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Kathleen Sander

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Kathleen Sander : The Business of Charity: The Woman's Exchange Movement, 1832-1900 (Women in American History) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Business of Charity: The Woman's Exchange Movement, 1832-1900 (Women in American History):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Valuable secondary source on an important aspect of the women's movement in the US By Laura McLemore I had been looking for information on the Woman's Exchange. This book was just what I'd been looking for. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. THE GENTEEL POOR FIGHT BACK: VALUABLE 19TH CENTURY HISTORY By David Roger Allen Dr. Kathleen Waters Sander (Ph.D. - History, U. of MD.) has written an extremely valuable book centered on the women's industrial exchange movement of the 19th century. Ruthless 19th century capitalism (also known as "capitalism at its finest") was not controlled or regulated by government, and offered no "safety nets" or benefits. Many individuals and families lived the "genteel life" during the 19th century for temporary periods, then were unceremoniously tossed off of the gravy train into the world of poverty.....a world for which they were often tragically unsuited, often even than those impoverished their entire lives. The women's exchange movement provided relief for previously "genteel" women suddenly or gradually reduced to circumstances bordering on desperation. In more than 70 American cities, a system of consignment retail shops was set up in which "consignors" (previously genteel but subsequently impoverished women) could offer

domestic products (mostly sewing and needlework items) for sales anonymously. The "shame" of impoverishment was hidden, capitalism's sins were uncomplained about, and some income for desperate women and their dependents was achieved. The brutal policing visited on those who complained about exploitation by the capitalist system was escaped. The women's industrial exchange movement was remarkable for its ingenuity and its imagination, and also for its longevity. Today, women's industrial exchange tea rooms and other facilities still operate and function, in some situations (as in Baltimore, Maryland) in facilities more than a century old. At the dawn of the 21st century, the model and mentality of the women's industrial movement, described well by Dr. Sander, is a shining light of hope for impoverished people in a world where protections against capitalistic rapacity and greed are clearly disappearing completely. Neither government nor disappearing "benefits" (retirement pensions, health insurance, etc.) offered by companies to gullible employees seem likely to protect vulnerable people any longer. The loss of government promised "benefits" in all categories seems very likely for the great majority of citizens as the new century progresses. Self-help actions independent of government and employers alike seem the best hope. The women's industrial exchange movement of the 19th century is a splendid model of how independent self-help action can work. It's truly inspiring, and a detailed history of its origins, successes, problems, and management such as that offered by Dr. Kathleen Sander is worth reading.

In the nineteenth century Woman's Exchanges formed a vast national network that created economic alternatives for financially vulnerable women in a world that permitted few respectable employment options. One of the nation's oldest continuously operating voluntary movements -- many are still in business after more than a century -- the Exchanges were fashionable and popular shops where women who had fallen on hard times could sustain themselves by selling their handiwork on consignment -- without having to seek public employment. Over the century Exchanges became an important forum for entrepreneurial growth and an example of how women used the voluntary sector -- which had so successfully served as a conduit for their political and social reforms -- to advance opportunities for economic independence.

"Rests on careful research into obscure sources to offer new insights into women's entrepreneurial activities... Well worth reading." -- Margaret Walsh, *Business History From the Back Cover* One of the nation's oldest continuously operating voluntary movements -- many are still in business after more than a century -- Woman's Exchanges were fashionable and popular shops where women who had fallen on hard times could sustain themselves by selling handiwork on consignment -- without having to seek employment in the public sector. Since the first shop opened in Philadelphia in 1832, Exchanges have provided an important forum for entrepreneurial growth as women have reevaluated their place in society and their ideas about economic independence. As paid work for women became more respectable, proponents of the Exchanges took up Mrs. George Armstrong (Libbie) Custer's cry, "We are all working women! Not a lady among us!" Kathleen Waters Sander draws on a wealth of research to demonstrate how women used the voluntary sector -- which had so successfully served as a conduit for their political and social reforms -- to advance opportunities for economic independence.