leaves and the underbelly of the data that suggests that sexual harassment is "widespread" (p. 175).

The book struggles with the intersectionality of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, and disability. Although McKenzie Leiper purports to focus primarily upon gender, arguing that the debate about equality has centred on "gender inequities in the profession" (p. 9), some of her quotations and her commentary go well beyond an essentialized gender analysis. Undoubtedly, had she begun rather than ended this study in 2002, she would have asked more direct questions in her interviews about these very pressing matters. All in all, this is a major piece of sociological research that will lay a baseline against which historians and future generations of women lawyers can measure their lives and careers.

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MINTZ, Steven — *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2004. Pp. 384.

The story of Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn evokes images of a carefree and adventurous boy who always manages to evade adult authority. As such, Huck has become a powerful symbol of the idyllic childhood many North American adults idealize. Historian Steven Mintz extends the metaphor of Huck's river journey beyond romantic nostalgia in *Huck's Raft*, his survey of American childhood. In 17 chapters, the book explores the socio-economic and cultural changes that have affected children's lives and adults' expectations of childhood since the colonial period. Mintz demonstrates that, like Huck, who suffered at the hands of an abusive and neglectful father, children have often sailed their rafts through precarious waters, steered more by parents, social reformers, and economic realities than by their own desires. There are several scholarly manuscripts that detail the efforts of American child reformers or explore changing parenting styles. There are also works, such as Harvey Graff's *Conflicting Paths*, that reconstruct childhood from first-hand accounts. *Huck's Raft* deserves praise for attempting to do both — to synthesize changing family patterns, reform impulses, and cultural sentiments towards childhood with children's own thoughts, reactions, and recollections. The result is a comprehensive study of the past four centuries that explores the continuous tension between the power of adults and the agency of children in the United States.

Several themes recur throughout Mintz's narrative. One is the uncertainty and instability of American children's lives since the Puritans arrived in New England. Mintz argues that the character of this instability shifted through three overlapping phases. In the colonial period, strict religious doctrine and indentured labour characterized pre-modern childhood. In this period, parents viewed children

as incomplete adults and sped their maturation process. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, apprenticeships, family migrations, and conflicts often took young children far from their families. Yet, at the same time, adults began to view children as more fragile and innocent beings, creating a new, modern phase of childhood. In the twentieth century, these modern attitudes transformed children's health and education, but many young people remained vulnerable to violence and economic hardship. Mintz suggests that in the last 30 years a postmodern notion of childhood has emerged. The postmodern child is exposed to mature themes and ideas at an early age, and yet usually remains dependent on his or her parents for much longer than children in earlier phases.

Mintz also emphasizes adults' continuous preoccupation with young people's activities and well-being. Mintz cites texts from as early as the Puritan era that decry the spiritual weakness of the young to concerns about juvenile delinquency expressed in the medical papers and popular periodicals of the 1940s and 1950s, to demonstrate how adults have tried to reform and improve children's lives. Mintz believes that adults' interest in children's well-being has generally yielded positive change — particularly where children's physical health and education are concerned.

However, Mintz distinguishes between what he describes as clear-headed, Progressive Era reformers and the panicky parents, educators, and legislators of later periods. Unlike the early-twentieth-century reformers, who Mintz argues channelled their concerns into a "sustained public commitment to children's welfare" (p. 155), adults of the last quarter century have succumbed to "alarmist myths" about high rates of youth violence, child abduction, teenage pregnancy, and academic failure. He argues that the belief that the young were more likely to smoke, drink, steal, vandalize, and even kill led adults to question their support of youth programmes and prompted calls for tougher juvenile jail sentences. Similarly, fears about stranger abductions and the safety of playground equipment restricted younger children's mobility and increased parental anxiety. Mintz demonstrates that concerns such as these were usually based on exaggerated claims and incorrect information; adults were still more likely than teenagers to smoke, drink, or commit crimes, and children were more likely to be physically harmed by a family member than by a stranger.

While his point about the destructive consequences of moral panics is persuasive, Mintz's attempt to separate well-meaning child savers from meddlesome moralists is less convincing. Early-twentieth-century social reformers were not less motivated by contemporary fears than adults in the 1970s and 1980s, as Mintz implies. Earlier adults feared the temptations and health hazards of the city and its immigrant populations instead of recreational drug use and poor academic performance, but they were still fearful of the changes they saw in their society. The consequences for young people were similar as well — as children's memories from boarding schools, state institutions, and separated families found in *Huck's Raft* confirm.

Indeed, throughout the book, Mintz treats children as active participants in historical change, consistently presenting first-hand accounts — including diary

entries, life stories, and selections from memoirs — to give young people a voice in the text. These accounts emphasize the diversity of children's experiences in the United States. Mintz often uses these sources to highlight the ways race, gender, and class affected children's lives. African American children — first as slaves, then as a disenfranchised group — generally had shorter childhoods than their white contemporaries. Similarly, boys and girls were raised to fit specific gender roles, shaping how they saw themselves and their place in society. Most importantly for Mintz, parents' income levels and socio-economic status often determined their children's health and levels of education.

Mintz's account of these varied childhood experiences might leave readers wondering what exactly defines childhood. The author defines childhood as the period between infancy and 18 years of age, a definition that contradicts Mintz's evidence that childhood is continuously being redefined. Throughout *Huck's Raft* he demonstrates that factors such as the economy, religious beliefs, migration patterns, gender roles, and racism have given childhood diverse meanings. It seems inappropriate to impose rigid age boundaries on such a fluid concept, one that is more determined by a young person's dependency on adults, and by adult attitudes towards children, than by a specific age.

Still, Mintz offers a thorough review of his subject, buttressed by a diverse source base that far outweighs the shortcomings of his study. *Huck's Raft* joins Joseph Kett's *Rites of Passage* and Harvey Graff's *Conflicted Paths* as an engaging survey and enjoyable read that will be appreciated by both the scholar and the lay reader. While its approach to and definition of childhood will provide ample fodder for graduate seminars, *Huck's Raft* will offer undergraduates a comprehensive synthesis that demonstrates the ways social realities and cultural concepts have affected — and continue to affect — young people's lives. It is a welcome addition to a growing area of historical inquiry.

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Morris, R. J. — *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780–1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. 445.

Men, Women and Property in England, 1780–1870 offers a new and rich interpretation of the interrelationships between property and capital accumulation by family members, family and individual life cycles, and the economy and urban landscape of Leeds. In its focus on these themes, this impressive history echoes and builds on much of the early work in family history that examined family strategies and structures within an economic framework. It builds, too, on R. J. Morris's earlier work on the middle classes and the property cycle. This is an economic and social history of the Leeds middle classes that places the families of that city in the broader context of the nation, but is also