From 1853 to 1890, under Brace's supervision, the NBLH and similar lodging houses were unique institutions because they "operated exclusively based on the voluntary participation of vagrant children and rejected virtually all forms of contractual, jural, carceral control," according to Staller (p. xvi).

Staller defends Brace and the CAS by comparing them with the institutional childcare of the Roman Catholic church in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Staller highlights the Catholic Protectory and Levi Silliman Ives, a former Episcopalian bishop who converted to Catholicism. Ives worked with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and was instrumental in founding the Catholic Protectory. Early on, he experimented with placing-out and apprenticeship systems for Catholic youth. But Ives concluded both were failures, which justified resorting to institutional asylum care, strict discipline, and "sav[ing] the children of the immigrant to the Catholic faith" (Staller, p. 252).

By contrast, Brace and his CAS allies rejected institutional care. Children in the NBLH were free to come and go on their own volition. Brace never accepted children via a court order and considered the incarceration of boys and girls in the House of Refuge and other juvenile asylums to be disciplinary, isolating, and "prison-like." He adopted this novel approach to juvenile delinquency at the very moment New York and other American cities were creating municipal police forces, police courts, penitentiaries, and new carceral institutions. Brace emphasized that the NBLH was not an asylum, the residents were "lodgers," not inmates, and that their residence was voluntary, not coercive or state-mandated. Young boys chose to reside in there. And they did so in large numbers. The NBLH sheltered 400 boys its first year, 4,000 a year in the latter part of the decade, and more than 8,000 by 1866. The residents came and went when they wanted. The newsboys, in effect, voted with their feet.

DiGirolamo concurs that the CAS lodging houses proved influential and were models for similar institutions throughout North America into the twentieth century. Newsboys' homes opened in Chicago (1865), Brooklyn, Detroit, and Cincinnati (1866); Baltimore (1867); Newark (1868); New Orleans (1869); Toronto and St. Louis (1870); Louisville (1872); Cleveland and Philadelphia (1875); Boston and Indianapolis (1879); Denver (1882); Pittsburgh and Buffalo (1885); Kansas City and Minneapolis (1886); Duluth (1887); Hartford (1888); Los Angeles (1890); Salt Lake City (1897); Butte, Montana (1899); Omaha (1902); Toronto again (1903); St. Louis again (1906); Houston (1910); and Portland, Oregon (1912) (p. DiGirolamo, 195, 429). Other historians have noted that by the 1870s other child-care institutions had adopted placement programs similar to the CAS, including the Five Points Mission, the New York Juvenile Asylum, the New York Foundling Hospital, and the New England Home for Little Wanderers in Boston.[11]

Staller's argument mirrors Linda Gordon's interpretation of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in the nineteenth century.[12] Like Gordon, Staller claims the CAS never intended "to destroy families or forcibly remove children but rather to support families and children in their normative practices (including delegating child care and assisting in labor transitions) under extraordinarily difficult and complex urban conditions" (p. xxxvi). Staller argues that CAS records reveal parents, kin, and family members actively sought help from the CAS during periods of financial or familial distress. She found little evidence of CAS hostility toward parents or families of NBLH residents, a finding which conflicts with much of the recent historiography which describes CAS officials aggressively removing Catholic children from their homes or without parental consent.[13] In addition, the CAS found employment for many youth in metropolitan New York, not just the American West. Work placements "were merely part of a continuum of help CAS offered poor children and families in locating suitable employment" (p. 20). More importantly, CAS lodging houses, night schools, clothing and food distribution, and other city operations were far more substantial than the placing out or emigration programs. "In terms of sheer numbers," concludes Staller, "CAS worked with far more children in New-York than those it placed in the country" (p. 21).

Staller, however, admits to three weaknesses in *New York's Newsboys*. The first concerns gender. Her primary focus is on boys, an emphasis she defends because young males were the inhabitants of the NBLH and represented the "flagship program" of Brace and the CAS (p. xxxvi). Other historians, however, note that girls not only comprised 39 percent of the placed-out children, but had higher "favorable" placement rates (74 percent) than boys (54 percent) according to some studies.[14] If Staller confirmed these findings from more than a century ago, her claims of CAS success would be enhanced and strengthened. Unfortunately, young females and girls lodging houses await their historians. A second underrepresented group is the pre-school children cared for by the CAS; Staller ignores this population for similar reasons, that CAS and the NBLH were primarily concerned with adolescents. Finally, the dozens of freestanding industrial schools associated with the CAS remain unexamined in the detail they deserve.

Staller's argument is unconvincing in parts. "In fact," she emphasizes, "there was a fair amount of evidence of ongoing correspondence between biological family youth placed out" (p. 267, note 1). But Staller never precisely elaborates on what constitutes "a fair amount of evidence." Her sample of placement records only covers the years from 1861 to 1865, and these are problematic. Prior to 1884, most CAS placement records were haphazard, incoherent, and provided minimal information with, "one- or two-line summations of the rare answers to those letters and the almost equally rare visits by agents," according to historian Stephen O'Connor.[15] Only after the death of Charles Loring Brace in 1890 did the CAS begin providing documentation covering placed children, their biological families, foster families, and CAS agents. A report by social worker Georgia Ralph in 1922 which examined CAS placements from 1865 to 1905 offered conflicting evidence about the success of CAS programs.[16] Staller provides no evidence challenging any of these earlier criticisms of the CAS.

Vincent DiGirolamo's prize-winning *Crying the News* is a tour de force of social history.[17] The author leaves few stones unturned. Relying upon archival manuscripts and published media stretching from New England to Southern California,[18] DiGirolamo weaves together multiple fields of history: labor, childhood, youth culture, education, journalism, philanthropy, sexuality, and even that of the disabled. From the penny sheets of Benjamin Day in the 1830s to the tabloids of William Randolph Hearst in the 1920s, DiGirolamo argues that the newsboy "experience challenges convenient yet dubious distinctions between child labor and adult labor, work and play, wages and profit, opportunity and exploitation" (p. 6). Newsboys, according to DiGirolamo, were instrumental in the creation of the comics in the 1890s, the development of advertising after 1880, early experiments with corporate welfare, and the adoption for photography by national media. Most importantly, DiGirolamo recognizes the singular role of new media—the penny

press and its mass-market, journalistic offspring—in American history after 1830. "Newsboys stood at the crossroads, literally and figuratively," he writes, "of a country undergoing revolutionary changes in communication, transportation, market capitalism, and mass democracy" (p. 14). The newsboy thus becomes a prism to comprehend nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America.

DiGirolamo demonstrates that the newsboy was more than a transitional form of labor, or a rite of passage from child to adult employment. Newsboys were a significant part of the American workforce, as well as familiar figures in American culture. New York's paper peddlers, for instance, grew one hundred-fold, from 150 in 1839 to 15,000 in 1898, and reportedly 30,000 in the early twentieth century. Small cities like Grand Rapids and Cincinnati boasted newsboy populations exceeding 1,000. By the 1930s, juvenile hawkers and carriers together totaled 570,000 nationally. Newsboys, by DiGirolamo's account, were central to the new capitalist enterprise of mass media. And well into the twentieth century, children of immigrants dominated the trade.

DiGirolamo reveals a teenage character that will surprise many. He—and sometimes she—was rarely an innocent waif or pathetic "street rat." DiGirolamo's newsboys are "prolific consumers of popular amusement" (p. 64), "pit dwellers" in Bowery theaters (p. 66), self-proclaimed "guardians of a free press" (p. 68), symbols of Young America, defenders of free wage labor, and fearless messengers of the news dodging bullets on Civil War battlefields. Indeed, "The capture of Rebel cities also meant the arrival of northern newsboys, who constituted the shock troops of occupation" (p. 135). When editors refused to do the bidding of newsboys, they resorted to petty theft—stealing their employers' publications and pocketing the profits—and ultimately strikes. On other occasions, DiGirolamo insists that "newsboys were not just passive recipients of philanthropy; they were also generous givers to charities and active defenders of their own economic interests" (p. 199). He documents instances in which New York NBLH residents contributed to various social and philanthropic causes ranging from relief for anti-slavery families in Bleeding Kansas to the restoration of Mount Vernon.

DiGirolamo unearths considerable evidence of the class consciousness and labor organizing among newsboys. He describes New Orleans newsboys joining a printers union in 1855, St. Louis newsboys forming a "protective organization" after the Civil War (p. 200), and Chicago and Detroit newsboys going on strike in 1877. Newsboy labor militancy increased after 1880 with strikes in New York; Troy, New York; Saratoga; Rochester; Cincinnati; Lexington, Kentucky; and Nashville in 1899; and in Minneapolis and Seattle in 1918. In Brooklyn, some newsies led boycotts against the *Evening World* in 1893. In the final quarter of the nineteenth century, newsboy unions received charters or affiliations from local labor councils, the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor, and the Industrial Workers of the World. By the early twentieth century, Newsboy Protective Unions were established in Boston; Chicago; Salt Lake City; Toronto; New York City; Worcester, Massachusetts; Sioux City, Iowa; Berlin, New Hampshire; Peoria and Galesburg, Illinois. Real newsboys, unlike their idealized counterparts, argues DiGirolamo, rose up "to expose and challenge the social inequities of their time" (p. 151).

Paradoxically, the workplace militancy and labor organizing by newsboys was largely forgotten. Instead, the newsboy "came to personify the spirit of capitalism in America" and the "legitimacy of the capitalist order," recognizes DiGirolamo. "The myth holds that individual character, not social class, shapes the structure of opportunity in America" (p. 4).

The centrality of newsboys as cultural fixtures can be found in "documentary photographs, muckraking novels, and sociological studies," according to DiGirolamo. "They appeared in comic strips, memoirs, minstrel shows, movies, paintings, poems, postcards, sculptures, sermons, songs, trade cards, and travelers' accounts" (p. 3). *Crying the News* vividly illustrates the pervasive visual presence of the newsboy in more than 175 illustrations, including 33 color plates. Many may be familiar with Henry Inman's *The Newsboy* (1841), David Gilmour Blythe's *The News Boy* (1846-52) and *Street Urchins* (1857), "The Newsboys' Lodging House, New

York" in *Harper's Weekly* (1867), or the photography of Lewis Hine after 1900, but their "hidden" appearance in the work of James McNeill Whistler, Winslow Homer, Thomas Nast, Childe Hassam, and George Bellows will surprise some. "Artists treated newsboys' poverty as picturesque," concludes DiGirolamo. "The face of the 'dangerous classes' was sad, sleepy, or stoic, but never angry or threatening" (p. 82).

The ubiquity of the newsboy experience is perhaps best revealed in the all-star roster of notable Americans who worked as newsies. Business executives such as Thomas Edison, Walt Disney, Marcus Loew, David Sarnoff, and Warren Buffett; national political figures Al Smith, Warren Harding, and Herbert Hoover; mayors Tom Johnson of Cleveland, Carter Harrison Jr. of Chicago, and Mark Fagan of Jersey City; U.S. Senators Hiram Bingham III of Connecticut and Robert Wagner of New York; entertainers Harry Houdini, W. C. Fields, and Frank Capra; athletes Jack Dempsey, Knute Rockne, and Jackie Robinson; writers Mark Twain, Jack London, Sherwood Anderson, Thomas Wolfe and Richard Wright; poets Robert Frost and Langston Hughes; journalists Adolph Ochs, Lowell Thomas, Walter Winchell, Theodore White, and Max Annenberg; educator John Dewey; sociologist Nels Anderson, war hero Eddie Rickenbacker; socialist leader Norman Thomas; ambassador Ralph Bunche, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, university president Robert Gordon Sproul, and Chicago bishop Bernard James Sheil were newsboys in their youth. "According to the myth," concludes DiGirolamo, "these great men did not just happen to be newsboys but were great because they were newsboys" (p. 4).

The newsboy myth ignores a history largely urban and industrial, located in the shared spaces of childhood, including lodging houses and reading rooms, news alleys and press rooms, immigrant trains and union halls, all-night cafés and boxing gyms, brothels and jail cells, theater pits and bandwagons. These largely nocturnal urban spaces reveal an industrial laboring class born not only on the factory floor but on city streets and spaces. Working-class children and adults never enjoyed the luxury of living in "separate spheres." For DiGirolamo, "the history of newsboys is the history of the working class writ small" (p. 549, 550).

Yet many worried. In 1895, Chicago Hull-House resident and Illinois state factory inspector Florence Kelley declared street work was little more than "white child slavery" and urged the passage of compulsory education laws. "There is no body of self-supporting children more in need of effective care than these newsboys and bootblacks," she wrote. "They are ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-clothed, illiterate, and wholly untrained and unfitted for any occupation" (p. 336).

Kelley was not alone. Newsboys were subject to intense scrutiny by Progressive reformers seeking to end all forms of child labor throughout the American economy. Settlement house leaders like Jane Addams and Lillian Wald considered newsboy lodging houses to be institutions which encouraged boys to abandon their families. "Juvenile street trading"—a new term invented to encompass the work of newsboys, bootblacks, messengers, and others—served to unite progressives (many of whom were socialists like Kelley—Robert Hunter, John Spargo, Scott Nearing, Upton Sinclair, and Jack London) across multiple issues. DiGirolamo complicates the history of Progressive and labor reform in defending the autonomy and personal agency of street children against not just the foes of child labor, "but also advocates of birth control, immigration restriction, sanitary housing, supervised playgrounds, educational uplift, Sunday rest, juvenile justice, social hygiene, temperance, good government, Americanization, and woman's suffrage," according to DiGirolamo (p. 384).

Newsboys themselves were divided on the issue of child labor. Many objected to licensing efforts in various municipalities throughout the nineteenth century, especially when they regulated the hours, ages, number, and behavior of children in the street trades. Others, such as the "young street merchants" in Chicago in 1884 accepted regulation as a way to protect their turf (p. 281). Much of *Crying the News* is a case study of the child labor movement from the view of the children affected.

DiGirolamo addresses issues of race and gender throughout. Both African American and white newsboy distributed newspapers in the South during the Civil War. Black youth served as hawkers, carriers, and train boys. By the middle of the war, nine out of ten Richmond newsboys were African Americans. Young Black teenagers worked in the Southern news trades in cities such as Richmond and Charleston, but even in Cincinnati they formed a Colored Newsboys' Union.

Newsgirls were controversial. Reformers affiliated with organizations such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children considered newsgirls to be one step removed from commercial sex work, justifying frequent arrests. Typical was the Chicago newspaper magnate and philanthropist Victor Lawson of the *Chicago Daily News*: "I do not believe that selling newspapers is demoralizing to boys," he said. "But [it] is the ruin of girls" (p. 327). In 1862, the Children's Aid Society opened its first lodging house for girls. But by 1868, the *Brooklyn Eagle* claimed that resistance to newsgirls broke down during the Civil War and estimated 300 such young females hawked New York newspapers. Newsgirls were not only common in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Detroit, but were fixtures of popular culture, exemplified by the 1869 production of "The New York News Girls" at Tony Pastor's Theater. The novelist Horatio Alger depicted a newsgirl as a protagonist in *Tattered Tom* (1871).

DiGirolamo recognizes that the aggressive agency of street children scared some city residents. In the wake of New York's deadly Astor Place riot in 1849, for example, the writer and editor Nathaniel Park Willis warned that the real threats to the republic were not the supporters of British actor William Charles Macready but the arrogant fire company runner, the speeding omnibus driver, the profane market woman, and the selfish newsboy "who disturbs the decent citizen with his cries in the early morning" (p. 75). But in the end, DiGirolamo rejects the reformer fears and urban legends of the nineteenth century. He relies on newsboys like Johnny Morrow who described themselves not as part of a "dangerous class," but rather as self-identified members of the "newsboy class" (p. 79). Greater dangers originated with contagions in the air than selling papers on the streets; more than half of Gotham's children during the 1850s died before age 5, eight out of nine of early childhood deaths happening in immigrant households. "More than any other personification of the age, the newsboy represented the liberating potential of a democratic society driven by a wide-open market economy," concludes DiGirolamo. Whatever hardships newsboys endured, most "saw themselves not as powerless victims but as members of a respectable trade who operated in a moral economy that put their right to work unmolested," concludes DiGirolamo (p. 181).

The era of the newsboy went into decline with the election of Pres. Franklin Roosevelt. The New Deal transformed the state's relationship with children in general and newsboys in particular, establishing the first federal day care centers, introducing subsidized school lunches, and building playgrounds, swimming pools, and athletic fields throughout the United States. The National Youth Administration provided the first financial aid programs for students and eventually placed graduates in hospitals, schools, and public agencies. Combined with the adoption of the National Newspaper Code in 1934 and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, hiring news sellers or carriers under the age of 16 was prohibited.

Staller and DiGirolamo navigate a historical tightrope by reinterpreting Charles Loring Brace and the Children's Aid Society in favorable terms. Each is critical of Brace's Protestant paternalism and his tactics of fear exemplified by his frequent invocation of "dangerous classes" to sometimes describe his charges. Yet, Staller and DiGirolamo acknowledge Brace's admiration of newsboy fortitude and gumption, often in the face of adversity: "there is a soul—solemn and immortal, which lives in the poorest outcast boy, as in the best and most cultured of society," Brace admitted. "Such lads as these are worth saving" (DiGirolamo, p. 110). The CAS adopted a range of antipoverty programs which became models for other cities and foreshadowed twentieth-century foster care. At a time when education, health care, and employment training was

rudimentary, if non-existent, the CAS reached hundreds of thousands of poverty-stricken, sometimes-abandoned, homeless children.

Questions nevertheless remain. DiGirolamo, for example, never discusses Levi Silliman Ives or the Catholic Protectory. Instead, he concentrates on the Rev. John Drumgoole, whose "achievements in child welfare work rivaled those of Brace," believes DiGirolamo (p. 197). The immigrant Drumgoole lacked the Ivy League pedigree and literary talents of Brace, but was nevertheless an equally important institution builder. In the 1870s, Drumgoole revitalized the St. Vincent Newsboys Home and went on to build the ten-story Home for Boys on Lafayette Place and Great Jones Street (1881) housing four hundred boys, many in single rooms. Like Brace, Drumgoole emphasized self-reliance; levied five cent fees on his charges for lodging and meals; accepted those unable to pay; incorporated a gym; established reading classes for small children and night classes for older boys; a curriculum with courses in business, Latin, and Greek; and opened his establishment "to boys of all faiths and races" (DiGirolamo, p. 198).

These institutions deserve more direct assessment. More precisely, which boys and girls were attracted to St. Vincent's? To the NBLH? If residence in each was voluntary, the structures were similar, and the philosophies of Drumgoole and Brace share more in common than not, what exactly attracted individual youth to one lodging house over the other? Staller never discusses Drumgoole, so these questions remain unanswered. Did Ives and Drumgoole represent two different and conflicting poles of Catholic institution-building in regard to addressing child poverty and homelessness in nineteenth-century New York?[19] Drumgoole's child welfare philosophy and comparison of the St. Vincent's Newsboys Home and the NBLH call for further historical investigation.

At a memorial service for Charles Loring Brace in 1890, the Rector William Reed Huntington of Grace Church proclaimed, "New York owes Brace a statue."[20] Does it? The Janus-faced motives of Brace and CAS operatives continue to present a complicated and confusing history. Were they motivated by anti-Catholic xenophobia or sincere concern for homeless, abandoned, and uncared-for children? Brace himself sometimes presented perplexing views in the same paragraph.[21] On the other hand, recent revelations of Roman Catholic clerical sexual abuse raise equally challenging and controversial questions about the primary motives of past Catholic child-care institutions.[22] Was their primary purpose to remedy youth precarity and poverty? Or was the self-preservation and institutional protection of Roman Catholicism at the forefront of their minds? Thousands of children were institutionalized and placed-out during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Can historians even partially know which system better addressed the economic, psychological, and emotional needs of their young charges? These questions are further complicated by the settler colonialism and agricultural labor demands unique to the second half of the nineteenth century which structured most placing-out and emigration programs.[23] Even definitional problems challenge historians: if nineteenth-century youth became "adults" by the age of 13 and entered the workplaces on rural farms and in urban stores and factories, should urban historians treat young teenage adults on city streets as "boys" and "girls"? These and related questions await the next wave of urban child-care historians.

Notes

1. The most common reference is George W. Matsell, *Semi-Annual Report of the Chief of Police from May 1, to October 31, 1849* (New York, 1850), 58–66, https://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6526/, and cited in Children's Aid Society, *First Annual Report* (New York, 1854), 4; also in Robert H. Bremner, John Barnard, Tamara K. Hareven, and Robert M. Mennel, eds., *Children and Youth in America: A Documentary History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 1:755-56. Also see Samuel B. Halliday, *The Little Street Sweeper; or, Life among the Poor* (New York, 1861), 142-43. On the common use of terms like "gutter-snipes," "street rats," and "Arabs," see Helen Campbell, Thomas W. Knox, and Thomas Byrnes, *Darkness and Daylight: Or, Lights and Shadows of New York Life*

(Hartford, 1891), 112-18, 213 (15,000 children); Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work Among Them* (New York, 1872), 31 (20,000-30,000 children), 41, 79 (Arabs).

2. Children's Aid Society, *Eleventh Annual Report* (New York, 1864), 4.
3. Numerous works examine aspects of Brace, his life, the CAS, and the placing-out program, including: Julia Grant, *The Boy Problem: Educating Boys in Urban America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 23-27; Maureen Fitzgerald, *Habits of Compassion: Irish Catholic Nuns and the Origins of New York's Welfare System, 1830-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 86-93, 119-20; Kenneth B. Kidd, *Making American Boys: Boyology and the Feral Tale* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 93-103; Catherine J. Ross, "Society's Children: The Care of Indigent Youngsters in New York City, 1875–1903," in *Families by Law: An Adoption Reader*, ed. Naomi R. Cahn (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 11-18; Timothy J. Gilfoyle, "Street-Rats and Gutter-Snipes: Child Pickpockets and Street Culture in New York City, 1850-1900," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 4 (2004): 855, 856, 861, 868-69; Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 103, 109, 132, 194, 251, 350, 352, 364; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); 782-84, 849, 978, 1003, 1161; Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 8-13; Clay Gish, "Rescuing the 'Waifs and Strays' of the City: The Western Emigration Program of the Children's Aid Society," *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 1 (Fall 1999): 121-41; Paula Fass, *Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 44; Steven Mintz, *Moralists & Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 115-16; Geraldine Youcha, *Minding the Children: Child Care in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995), 193-210, 277-78, 294-95; Jane Allen, "'Brace, Charles Loring' and 'Children's Aid Society,'" in *The Encyclopedia of New York*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 135, 213; Thomas Bender, *New York Intellect: A History of Intellectual Life in New York City from 1750 to the Beginning of Our Own Time* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 182, 195-99; Thomas Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 128-57; Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789–1860* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 194-214; Donald Dale Jackson, "It Took Trains to Put Street Kids on the Right Track out of the Slums," *Smithsonian* 17 (August 1986): 95-103; Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); Alexander W. Pisciotta, "Treatment on Trial: The Rhetoric and Reality of the New York House of Refuge, 1857–1935," *American Journal of Legal History* 29, no. 2 (1985): 151-81; Edward K. Spann, *The New Metropolis: New York City, 1840-1857* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 267-73; Kristine Elisabeth Nelson, "The Best Asylum: Charles Loring Brace and Foster Family Care" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1980); Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820–1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 94-107; Robert M. Mennel, *Thorns and Thistles: Juvenile Delinquents in the United States, 1825-1940* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1973), 32-48, 63-64, 110-12, 200; Francesco Cordasco, "Charles Loring Brace and the Dangerous Classes: Historical Analogs of the Black Urban Poor," *Journal of Human Relations* 20, no. 3 (1972): 79-90; David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 259-60; Joseph M. Hawes, *Children in Urban Society: Juvenile Delinquency in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); Walter I. Trattner, *Homer Folks: Pioneer in Social Welfare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 19-20; Anthony M. Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), xxi-xxiii, 36, 65, 109; Seymour J. Mandelbaum, *Boss Tweed's New York* (New York: John Wiley, 1965), 160; Miriam Z. Langsam, *Children West: A History of the Placing-Out System of the New York Children's Aid Society, 1853–1890* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the Department of History, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1964); Martin Wolins and Irving Piliavin, *Institution or Foster Family: A Century of Debate* (New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1964), 5-27; Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944), 16; Henry W. Thurston, *The Dependent Child: A Story of Changing Aims and Methods in the Care of Dependent Children* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), 92-160. Also see notes 5,

8, and 10.

4. Staller enjoyed “unrestricted access to otherwise restricted children’s case records” (pp. xlv-xlvi). She sampled 708 boys case files from 1861-1865 (p. 32, note 84; p. 266, note 1). Significantly, other parts of the CAS collection remain largely unexploited by historians. Consider the little-known photographic prints taken in 1928 by Lewis Hine at CAS country facilities such as the Brace Farm School in Valhalla, New York, and the Bowdoin Farm School in New Hamburg, New York. See Box 978, https://www.flickr.com/photos/n-yhs/collections/72157623840005511/; or the architectural drawings by Calvert Vaux, who designed numerous CAS buildings, in boxes 38 and OS1 in Series VIII, http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/nyhs/childrensaidsociety/dscaspace_ref8_3xf.html, in Guide to the Victor Remer Historical Archives of the Children’s Aid Society, 1836-2006 (bulk, 1853-1947), MS 111, New-York Historical Museum & Library (Remer Archives hereafter), accessed February 13, 2023, http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/nyhs/childrensaidsociety/.
5. Staller acknowledges the influence of Bruce Bellingham. See Bellingham, “The ‘Unspeakable Blessing’: Street Children, Reform Rhetoric, and Misery in Early Industrial Capitalism,” *Politics & Society* 12, no. 3 (1983): 303-30 (which includes an excellent summary of the literature on the CAS in the history of criminology and social welfare, pp. 326-27); Bellingham, “Institution and Family: An Alternative View of Nineteenth Century Child Saving,” *Social Problems* 33, no. 6 (1986): 533-57 (which includes a critical summary of the “child saving” literature); Bellingham, “Waifs and Strays: Child Abandonment, Foster Care, and Families in Mid-Nineteenth Century New York,” in *The Uses of Charity: The Poor on Relief in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis*, ed. Peter Mandler (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990); and Bruce William Bellingham, “Little Wanderers: A Socio-Historical Study of the Nineteenth Century Origins of Child Fostering and Adoption Reform, Based on Early Records of the New York Children’s Aid Society” (PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1984).
6. Karen M. Staller, *Runaways: How the Sixties Counterculture Influenced Today’s Practices and Policies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Karen Staller, “Social Problem Construction and Its Impact on Program and Policy Responses,” in *From Child Welfare to Child Well-Being: An International Perspective on Knowledge in the Service of Making Policy*, ed. Sheila B. Kamerman, Shelley Phipps, and Asher Ben-Arieh (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 155-73.
7. Children’s Aid Society, *Eleventh Annual Report*, 3-4 (emphasis in original). The original quote appears in Children’s Aid Society, *First Annual Report* (New York, 1854), 12. For other examples of Brace’s invocation of the term “dangerous,” see Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York*; Children’s Aid Society, *Fourth Annual Report* (New York, 1857), 5, 6; Children’s Aid Society, *Sixteenth Annual Report* (New York, 1866), 9.
8. Stephen O’Connor, *Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2001), prologue.
9. Staller points out that the program was known as the Emigration, Placing-Out, or Western Emigration (or some combination) Department from 1859 to 1925. Also see Container List for Series XI—Records of the Children’s Emigration, Placing-Out, and Foster Home Programs, 1853-2006, 1853-1939, Remer Archives, accessed February 3, 2023, http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/nyhs/childrensaidsociety/dscaspace_ref11_8wt.html.
10. O’Connor, *Orphan Trains*, prologue. The CBS television movie *Orphan Train* (1979) was directed by William Graham; starred Jill Eikenberry, Kevin Dobson, and Glenn Close; and was adapted from James Magnuson and Dorothea G. Petrie, *Orphan Train* (New York: Dial Press, 1978). Also see Marilyn Irvin Holt, *The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 195n2. Other films that have perpetuated and popularized the use of “orphan train” include: Wendy Hearn (Director and Producer), *The End of the Line: Orphan Trains* (New York: Heritage Account, Inc., and Filmakers Library, 1989); Edward Gray and Janet Graham, directors, *American Experience: The Orphan Trains* (PBS, 1995); Colleen Bradford Krantz (Director), *West by Orphan Train* (All Channel Films, 2014). Publications using “orphan train” in their titles include: Christina Baker Kline and Sarah L. Thomson, *Orphan Train Girl: The Young Readers’ Edition of Orphan Train* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017); Rebecca Langston-George, *Orphan Trains: Taking the Rails to a New Life* (North Mankato: Capstone Press, 2016); Peggy Caravantes, *The Orphan Trains: A History Perspectives Book* (Ann Arbor: Cherry Lake Publishing, 2014); Elizabeth Raum, *Orphan Trains: An*

Interactive History Adventure (North Mankato: Capstone Press, 2011); Rebecca S. Trammell, "Orphan Train Myths and Legal Reality," *The Modern American* 5, no. 2 (2009): 3-13; Andrea Warren, *We Rode the Orphan Trains* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2004); Verla Kay, *Orphan Train* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2003); Andrea Warren, *Orphan Train Rider: One Boy's True Story* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1996); Annette R. Fry, *The Orphan Trains* (New York: Macmillan, 1994); Martha Nelson Vogt and Christina Vogt, *Searching for Home: Three Families from the Orphan Trains* (Grand Rapids: Triumph Press, 1983); Also see National Orphan Train Complex Museum & Research Center, Concordia, KS, updated February 23, 2021, accessed February 13, 2023, https://orphantrain-depot.org/.

11. O'Connor, *Orphan Trains*, 148.
12. Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence—Boston, 1880-1960* (New York: Viking Press, 1988); Gordon, "Family Violence, Feminism, and Social Control," *Feminist Studies* 12, no. 3 (1986): 452-78, reprinted in Eric H. Monkkonen, ed., *Crime and Justice in American History*, vol. 9 (Westport: Meckler, 1991). Ironically, Gordon is critical of Brace in *Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*, 9-17. Staller never cites Gordon in *New York's Newsboys*.
13. For a few examples, see Mintz, *Moralists & Modernizers*, 116; Fitzgerald, *Habits of Compassion*, 89-95; Gordon, *Great Arizona Orphan*, 9-17.
14. See O'Connor, *Orphan Trains*, 216-19, which briefly discusses the retrospective study by Georgia Ralph in 1922 discussed in Thurston, *Dependent Child*, 132-36.
15. O'Connor, *Orphan Trains*, 128-40, 254 (quote), 302-304. O'Connor adds that only after 1895 did CAS officials adopt standardized forms with a child's name, age, religion, and foster parent information, much of which was never previously collected.
16. Ralph's study had access to CAS internal records and examined the years 1865, 1875, 1885, 1895, 1905, and 1915. See Thurston, *Dependent Child*, 132-40.
17. *Crying the News* received numerous awards after publication, including the Frederick Jackson Turner Award of the Organization of American Historians, the Eugenia M. Palmegiano Prize of the American Historical Association, the Vincent P. DeSantis Book Prize of the Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, the Philip Taft Labor History Award, and the Frank Luther Mott-KTA Journalism & Mass Communication Research Award.
18. Among the manuscript collections upon which DiGirolamo relies are: the Broadsides Collection of the American Antiquarian Society; the Peter J. Eckel Newsboy Collection at Princeton University; the New York Children's Aid Society Archive in the Remer Archives; the Pulitzer Papers and the Lillian Wald Papers at Columbia University; the James E. Scripps Papers and George G. Booth Papers in the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan; the Robert S. Saunders Papers in the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at the University of Missouri–St. Louis; George Eastman House Collection in Rochester, NY; the Grand Rapids Press Collection and the Mouw Family Papers in the Grand Rapids Public Library; the New York Child Labor Committee Papers in the New York State Library in Albany, NY; the Helen King Boyer Collection at Georgetown University Library; the Juvenile Protective Association Records at the University of Illinois at Chicago; the National Child Labor Committee Papers and the American Life Histories of the Federal Writers' Project in the Library of Congress; the Hattie H. Smith Papers in the Schlesinger Library of Harvard University; the Hallie Flanagan Papers at Vassar College; the Russell H. Meinhart Papers in the Montana Historical Society Research Center Archives; and the James S. Copley Library in La Jolla, CA. Little-known oral history collections include the Jews in Minneapolis Oral History Project at the Minnesota Historical Society; oral history interviews at the Youngstown State University Oral History Project; and oral history interviews in the Densho Visual History Collection based in Los Angeles.
19. For more on Roman Catholic social welfare in nineteenth-century New York, see Fitzgerald, *Habits of Compassion*. She never discusses John Drumgoole. On Ives, see Thurston, *Dependent Child*, 126-27; and John O'Grady, *Levi Silliman Ives: Pioneer Leader in Catholic Charities* (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1933), which has no discussion of Brace or the Children's Aid Society.
20. "Charles Loring Brace. A Statue of the Philanthropist Asked for," *New York Times*, November 28, 1890, p. 2, quoted in DiGirolamo, p. 110; "William Reed Huntington," *Wikipedia*, last updated October 2, 2022, accessed February 4, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Reed_Huntington. Also see "In Honor of C.L. Brace," *New York Times*, December 10, 1890, 5.

21. One among many examples is Brace declaring that homeless and vagrant children "are often of very good stock; coming of honest European peasantry who, in a foreign land, have become unfortunate. They are not links of a chain of criminal inheritance." Yet, in the ensuing sentence he remarks, "A criminal family in a large city, much sooner than in rural districts, breaks up rapidly." See Charles Loring Brace, "The 'Placing Out' Plan for Homeless and Vagrant Children," Proceedings of the Annual Conference of Charities (Chicago, 1876), 135-36, quoted in Platt, *The Child Savers*, 36.
22. This literature is vast. Start with Thomas G. Plante and Kathleen McChesney, eds., *Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church: A Decade of Crisis, 2002-2012* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011); Kathleen McChesney, "What Caused the Crisis?: Key Findings of the John Jay College Study on Clergy Sexual Abuse," *America*, June 6, 2011, accessed February 3, 2018, https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/779/article/what-caused-crisis; and Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, "Report I of the 40th Statewide Investigating Grand Jury" (Harrisburg, PA, July 27, 2018), accessed February 14, 2023, https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/taking-action/attorney-general-shapiro-details-findings-of-2-year-grand-jury-investigation-into-child-sex-abuse-by-catholic-priests-in-six-pennsylvania-dioceses/. For a summary of the latter, see Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, "Attorney General Shapiro Details Findings of 2-Year Grand Jury Investigation into Child Sex Abuse by Catholic Priests in Six Pennsylvania Dioceses" (August 14, 2018), accessed February 14, 2023, https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/taking-action/attorney-general-shapiro-details-findings-of-2-year-grand-jury-investigation-into-child-sex-abuse-by-catholic-priests-in-six-pennsylvania-dioceses/.
23. The literature on settler colonialism is large. See Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014); Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). I am grateful to Theodore Karamanski for directing me to these publications.

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