

**WIVES, WIDOWS, AND SINGLEWOMEN:  
WORKING WOMEN AT LONDON'S  
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FAIRS**

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*Eighteenth-century city officials and social commentators targeted London fairs as disorderly institutions that interfered with "true" commerce. Critics used gendered imagery to describe the evils of fairs, and unruly women were central to these descriptions. Women faced increasing criticism of their presence at fairs, but they continued to work there in large numbers—many in prominent positions and usually in the same capacities as men. At all levels, women were visible participants in these seasonal festivities.*

In Edward Ward's satirical periodical piece *The London Spy* (1698–1700), the two main characters visit London's well-known and frequently satirized Bartholomew Fair. While there, one of the main characters spies a helpless young woman "labouring in the Crowd, like a *Fly* in a *Cobweb*." Compelled to protect this seemingly vulnerable woman, the protagonist escorts her out of the crowd, defending her from "the rude Squeezes and Jostles of the careless Multitude."<sup>1</sup> Only after safely guiding her from the crowd does he realize he has been duped. As the woman "Shuffl'd [back] into the Crowd," he discovers the extent of her ploy—using her femininity as a decoy, this woman had rewarded the protagonist's "civility" by picking his pocket. Embarrassed by his "over-care of [the] Lady, and carelessness of [him]self," he uses this incident to instruct his companion about the dangers of women in Bartholomew Fair. One had to be as mindful of these ladies and their unpredictable nature "as Country people are of Stags in Rutting-time; for their accustomed ways of Rewarding Kindnesses, are either to take something from you, you would unwillingly part with; or give you...that which you would be glad to be without."<sup>2</sup>

When Ward wrote this periodical series, London's city officials were beginning their long campaign to suppress the city's fairs. Seasonal fairs had existed in and around London since the Middle Ages. The most important included St. Bartholomew's Fair, held in West Smithfield; Lady Day, or Southwark, Fair

(held in that borough); and the newer, but just as festive, May Fair. During periods of suppression, satirical literature and prints illustrated the fairs' alleged ill effect on London and on wider England's society and commerce. Central to these depictions were unruly public women who attended or performed at the fairs or provided goods and services there. Debates about the dangers associated with London's fairs often singled out the women who worked the fairs as most representative of the broader threat of seasonal commerce: to social critics, these women's behavior embodied disorder. Yet legal efforts to restrict urban festivity and the popular literature and prints featuring unruly female characters had little impact on women's work at fairs during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>3</sup> Women were central to the operation of businesses connected to the fairs—wives, widows, and singlewomen managed or performed in strolling companies, operated fair booths, prepared or sold food, and kept inns.

City officials considered London fairs outdated seasonal markets and of little value in a commercial city offering increasing year-round availability of all types of goods, services, and entertainments. Festivity interfered with working men's productivity, morality, and financial security. Regulating gender order in public, or "social," spaces was of vital concern to middling men and city officials interested in policing and reforming their city and enforcing orderly commerce.<sup>4</sup> Their zeal may have been linked to their perception of fairs as spaces for female labor.<sup>5</sup> Early modern European work conditions had changed since the 1500s. As occupations became more specialized, new notions of gender-divisions of labor emerged. The medieval craft system under which masters trained journeymen apprentices declined and in its place emerged a guild system made up of wage laborers. With the passing of the apprentice system and increased competition among journeymen for wages, women were slowly excluded from work opportunities in guilds.<sup>6</sup> Though they found fewer opportunities within the guild system, women continued to find work in areas that were an extension of their work at home, domestic service, for example, or selling household products at urban markets or fairs.<sup>7</sup> Many times income from fairs contributed to a family economy, but such a space provided job opportunities for singlewomen as well.<sup>8</sup>

Women who sold goods at markets were "visible, talkative, and competent" laborers, who, though they worked in an arena tied to their household labor, challenged notions of what was "female work."<sup>9</sup> Working outdoors without the

obvious supervision of husbands or fathers, female fair workers confronted dominant understandings about proper commerce and gendered work roles, which Protestant Europe—a “godly commonwealth”—defined as occurring within male-headed households. In this configuration, women were ideally responsible for running the household while men were responsible for external family affairs.<sup>10</sup>

Not all women worked in the open, however. Women who ran inns and taverns were kept busy by the seasonal influx of fairgoers. Inn keeping, while not as visible an occupation as working in the open spaces of fairs, was a common venue of women’s work and one that was associated with their customary domestic duties. Peter Earle demonstrates that among a sample of working London women, wives who ran businesses devoted to food, drink, and entertainment constituted three-quarters of his total sample.<sup>11</sup> Although early modern English women were increasingly edged out of some occupations and trades, wives and singlewomen remained within the network of businesses and supporting industries associated with London’s many spring and summer fairs. Women’s work was vital to maintaining family-owned businesses during the seasonal peaks associated with fairs, not only in inns or taverns but also in the many shops situated within and surrounding the city spaces that hosted fairs. Wives, daughters, and servants shared in the operation of these early modern businesses: in some, women and men shared equal responsibilities, but in others women either made the primary decisions in the daily operations of businesses that were their husbands’ in name only or operated the companies in their own names.

Wives who worked at fairs with their husbands often represented their businesses to the outside world, revealing the extent to which they, instead of their husbands, actually functioned as managers. Records from London’s central criminal court, the Old Bailey, reveal that both single and married women who ran taverns and inns often testified in lieu of their husbands when their family businesses were involved in court hearings. Elizabeth Davil, for example, “kept a Victualling House” in an area near Bartholomew Fair, and during the fair, held in late August, she took in a large amount of extra income. In retelling how a servant stole from her hidden stash, Davil reveals that she was alone in managing the daily operations of her family’s business. Not only did she oversee her cook and servants, but when her Bartholomew Fair money went missing, she was also in charge of interrogating a servant her son suspected had committed the theft.<sup>12</sup>

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Ann Chapman, who ran an inn near West Smithfield, in the area of Bartholomew Fair, also represented her business at the Old Bailey. It is not clear if she was widowed, but from all appearances, she ran this business alone. Her testimony reveals a second, and illicit, fair industry in which women and their husbands worked in pairs, both at the fair and as thieves. Joseph Forward and his wife rented rooms from Chapman for three months, and during their tenancy they set up a temporary business to sell “gin and Blackpuddings” at Bartholomew Fair. Chapman complained that her new tenants would “come home drunk at all hours,” and were far behind on their rent. The Forwards explained that they were “broke” because a bottle of gin had been stolen from Mrs. Forward at the fair. They would have had money for rent had she been able to sell her drink. Chapman explained to the court how, finally tired of their excuses, she had gone up to the Forwards’ room to issue a warning. On the way up, she met Mrs. Forward leaving her room with a “bundle.” Thinking she was going to “raise a new stock of Gin,” Chapman approached Forward, who countered that his wife was not getting more gin, so he would “fetch her back.” This was merely an alibi for the Forwards’ quick get-a-way. Once they were gone, Chapman realized she was missing a sheet, two candlesticks, and a pair of tongs. She was later informed by Joseph Forward’s brother that the goods were at his house, but Chapman declined to retrieve them because she had heard that “one must not take such things back.”<sup>13</sup> Joseph Forward was acquitted, but Elizabeth Pardoe (the woman who had stolen from Mrs. Davil) was found guilty and put to death. We can only guess how great a role gender and the presence of male witnesses played in these results, but my interest is in demonstrating that married and singlewomen were active in the daily management of one venue of London’s fair industry, and court records provide evidence of women who worked the fairs—from running inns to selling food and drink at small fair booths.

An examination of women’s actual work at fairs cautions us against interpreting cultural representations of female fair workers as evidence that their work spaces constricted during the late seventeenth through the mid-eighteenth centuries.<sup>14</sup> Women who worked at fairs continued their occupations despite negative literary representations and satirical art.<sup>15</sup> Historians agree that fairs were a space in which women were welcome as workers because this type of casual labor usually required little capital and could be done as a supplement to the family economy.<sup>16</sup> However, fair records complicate our understanding of early

modern gender and work and reveal that low-skilled labor was by no means performed solely by women. Though in some cases urban markets were dominated by women, London fair records reveal that large numbers of men joined women as workers participating in this form of part-time, seasonal occupation. Fair records also contest notions of a strict sexual division of labor among the types of jobs men and women undertook at fairs: at late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century fairs, women often worked in managerial positions usually considered “male,” especially as fair booth proprietors.

Women who found work in the open spaces of London’s fairgrounds sold food and drink and goods ranging from trinkets, such as dolls or ribbons, to china. They were also active in the entertainment industry of fairs, working as rope dancers, acrobats, actresses, or singers and even as play booth managers. In short, women worked in the same jobs as men. Of course, many women took advantage of the crowds at fairs and worked as prostitutes or pickpockets. At all levels, women were visible participants in the seasonal festivity of fairs.

While evidence of women’s work as street sellers and itinerate peddlers is scarce, their applications for licenses to “show” (*monstrare*) wares or performances or to sell food or drink at fairs are recorded in surviving rolls from Bartholomew Fair’s Pie Powder Court. These rolls are an untapped resource that sheds new light on women’s working lives in early modern England. Pie Powder courts were held in fairs and markets for the duration of those occasions and had jurisdiction in commercial matters.<sup>17</sup> Until recently, scholars examining London fairs have only had access to the Pie Powder Court records from the late eighteenth century, but these usually list just the last names of those seeking licenses to exhibit goods or shows at the fair. The following discussion is based on the rolls from 1709 to 1732.<sup>18</sup>

Bartholomew Fair’s Pie Powder Court rolls contain very little detail other than brief records of disputes and listings of those who acquired licenses for the fair. The advantage of the earlier rolls is that they record both first and last names of licensees, making it easy to uncover trends such as the numbers of people advertising shows at the fair versus those who actually acquired licenses, as well as percentages of women acquiring licenses to work in the fair. Though later records from Bartholomew Fair lack full names, they do specify which goods or type of entertainment each individual was licensed to show but contain little detail beyond that. Records from the early eighteenth century merely state which type of license each individual purchased:

*pro venditione esculent* (for the sale of food), *pro venditione poculent* (for the sale of drink), *pro venditione gingerbredd*, and, the most common license, *pro venditione monstrare* (to “show” wares or performances).

The Pie Powder Court records provide an important glimpse into the ways in which women participated as legitimate laborers in late early modern London. These records support historiography which argues that large numbers of women in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries supplemented their family income through itinerate work such as selling goods at markets or fairs. They also reveal that at Bartholomew Fair many women sought licenses to sell their goods and services legally. It is not always easy to determine what goods or services these women provided, but sometimes additional information about them is available in other sources. For example, some women who purchased licenses also took out newspaper advertisements in which their entertainment is described.<sup>19</sup> Actresses or play booth managers are particularly easy to locate; however, the trade of the large majority of these women is presently unknown.

That fair traders could evade the legal process of obtaining a license is clear if the names of those who advertised shows are compared with the names of people who obtained licenses. In some cases people were brought into the fair’s court and fined for failing to obtain a proper license.<sup>20</sup> Since it was possible to evade licensing, the Pie Powder Court records are not an entirely precise account of the numbers of men and women who worked at fairs, and we must consider whether these records accurately reflect the number of women. Though such labor required a low level of capital investment, the economic status of these women varied and some could not have afforded fair licenses.<sup>21</sup> The most successful hawkers would have had the expendable capital required to pay the licensing fee for London’s chartered fairs; others may have attempted to circumvent licensing and sell their goods illegally.

Increases and decreases in the numbers of licenses issued at Bartholomew Fairs’ Pie Powder Court coincide with the city’s efforts to limit the fair to the original three days stipulated in its charter. The London Swordbearer’s lease, which entitled him to farm profits from fair licenses, expired in 1708, and city officials saw this as their opportunity to finally restrict the tenure of an occasion they considered a growing nuisance. In this year, London’s Court of Common Council issued an order restricting the fair to its original three days.<sup>22</sup> Low numbers of licenses issued in 1709 (ten) most likely reflect the

city's early vigilance in carrying out this order. By 1715, however, the court was obliged to issue yet another order reminding Londoners of the fair's regulation. In this year, forty-six licenses were issued. The steady increase in licenses issued from 1709 to 1715 reveals the fair's renewed growth. Only seven years after the court's order, the number of licenses issued by Bartholomew Fair's Pie Powder Court had nearly quadrupled. Clearly, enforcement had abated. The prospect of trading for fourteen days instead of three attracted more peddlers and "showmen" to the fair. This increase in licenses occurs also during what Sybil Rosenfeld calls Bartholomew Fair's "theatrical heyday."<sup>23</sup> London's established companies of "strollers" not only continued to present dramatic entertainment at fairs but were joined by actors, actresses, and managers from London's theatres. This influx of "professional" actors eventually declined with the imposition of the 1737 Licensing Act, which limited dramatic (spoken) entertainments to London's patent theatres.<sup>24</sup> However, we are not able to witness the impact of this decline in the records of Bartholomew Fair's Pie Powder Court because existing records end in 1732, only to begin again in 1790.

If we examine the numbers of women who acquired licenses at fairs between 1702 and 1732, even accounting for variations in recordkeeping and bearing in mind evasion of licensing, it is clear that women were consistently present in noticeable numbers. During the 1720s, there was an overall increase in the number of licenses issued, from eighty-five in 1719 to a peak of 145 in 1721. The percentage of licenses issued to women also increased slightly. While 23 percent of the total number of people who sought licenses in 1719 were women, in 1721, 31 percent were women. A peak year for women's seeking licenses was 1721, but from 1720 to 1727, women consistently made up at least 20 percent of those purchasing licenses to trade in Bartholomew Fair. This continued presence of women as peddlers or exhibitors demonstrates that they remained active workers at fairs. The number reveals also, however, that women did not make up the bulk of officially licensed trade at London's fairs.

While many women obviously did find work at urban festivals, it was by no means a venue dominated by working women. Depictions of London fairs that portray dangerous female performers or sellers make these women seem ubiquitous, equating women with this class of work even though it was officially dominated by their male contemporaries. Literary and print depictions of fair disorder hinge on representations of disruptive women

TABLE 1

LICENSES ISSUED IN BARTHOLOMEW FAIR'S PIE POWDER COURT, 1709-1732

YEAR	# ISSUED	# TO WOMEN	% TO WOMEN
1709	10	2	20
1710	15	4	26
1711	18	4	22
1712	17	3	18
1713	29	3	10
1714	45	8	18
1715	46	12	26
1716	52	10	19
1717	10	2	20
1718*			
1719	80	18	23
1720	105	25	24
1721	145	45	31
1722	113	27	24
1723	100	21	21
1724	129	31	24
1725	125	28	22
1726	120	28	23
1727**	70	15	21
1728	19	3	16
1729	28	3	11
1730	37	3	8
1731	39	9	23
1732	25	3	12

\*No record

\*\*This year Thomas Carbonell, English Sword Bearer, and Thomas Elderton, Common Cryer of the City of London, "came in person to this Court and individually petitioned that the aforesaid licences be revoked and monies received for them should be restored, and that no such licenses should be granted again in the future. And in return, of their own free will, they offered and undertook to pay £20 paid annually, revoked the licences and restored the money received for them. And [the Court] also concede that no more licences of this sort would be granted in the future, saving the rights of this liberty."

Source: St. Bartholomew's Fair: Pie Powder Court Rolls, Ref. HB. C6 and C7, Highclere Castle Archive.



because this gendered deployment, backed up by a traditional understanding of women's place in the social and spiritual order, enabled artists and writers to underscore the imminent threat fairs posed to urban order.

One woman who was very successful at fair work was Hannah Lee, who acquired a license to show at Bartholomew Fair nearly every year from 1709 to 1732. Lee was a fair booth proprietor and manager of a London-based company of strolling actors. Her experience working at London's fairs during the 1730s demonstrates that certain occupations made women more susceptible to legal or social sanction, but it also illustrates how one woman continued her business despite notions about women's work at fairs.

Lee originally ran the family business with her mother, Anne Mynns, and assumed the business after her mother's death. These women produced some of the most popular entertainments at fairs, including *The Siege of Troy*, which Mynns commissioned Elkanah Settle to write in 1705. Settle's drolls were, according to the well-known actor Theophilus Gibber, "generally so well contrived, that they exceeded those of their opponents in the same profession."<sup>25</sup> This droll had a typical dramatic narrative, but what made it attractive to audiences was its overabundance of spectacle. Drolls at Lee's booth were always popular, and a number of them were printed and sold at her booth.

Lee had enjoyed success as the proprietor of a fair booth and manager of a strolling acting company. She could not afford, however, to have her business curtailed by social reforming city fathers or members of Parliament. In 1735, the City issued its latest warning regarding the length of fairs and the inappropriateness of play booth entertainment. Their admonishment coincided with the proposal of a bill in Parliament which would curtail strolling companies of actors and impose limits on dramatic entertainments. Lee took action in the face of each threatened regulation, realizing the detrimental impact such legal changes would have on her livelihood. She took her objections to Parliament where, on April 21, 1735, she submitted a petition against the Playhouse Bill. Lee argued that her business and all of the funds she had invested in it were in danger. She estimated that she had put approximately £2000 or above into "Two Booths...Buildings, Cloaths, Scenes, Decorations, and other necessaries." Lee's strolling company had now become "her whole Substance...on which she subsists," and she feared that "being now infirm in Body, and old, she must be ruined, if the Bill should pass into Law."<sup>26</sup> In operating her business, Lee hoped to continue her mother's intention of running a respectable

company, and she argued to Parliament that she presented “innocent and amusing” entertainments that were patronized by many notable people. She also claimed “her and her late Mother’s Companies have always been Nurseries for the greatest Performers that ever acted on the *British Stage*, particularly the celebrated Mr. *Powell* and Mr. *Booth*, as well as great Numbers of the present Actors at the Theatres of *Drury Lane* and *Covent Garden*.”<sup>27</sup> Though Lee’s petition to have her counsel speak against the Bill was rejected, the Bill was eventually withdrawn. Her business was safe from national regulation (at least until the passage of the 1737 Licensing Act), but the obstacle presented by the City remained.

Five months after Hannah Lee petitioned Parliament, her business was interrupted by the City. After issuing their warning that “nuisance booths” would be torn down by bailiffs, officials targeted Lee, who was apparently ignoring this legislation. On September 23, 1735 (three weeks after the fair should have ended), London’s Court of Aldermen and Common Council met and recorded that Mrs. Lee had “erected a Booth in or near Southwark wherin [*sic*] she continues to Act Plays and Interludes in defiance of the law.”<sup>28</sup> It is difficult to imagine that Lee, who had five months earlier petitioned Parliament about the future of her business, was unaware of the City’s latest attempts at legal regulation of fair booths. Perhaps her defiance reveals her belief that this legislation, like many earlier orders, would not be enforced. She may have continued her business three weeks beyond the chartered time allocated to Southwark Fair in previous years, though this year she was aware that no national laws prohibited her dramatic entertainment. Knowingly or not, Lee entered a contestation between local and national authorities. With the apparent sanction of Parliament, she challenged the authority of local officials to limit her business. Here was a woman who had publicly denounced national legislation that would have assisted the City in its efforts to abolish play booth entertainment at fairs. Though her voice was of little consequence to Parliament, city officials would nevertheless have been aware of her participation in petitioning against the Bill.

Lee’s 1735 dismissal of city legislation and continuation of her business were poorly timed. Her appearance in Parliament made her a sitting duck as far as local officials were concerned, but what remains unclear is whether Lee was singled out because of her sex. As a female play booth proprietor, she exemplified the threat to the commercial (and masculine) space London’s officials wanted to create. Not only did she provide entertainment

London's officials called a "growing evil with mischievous consequences," but she did this as a woman.<sup>29</sup> A thriving female play booth proprietor represented a double threat—she was the ultimate temptress, using both femininity and spectacle to lure men away from productive labor. To what extent had visual and literary depictions of unruly women at fairs influenced how city fathers perceived Lee? Though she had indeed run a respectable and popular family business throughout the early eighteenth century, it was during this time that many vivid misogynist depictions of women who worked at fairs—particularly as performers—were produced.

Southwark's bailiff informed on Hannah Lee in late September 1735. Lee was summoned by the court, and, though the record is not clear, her entertainment most likely ceased. While this incident can be read as evidence that certain occupations made women more susceptible to legal or social sanctions, it also demonstrates how one woman continued her business despite notions about women's work at fairs. She was a strong business woman who carried on her mother's business and did so without consideration of or appeal to her gender. There is no evidence that Lee found her gender an impediment to her rights or success as a business owner. She believed her livelihood was worthy of government protection regardless of her being a woman. Lee petitioned Parliament as a business owner, never showing any indication that she believed her status as a woman might hinder her appeal. As a resident and business owner within the jurisdiction of London, she sought to profit from the public demand for entertainment. By flouting city legislation inhibiting her business, she acted like countless other play booth proprietors who also extended their shows long after fairs had ended. Hannah Lee viewed city and Parliamentary legislation, not her gender, as the only impediment to her business.

There is other evidence that women who worked in managerial positions at fairs did not see themselves as participating in a "male" profession. In most cases, these women continued a family-run business. Another Leigh, widow of the play booth proprietor Francis Leigh, continued her husband's business after his death in 1719. In the five years before his death, Leigh had purchased a license to show at Bartholomew Fair in 1714 and had purchased one jointly with Jacob Spiller in 1715.<sup>30</sup> We know his wife continued the partnership with William Bullock that the two men had established in 1717. When Leigh assumed her husband's business in 1719, however, she did not purchase a license (neither did Bullock, that year, though he did in

1720). The expenses related to the death of Francis Leigh may have reduced Leigh's and Bullock's ability to purchase a license. In Bartholomew Fair's Pie Powder Court rolls, it is apparent that both men and women evaded licensing. This gender-neutral aversion to the legal process of obtaining a license makes it difficult to determine whether having access to ready capital influenced decisions to acquire a license and if having excess funds for licenses always related to gender. From the limited evidence pertaining to licensing at Bartholomew Fair in the early eighteenth century, purchasing a license to show at the fair does not appear to have been more likely for male than for female play booth proprietors, though when men ran businesses with their wives, the men seem to have sought the license.

I began with Ned Ward's depiction of the dangerous "black widow" pick-pocket of Bartholomew Fair. The woman described in this passage represents everything London officials feared about women who worked (illicitly, in this case) at fairs. In this and other representations, women who profited from fairs were depicted as dangerous. My evidence suggests that London women who worked at fairs managed to stay in business despite assaults on their character and city officials' new notions of commerce and the city. Women tested the bounds of their representative confinement and found them much more flexible than literary and print depictions suggest. We must consider women's response to misogynist representations of their work or regulatory efforts to curtail their labor. As notions of women's proper urban work space shifted in the early eighteenth century, female fair workers responded to, ignored, or reconfigured themselves in the face of efforts to regulate their available occupations. In the absence of economic conditions that would allow working women to vacate the streets of London, women remained active participants in the city's work force.

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#### NOTES

1. Edward Ward, *The London Spy*, 4th ed. (London: J. How, 1709), in *Marriage, Sex, and the Family in England, 1660–1800*, ed. Randolph Trambach (New York: Garland, 1985), 248.
2. *Ibid.*, 248–49.
3. Michael Roberts discusses attitudes about early modern English working women in his analysis of representations of women in "characters," and pastoral poetry, "'Words they are Women, and Deeds they are Men': Images of Work and Gender in Early Modern England," in *Women and*

*Work in Pre-Industrial England*, ed. Lindsey Charles and Lorna Duffin (Dover, NH: Croom Helm, 1985), 145–51; see also Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992); and Dianne Dugaw, *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry, 1650–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

4. Although the work of scholars such as Michèle Cohen and Peter Borsay focuses primarily on spaces of “polite” leisure, I attempt to broaden the scope of recent work on the gendered regulation of social space to include middling attention to spaces of popular amusement. See Cohen, “Manliness, Effeminacy and the French: Gender and the Construction of National Character in Eighteenth-Century England,” in *English Masculinities, 1660–1800*, ed. Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (New York: Addison Wesley, 1999); Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660–1770* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 37; and Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity, London’s Geographies, 1680–1780* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998).
5. The prevalence of women workers in urban markets is explored in a number of important studies of women’s work in early modern Europe. See, for example, Merry Wiesner, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986).
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Our knowledge of singlewomen’s work at urban markets is limited by archival sources in which it is easiest to find historical evidence of married women’s experiences. Wiesner begins to explore evidence of singlewomen’s work in early modern Germany in “Having Her Own Smoke: Employment and Independence for Singlewomen in Germany, 1400–1750,” in *Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250–1800*, ed. Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 192–216. Here, Wiesner discusses official views of singlewomen who peddled or sold in markets. In Frankfurt, for example, city fathers viewed street selling as a type of poor relief for widows or soldier’s wives, not as an occupation for singlewomen (p. 207).
9. Roberts, “‘Words they are Women, and Deeds they are Men,’” 153.
10. Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 43–47.

See also Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England, 1500–1720* (London: Routledge, 1993). The importance of families in the social order of early modern Germany is explored in Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household—Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Wiesner, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany*; and Heide Wunder, *He is the Sun, She is the Moon: Women in Early Modern Germany*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

11. Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society, and Family Life in London, 1660–1730* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 149.
12. Proceedings of the Old Bailey (September 6, 1732), Ref: t1 7320906-20.
13. *Ibid.* (October 16, 1734), Ref: 117341016-23.
14. Amanda Vickery began a productive interrogation of such categories as “separate spheres” and “domesticity” as these have been interpreted by women’s historians in her “Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women’s History,” *Historical Journal* 36, no. 2 (1993): 383–414, whereas Anna Clark has examined how working class women and men understood and responded to notions of “separate spheres” in *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
15. William Hogarth’s 1733 painting *Southwark Fair*, for example, depicts women as central to the disorder and mayhem of the fair.
16. Ivy Pinchbeck’s discussion of women peddlers remains valuable; *Women Workers and The Industrial Revolution, 1750–1850* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1930; reprint, New York: A. M. Kelley, 1969), 300.
17. The exact origins of the term “Pie Powder” is unknown. Scholars have argued that it comes either from the French for “dusty feet,” because fairs were usually held during the dusty summer months, or from the old French name for a peddler, *pied poldreaux*. Henry Morley, *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair, 1880* (Detroit, MI: Singing Tree Press, 1968), 76–79.
18. These earlier court rolls from Bartholomew Fair’s Pie Powder Court are held by the Earl of Carnarvon at Highclere Castle in Oxfordshire. I am especially indebted to his archivist Jennifer Thorpe for realizing the richness of this historical source and cataloguing the court rolls with the National Register of Archives, and for her transcription of these rolls.
19. The best example is the successful play booth proprietor Hannah Lee.

20. As was Timothy Fielding in Ref. HB C7 (St. Bartholomew's Fair, Middlesex: Pie Powder Court Roll 1723-1732), Membr. 10r.
21. See Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclotching of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and Their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984). Spufford argues that though the government began taxing street traders by the late seventeenth century, many women traded without licenses. See also Anna Clark and Ivy Pinchbeck—both have demonstrated that this occupation was dominated by women. Bridget Hill sees increasing numbers of hawkers in London during the late eighteenth century in *Women, Work, and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).
22. Morley, *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair, 1880*, 297.
23. Sybil Rosenfeld, *The Theatre of the London Fairs in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), ch. 2.
24. *Ibid.*, 44.
25. Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons. *Journals of the House of Commons* (1735, rpt. 1803-13), 470.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. Repertories of the Court of Aldermen, 139, 233.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Ref. HB. C6 (St. Bartholomew's Fair, Middlesex: Pie Powder Court Roll, 1709-22).