

Public Abstract

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This dissertation offers a provocative reassessment of Billy Sunday and his big-tent revivals in the Progressive Era. Departing from the dominant fundamentalist caricature of the evangelist, it argues that Sunday and his team helped create modern America. By embracing progressivism, the bureaucratic ethos, women's liberation, and the culture of consumption, they created a revival program that adapted a once-frontier tradition to America's largest cities and made revivalism part of the urban-industrial experience. This project, then, is not simply a biography of Billy Sunday. It is the story of his revival team, especially the women in it, and how revivalism became an agent of cultural transformation that deepened the hold of a new social order.