

have earned had she continued to work that semester in her factory job. The experience proved a turning point for Hilda. She was determined not to go back to the factory; Addams found her a job as hostess at Hull House. The hostess job was normally a volunteer position filled by socialites, but in the summer most upper-class families left on vacation and Addams needed help. Hilda loved her new job and then asked Addams to let her teach English for immigrant girls and women. She soon became a full-time teacher.

In Hilda's autobiography she devotes a section to Jane Addams as a person. Hilda argues that Addams's *Twenty Years at Hull House* reveals little about Addams the person. Most of the sources on Hull House were written by the same sort of upper-class Yankees as Addams herself—that is, by the volunteers rather than the clients. Hilda's diary provides a fresh ethnic viewpoint, though it is totally uncritical, and never mentions any faults in Addams or Hull House that sharp-eyed Hilda might have noticed. The book is likely to provoke students to broaden their perspective on settlement houses, taking more the viewpoint of the reformees than the reformers. Teachers focusing on the Progressive era or the settlement house movement can mine the 78 pages of materials starting with "I Discover Hull-House" and ending with a discussion of Jane Addams. For teachers wishing to read excerpts to students about another young student's trip to the New World or initial impressions and experiences in America, the first third of Hilda's diary is excellent material.

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June Sochen. *Mae West: She Who Laughs, Lasts*. Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., Pp. vii, 153. Paper, \$9.95.

June Sochen's *Mae West: She Who Laughs, Lasts*, a concise and well-written biography, explores Mae West's career within the context of early twentieth-century entertainment, women performers, and popular attitudes toward female sexuality. Sochen relied extensively on newspaper clippings, show business periodicals, censorship cases, and West's autobiography, *Goodness Had Nothing to Do with It* (1959). Given Sochen's focus and the nature of her sources, it is hardly surprising that the private Mae West rarely emerges in this study. More information on West's off-stage life is necessary for readers to assess the appropriateness of Sochen's frequent conflation of the public persona and private person. Although she occasionally refers to differences between the two, Sochen does not adequately explore the woman behind the image. However, as an engaging account of an extraordinary career that spanned five decades and encompassed vaudeville, Broadway, Hollywood, night clubs, and even radio and television, *Mae West: She Who Laughs, Lasts* provides illuminating information on several facets of American popular culture.

Sochen is especially effective in dealing with the ways in which Mae West pushed the boundaries of acceptable sexual behavior for women. "In prudish America," Sochen writes, "she kidded her audience, the censors, and all others who believed in the double sexual standard, in woman's passivity, and in their own moral seriousness." West created a persona that kept moralists on edge and maximized media exposure and ticket sales. Her vaudeville and stage image in the 1910s and 1920s as "a sexually active woman who saw no difference between her needs and preferences and those of men" defied conventional assumptions and intrigued audiences. By the time West arrived in Hollywood in 1932, she had written and starred in several of her own plays, most notably *Sex*, for which she was arrested and jailed; *Drag*, a sympathetic portrayal of homosexuality; and *Diamond Lil*, which received popular and critical

acclaim and established her as a superstar. Lil, West's stock character, was a prostitute with "a heart of gold," who "used men" and was "always in control."

Although West had a contract with Paramount and a formidable reputation, Sochen notes that her success in Hollywood was far from certain. The irrepressible West, however, quickly discovered "the trump cards that would allow her to get her way" at Paramount, and established her special niche as a sex comedienne by bringing various reincarnations of Lil to the screen. Her 1933 films *She Done Him Wrong* (the film adaptation of *Diamond Lil*) and *I'm No Angel*, both extremely successful, reiterated West's themes about women's sexual nature and their "right to express it" without suffering "any social consequences as a result." West made other films and received enormous amounts of publicity in her constant skirmishes with Will Hays and the Production Code, but Sochen points out that what had once seemed daring soon became predictable and hackneyed. Convinced her persona need never change, West blamed others for the decline in popularity of her movies. Sochen's discussion of West's Hollywood career is balanced and fair; she delineates both West's talents and the different facets of her personality that contributed to her demise as a film star. Although her film career was over by 1943, West remained an active performer for two more decades, first in stage revivals of *Diamond Lil*, and later in a night club act in which she was surrounded by male body builders in a parody of the "girlie" shows. West's vanity and ego seemed somewhat pathetic at this stage of her life, but Sochen treats her with admirable understanding and sympathy. The author is not convincing, however, when she claims that West had become "a vital force" among the Baby Boom generation in the 1960s.

As Sochen notes, the historical profession has been slow to acknowledge the importance of popular culture. Thus many historians have only recently begun to incorporate more information on popular culture into their classes. *Mae West: She Who Laughs, Lasts* provides some very valuable background for such instructors, but it will probably remain on supplemental rather than required reading lists for most general twentieth century surveys or women's history courses. *Mae West* is more likely to be assigned in film studies classes or American studies courses with a strong emphasis on popular culture.

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James R. Ralph, Jr. *Northern Protest: Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement*. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1993. Pp. xi, 338. Cloth, \$27.95.

The story of the civil rights movement has been frequently told, both in print and in visual form. However, most treatments of the topic have allocated little space to the open-housing protests in Chicago in 1966. *Northern Protest* very adequately fills this void.

The book begins with the decision by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in August 1965 to take its non-violent campaign to the North. The site selected for the first action was Chicago, a city where the civil rights movement showed signs of faltering. The author carefully probes the difficulties encountered by the SCLC when trying to confront entrenched social and economic inequities in the North with the same methods that had worked so effectively in the South. The picture that emerges is often one of confusion and uncertainty. It becomes clear that the SCLC had trouble selecting an injustice that seemed certain to rally the black population. Furthermore, divisions within the black community itself and disagreements between national and local leaders often threatened to derail the process. After an initial attempt to target Chicago's slums, the goal of integrating white neighborhoods was selected as the primary focus of the non-violent campaign. Although many blacks and a