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## Bawdy City

A vivid social history of Baltimore's prostitution trade and its evolution throughout the nineteenth century, *Bawdy City* centers women in a story of the relationship between sexuality, capitalism, and law. Beginning in the colonial period, prostitution was little more than a subsistence trade. However, by the 1840s, urban growth and changing patterns of household labor ushered in a booming brothel industry. The women who oversaw and labored within these brothels were economic agents surviving and thriving in an urban world hostile to their presence. With the rise of urban leisure industries and policing practices that spelled the end of sex establishments, the industry survived for only a few decades. Yet, even within this brief period, brothels and their residents altered the geographies, economy, and policies of Baltimore in profound ways. Hemphill's critical narrative of gender and labor shows how sexual commerce and debates over its regulation shaped an American city.

KATIE M. HEMPHILL is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Arizona.

# Bawdy City

*Commercial Sex and Regulation in Baltimore,  
1790–1915*

KATIE M. HEMPHILL

*University of Arizona*



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*For my parents,  
Kim and Susan Hemphill,  
who almost certainly wish this book was about something else.*

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Abbreviations

AMR	Alms-House Medical Records, Maryland Historical Society
BAAB	Baltimore Almshouse Admissions Book, Maryland Historical Society
BCC	Baltimore City Court (Dockets and Minutes), Maryland State Archives
BCCC	Baltimore City Criminal Court (Criminal Dockets), Maryland State Archives
BCCOTGD	Baltimore County Court of Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery (Dockets and Minutes), Maryland State Archives
BCoRW	Baltimore County Register of Wills, Maryland State Archives
BCRW	Baltimore City Register of Wills, Maryland State Archives
MVC	Maryland Vice Commission
MVCR	Maryland Vice Commission Report, Enoch Pratt Library