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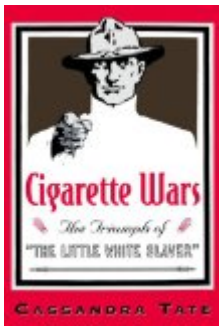
Cassandra Tate. *Cigarette Wars: The Triumph of the Little White Slaver.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. vi + 204 pp. $29.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-511851-3.



Reviewed by Kay Kiefer

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Although this is hardly the first book to chronicle the hazards of smoking and the attempts to stamp out the nasty habit forever, Cassandra Tate's account, from a researcher's point of view, may be the most thorough. The reader may be surprised to learn that a full-fledged anti-smoking crusade (on a par with the admonitions of medical experts in the 1960's and 1970's), spawned in the late nineteenth-century and continued with fervor into the early twentieth century.

The central figure in *Cigarette Wars* is the indomitable Lucy Page Gaston, teacher, writer, lecturer and member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Founder of the Anti-Cigarette League of America, Gaston maintained that cigarette smoking was a dangerous new habit, particularly threatening to the young and thus likely to lead to the use of alcohol and narcotics, so prevalent in the 1890s. The dedicated Gaston's mission attracted the attention and the patronage of like-minded progressives and of such stalwart members of the WCTU as evangelist Dwight Moody and David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University.

In a thought-provoking and interesting style, journalist Cassandra Tate, writes not only of the overwhelming public support for the Anti-Cigarette League of America (between 1890 and 1930 fifteen states enacted laws to ban the sale, manufacture, possession, and use of cigarettes), but of the untimely distancing of the prohibition movement from the anti-cigarette campaign. The WCTU feared that the furor over attacks on smokers was eroding support for the enforcement of prohibition. While they may have disliked cigarettes and tobacco in general, they were willing to ignore them in the interest of what they had already won. "The tobacco habit may be a private and personal bad habit, but it is not in the same class as intoxicating liquor," said Wayne B. Wheeler, general counsel of the anti-saloon league (p. 123). Regrettably, a similar attitude was taken by army doctors and military officials during World War I, who claimed tobacco calmed the weary, sedated the wounded, and distracted the bored. Having been denied access to wine and women, the men

were encouraged to smoke. Thus, sanctioned by both official edict and public consensus, the cigarette, relatively uncommon until the turn of the century, enjoyed the benefits of novelty. Cigarettes had acquired the patina of patriotism.

As the war siphoned support from the anti-cigarette movement, Tate skillfully constructs a new post-war America, one that catapulted cigarettes into the mainstream of American culture through advertising. At the outset of World War II, cigarette advertising was in its heyday. Health-related messages like, "Fatima, truly comfortable to your throat and tongue"(p.142), and articles in the prestigious Journal of American Medicine (JAMA), that claimed only cultists and reformers believed cigarettes were harmful (p.140), underscored the deception of the medical community. While Tate duly notes the laxity of the American Medical Association (AMA), the reader would perhaps be better served had the author made the more obvious connection between the AMA's stance on smoking and the decision to accept cigarette advertising in its medical journal.

Cigarette Wars is chockablock with historical information, including excellent notes and an informative appendix listing state cigarette prohibitive laws. On the down side is the skimpy index, in dire need of more cross-referencing. However, overall the little book gives the reader a more than adequate history of "the little white slaver."

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