“Guarding Innocence”: Age of Consent, Gender, and Progressivism

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ABSTRACT

This paper details the age of consent reform efforts of American suffragists, Women’s Christian Temperance Union members, and social hygienists. These reformers worked together in pursuit of their common goal of raising the sexual age of consent laws, but they disagreed on many other aspects of the campaign, especially about whether women should be protected or freed by the law.