throughout history, and his strong emphasis on continuity in the experience of the poor in America. If he is concluding that a strengthened welfare state is a good thing, one would expect him to find that welfare states in the past made a positive impact on the experiences of the poor. Instead, the book avoids such a story of change over time. In the section focusing on women's experience, for example, there are so few examples from prior to the New Deal, that the book never has to grapple with whether the New Deal changed women's and children's experiences of poverty. Relentlessly, Pimpare's story of continuity would suggest that neither welfare states, nor new technologies in the workplace or in food production, nor changing elements of culture have had a significant impact on what poverty feels like.

At times, this argument is not well-supported, but at other times, Pimpare's parade of evidence demonstrates that many aspects of poverty have been remarkably alike, whether documented in the 1760s or the 1960s. This book, then, will challenge experts in the field and laypeople alike to revise or moderate our views of the history of social welfare as marked by distinctive phases. It will also challenge scholars and policy-makers to listen more closely to those who experienced poverty. It will appeal to both scholarly and popular audiences because of its engaging, clear, and fluid writing. It will also serve scholars and teachers as an extraordinarily rich collection of endnotes, and of the voices of the poor.

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Protesting About Pauperism: Poverty, Politics and Poor Relief in Late-Victorian England, 1870-1900. By Elizabeth T. Hurren (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007. xii plus 296 pp.).

This examination of poverty and the ways in which the public, government institutions and the poor themselves tried to define poor relief and agitate for equitable financial assistance, raises provocative questions about nineteenth century values and the differences towards urban and rural poor relief. Elizabeth Hurren provides a needed examination in the historiography of relief and the welfare state by looking at the later nineteenth century when the controversy of the New Poor Laws had died down, urban pauperism was recast in terms of moral failing and reformers like Charles Booth were initiating the *crusade* against outdoor relief, distinguishing it from the bureaucratic agencies of the first half of the century, dependent upon strict bureaucratic control under the watchful eye of elected officials watching the rate-payers' money Hurren argues that far less has been done in the revision of the scholarship on poverty and relief than one might have expected. While Sidney and Beatrice Webb's work is clearly incomplete, Hurren suggests work by others does not present a complete picture of the chal-

lenge of rural poverty, local government and the moral crusade campaign. The central purpose of her book, therefore, is to test the argument that local democracy at the rural level, growing out of both the Third Reform Act of 1884 and the Local Government Act of 1894 which brought the urban system of locally officials into controlling poor relief via rate-payer councils, transformed both attitudes towards and reactions against, administration of poor relief in rural areas. It explores, "...whether political activism developed in a linear fashion, starting with agricultural trade unions and culminating in working-class representation in the poor law union boardroom [and] whether Liberalism...managed to contain and address the aspirations of working people." (p. 11) To this end, Hurren uses Brixworth in Northamptonshire as a microcosm of England, seeking to examine more critically the crusading experience of poor relief and to reinsert it into the historical arguments concerning the rise of the welfare state. To that end, she looks specifically at crusading initiatives by specific groups at the local political level, their failure in alleviating rural, but their impact on the poor for decades to come.

The book is divided into two parts. The first does the necessary, but exceedingly detailed job of providing the backdrop to poor relief generally, and the local political application of post 1834 policy, specifically, in Brixworth. Comparisons between the Liberal and Conservative parties, ideologically and in terms of electoral domination, demonstrate the complexity of the social issue of poverty on the one hand and political reality, on the other. As a result, the realities of shifting to indoor poor relief as the exclusive means of poverty assistance were doomed to inefficiency, if not failure, given regional differences and the extent of local representation in Poor House administration. In examining Northamptonshire, Hurren shows that the crusade impacted the traditional order of landowning elite dominating the poor relief boards, despite a significant population participating in manufacturing and urban life, removed from the anachronistic landed gentry governing at the county level. Socio-economic divisions, the extension of the vote through the three Reform Acts, all contributed to class divisions and antagonism with patriarchal poor relief administration. Poor relief distributed as though it were a gift or favor granted by one particular social order, smacked of the pre-reform system of privilege, patronage and corruption. Brixworth also had the embarrassment of two deaths occurring in 1874 at is workhouse, both deemed by the local press to be due to medical negligent. At the same time, poor law guardians on the Brixworth union board began crusading policies with harsher and more stringent criteria for relief. The increasing cost of relief resulted harsher evaluation of need and charity relief that might be offered, if not accepted, by the rural poor applying for union assistance. As most had no political voice, reforming the system or changing its administrative personnel were not realistic. Popular protest and the threat of violence, however, could do much before and after an extension of the vote to rural society.

Popular protest in Northamptonshire and the transformative change on union officials following the democratization of local government is the focus of

the second part of the study. Chapters examine the organization of resistance to the crusade campaign. Even after 1885, elected officials tried to relegate poor relief to the bottom of political agendas. Coalition and caucus politics took up specific issues, such as medical and burial expenses and turned them into political issues which reflected the divisions between efficiency-oriented relief administrators and those arguing for greater humanitarian expenditure. Rural protests and the coverage by the national press propelled such seemingly mean-spirited regulations into the national political debate and the need to replace crusading spirit with a singular, humanitarian relief system providing assistance indoor and outdoor, urban and rural throughout agricultural and manufacturing downturns in economic security.

Hurren certainly does provide a thorough scholarly examination of the link between the two most-examined areas of English poverty and poor relief. While Brixworth cannot possibly provide the whole story, she is right to argue that the mixed economy and existing political structure, struggling through the nineteenth century to change with political reform and shifting party alliances, make it a very useful example of challenges on the national level, ideologically, economically, politically and socially. Well researched and clearly written, this is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the intersection between political and elected political action on the one hand, and the power of democratization on socio-economic policy on the other, in the late Victorian period.

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The Medieval Prison: A Social History. By G. Geltner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008. xviii plus 197 pp.).

Prisons and imprisonment were, of course, ubiquitous at all periods of European history since antiquity. Geltner's real claim is actually not that it was the 'medieval' but that it was the modern prison that emerged in the fourteenth century as a functioning institution with dedicated accommodation, administration, and financial arrangements (though with earlier roots), and that the practice of employing imprisonment as a punishment in itself, as opposed to detention for other purposes, became regular and established, despite the continuing refusal of jurists to approve or acknowledge it as such. It is not the least merit of this useful study that it points firmly, though not for the first time, to the years after 1250 or so for the beginning of developments too often assumed to belong to a much later period. It is a pity that the author diminishes a title that in other ways claims rather too much by enshrining in it an adjective that all of us, but social historians in particular, would be much better off without.

Geltner's work is based on close archival examination of prisons in Florence, Venice, Siena and Bologna in the fourteenth century. It shows that they emerged