

not reconcile them with the moral rebuke their slave system provided them at every turn.

Hal Goldman
Carleton University

McKENZIE LEIPER, Jean — *Bar Codes: Women in the Legal Profession*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006. Pp. 242.

Jean McKenzie Leiper's interesting study is based upon interviews, carried out between 1994 and 2002, with 110 women lawyers practising in Ontario. While many of the interviewees were part of the "first wave" of the growing female lawyer cohort born after World War II, others came to the profession somewhat later. The sample pulled up a diverse group: many of them white and middle-class as one might have anticipated, but others only one generation removed from immigrant roots, some from racial minority and ethnic backgrounds, and some lesbian. The lawyers practised in a range of areas in large urban and smaller centres across the province.

Using the metaphor of "Portia" in her robes, McKenzie Leiper begins by exploring the anomaly of women's presence within a masculinist profession and the trappings of outward demeanour and dress. She next considers the interviewees' experiences in law school, the "time crunch" they subsequently suffer as they juggle practice with family responsibilities, and the "gendered aspects of time," marvelling at the complicated choreography that controls the daily routines of these superbly organized female lawyers. She then examines the women's career paths, which she describes as replete with glass ceilings and discriminatory mentoring, income disparity, barriers to entry as partners in private firms, and gender-skewed drop-out rates.

This is a fascinating study, based on two sets of detailed, lengthy interviews with each participant at different stages of their careers. The complexity of the issues canvassed and the richness of the responses provide a wealth of data. Deftly set within the pervasive sociological literature and sophisticated theoretical frameworks, McKenzie Leiper's study brilliantly comes alive when she quotes from the transcripts of her taped interviews. Women lawyers provide remarkably candid, often poignant, and sometimes hilarious comments about their experiences.

In the section on outward demeanour and dress, McKenzie Leiper describes female lawyers who are "expected to retain their femininity but to dress conservatively, hiding any hint of sexuality that would be disruptive in the masculine world of law" (p. 27). She explores the androgynous professional costuming offered by the traditional barrister's robes and recounts the disastrous tale of a very pregnant lawyer, forced by judicial intransigence to wear the barrister's vest under her gown, only to have the buttons burst during argument, baring her pregnant stomach to all. Others describe standing out like a sore thumb in "coloured"

suits among a sea of "forty blue suits" or being contemptuously dismissed for wearing a dark dress with high collar and hemline below the knee, attire deemed too feminine for court (pp. 30, 36–37, 180).

The section on women's situation in law schools is very interesting, although McKenzie Leiper's comment that Canadian feminist debates erupted secondarily to American debates is not quite accurate. My own experience was that strong feminist consciousness developed in Ontario law schools contemporaneously with American schools, and that the Canadian version was often more radical than in the United States. Many of McKenzie Leiper's interviewees report noticing that "gender wars" had broken out in most Ontario law schools, but confess that they deliberately chose to "avoid feminist issues" during their years in law school (p. 181). While this may have been a career-enhancing decision, it also raises questions about whether women law students are more conservative or risk-averse than the general population of women.

The sections of the book that are most fully developed are those relating to time-triggered stress. The textured descriptions of women lawyers' daily routines offer compelling rationales to explain why 10 per cent of McKenzie Leiper's sample left the profession during the study. Women running frantically against the clock manage impossible schedules. Perhaps the most appalling example is of a woman lawyer in hospital, having given birth at 6:10 a.m., who phones her firm at 9:00 a.m. to explain she will not be in for work. The response? The law firm starts to refer phone calls from clients directly to the hospital. Missing from action in many cases are the domestic partners who, despite a few equal co-parents noteworthy by their exceptionality, seem often to fail to shoulder their share of these juggling nightmares. McKenzie Leiper complains later about the virtual absence of media messages aimed at "men in high places" to seek fulfilment at home with children (p. 186). Yet one must ask why so many women lawyers are settling for less than equal domestic partnerships.

McKenzie Leiper also examines the varied career paths pursued by female lawyers and concludes that the "linear career model" anchored in an "unbroken, upwardly mobile path to status, money, and power" reflects fewer and fewer male careers and virtually no female ones. Yet this "linear career model" is still "prized in large law firms and other legal settings" (p. 173). Her call for a more humane approach to the curriculum vitae is a welcome one, but seems increasingly less realizable given the growing globalization of the practice of law and the concomitant explosion in pace and competition. She asks the question whether expectations about performance have been modified over the past 30 years as women have advanced in the system. Her answer, a "very guarded 'yes' ," is qualified by her conclusion that it is "only because, by their very presence, they have raised alarm bells and provoked responses from law societies and bar associations" (p. 178). She adds that law firms proudly display their equity policies, but that the presence of women has "laid bare a vein of prejudice in firms that have remained committed to a masculine approach" (p. 178). Nowhere is this more evident than in the stories about male lawyers' histrionics over maternity

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.

Constance Backhouse
University of Ottawa

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