

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03337-4 - Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Vitorian Prostitutes in York

Frances Finnegan

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Poverty and prostitution

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03337-4 - Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York

Frances Finnegan

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



Frontispiece A sentimentalised version of a street-walker, adorning an Annual Report of one of the hundreds of Female Refuges operating throughout the country in the Victorian period. From the 34th *Annual Report of the Female Mission to the Fallen*, Charing Cross, London, 1892.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03337-4 - Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York
Frances Finnegan

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Poverty and prostitution

a study of Victorian prostitutes in York

FRANCES FINNEGAN

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE
LONDON · NEW YORK · MELBOURNE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-03337-4 - Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York
Frances Finnegan
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521224475

© Cambridge University Press 1979

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1979
This digitally printed first paperback version 2006

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Finnegan, Frances.

Poverty and prostitution.

Bibliography: p. 00.

1. Prostitution—England—York—History.
2. Prostitutes—England—York—Case studies.
3. York, Eng.—Social conditions. 4. Social classes—England—York. I. Title. [DNLM: 1. Prostitution—History—England. 2. Poverty—History—England. HQ117 F514p] HQ186.Y67F56 301.41'54'0942843 78—68123

ISBN-13 978-0-521-22447-5 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-22447-0 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-03337-4 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-03337-3 paperback

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03337-4 - Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York

Frances Finnegan

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

	<i>List of illustrations</i>	vii
	<i>Preface</i>	ix
	<i>Abbreviations</i>	xi
1	Introduction	I
2	Houses and haunts	34
3	The prostitutes and brothel-keepers	68
4	The clients	114
5	Drink, destitution and disease	136
6	Rescue and reform	164
	Conclusion	212
	<i>Notes</i>	216
	<i>Bibliography</i>	226
	<i>Index</i>	229

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03337-4 - Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York
Frances Finnegan

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Illustrations

	Page
	Frontispiece: Victorian street-walker
1	Map of mid-nineteenth-century York 19
2	Petergate 20
3	Tindall's Yard, First Water Lane 38
4	Beedham's Court, Skeldergate 44
5	Scriven's Court, Fetter Lane 46
6	Calvert's Yard, Tanner Row 47
7	Grape Lane 52
8	Walmgate 54
9	Plow's Rectory Buildings, Walmgate 55
10	Slum yard in York 56
11	Hungate 59
12	Carmelite Street 60
13	Black Horse Passage 62
14	Brothels in Stonebow Lane 64
15	Layerthorpe Buildings 66
16	Destitute child rescued from 'moral danger' 77
17	Destitute child rescued from 'moral danger' 78
18	Destitute child rescued from 'moral danger' 79
19	Destitute child rescued from 'moral danger' 80
20	Finkle Street, c. 1880 90
21	Bradley's Buildings, Hungate 94
22	Garden Place, Hungate 100
23	Bellerby's Yard, Wesley Place 101
24	Lower Wesley Place in flood 103
25	1861 poster of the York Society for the Prevention of Youthful Depravity 130
26	'Drink and the Social Question' 146

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03337-4 - Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Vitorian Prostitutes in York
Frances Finnegan

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii	<i>List of Illustrations</i>	
27	York City Police Force, c. 1880	148
28	Rules of the York Penitentiary	172
29	St Mary's Court, Blossom Street	176
30	Victorian prostitutes reformed	206
31	York Penitentiary Inmates' Declaration	207

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03337-4 - Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York
Frances Finnegan

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

In questioning the validity of much that has been written on Victorian prostitution in general this study draws on all the available evidence on individual prostitutes and brothel-keepers in a provincial city between 1837 and 1887. The enormous amount of detailed material in local archives relating to prostitutes has, until now, been neglected by historians who nevertheless have written and generalised on the subject, relying almost entirely on secondary sources. In contrast, this study has examined the lives and circumstances of the women themselves, both as individuals and as a class; and, since there is no reason to suppose that prostitutes in York were untypical of their kind, its findings have a wider than local significance and hopefully contribute to a clearer understanding of Victorian morality and society.

My attention was drawn to the widespread existence of prostitution in Victorian York during the preparation of my doctoral thesis on the development of the Irish Community in the city.* It was impossible to examine the lives of the Irish poor without becoming aware too of the existence of an equally deprived and unfortunate group – those ‘fallen women’ who, like the Famine immigrants, featured frequently in the newspaper Police Reports, were often applicants for poor relief and lived in the most squalid and insanitary parts of the city. Both groups, though distinct, were common victims of poverty.

I would like to thank the staff of the York Reference Library and Archives Department, in particular Mrs Rita Freedman the Archivist and her assistant Mrs Mary Thallon for their helpful interest in sorting the newly acquired records of the York Penitentiary Society.

* F. E. Beechey, ‘The Irish in York 1840–1875’, University of York, 1977.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03337-4 - Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Vitorian Prostitutes in York
Frances Finnegan

Frontmatter

[More information](#)x *Poverty and Prostitution*

I am also grateful to Dr D. M. Smith of the Borthwick Institute for supplying me with early references to the history of Grape Lane and to Major Tomlinson, Archivist at the York Barracks, and Sergeant Hawley of the York Police Force for their kind assistance. I am again indebted to Dr A. J. Wilmott of the Department of Computer Science, University of York, and would like to thank particularly Mr Steve Winnall for his generous help with the computer material.

My thanks are especially due to Mr Harry Hall, Senior Environmental Health Officer, for his unfailing kindness and for allowing me to draw upon his wide experience and knowledge of York's former slums; and also to the Department of Environmental Health for permission to reproduce many of the photographs in this book. Additional photographic material was generously supplied by the York City Archives and Mr David Wilde, and I am grateful to Mr David Whitely, University of York photographer, for his excellent reproduction of this material. I would also like to thank Mr S. S. L. Marshall, Managing Director of Vickers Instruments Ltd, York, for his hospitality and for allowing me to inspect the former premises of the Female Penitentiary, and those retired employees of the firm for their reminiscences of the Refuge and its inmates in the early years of this century. I am grateful, too, to my former husband Terry Beechey, A.R.I.B.A., for preparing the excellent map of mid-nineteenth-century York.

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Harold Perkin for his encouragement and helpful suggestions, and Mr Peter Laslett for his expert advice in the later stages of the preparation of this book. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Twenty Seven Foundation of the Institute of Historical Research for a grant towards research expenses.

This list of acknowledgements would be incomplete without a special word of thanks to my daughters Sarah and Rachel for their assistance in coding much of the material for computer analysis and for their helpful understanding during the writing of this book. Finally, and most of all, I wish to thank Professor Eric Sigsworth for his scholarly advice, help and criticism, and his unfailing patience, encouragement and interest.

*Frances Finnegan
Pocklington*

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03337-4 - Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Vitorian Prostitutes in York
Frances Finnegan

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Abbreviations

<i>Annual Report</i>	<i>Annual Report of the York Penitentiary Society</i>
<i>Gazette</i>	<i>Yorkshire Gazette</i>
<i>Herald</i>	<i>York Herald</i>
Poor Law	York Poor Law Guardians' Application and Report Books
Refuge Committee	York Penitentiary Society Ladies' Committee Books
Sessions	York Quarter Sessions Minute Books
Visitors' Books	York Penitentiary Society Ladies' Visitors' Books
Watch Committee	York Corporation Watch Committee Minute Books