

“You have to have some fun to go along with your work”: The Interplay of Race, Class, Gender, and Leisure in the Industrial New South

M. Deborah Bialeschki

Leisure Studies and Recreation Administration,
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Kathryn Lynn Walbert

Department of History, University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill

The purpose of this paper is to explore the leisure experiences of Southern women textile and tobacco workers from 1910 to 1940 as a way to analyze the meaning of recreation to working-class Southerners and the role of leisure in the development of communities of workers. Important differences in recreation and leisure opportunities for Black and White working class women became clear in the analysis. While White women textile worker's recreation was relatively politically uncharged, perhaps posing only a minor challenge to employers' intentions, African American women tobacco workers transformed recreation and leisure experiences into a vehicle for social change based on race and class issues. White workers seemed to have used leisure for its own sake, perhaps gaining some sense of solidarity with one another in the process, while in the Black community, leisure was almost always entwined with struggles for fair treatment in the work place or a political voice.

KEYWORDS: *Race, class, gender, historical analysis, labor movements*

Introduction

Textile and tobacco communities, symbols of the transformation of the Southern economy from a rural to an industrial basis, have proven rich subjects for the study of industrialization, trade unionism, and, perhaps most critically, the reinforcement of race, class, and gender hierarchies in the New South (Janiewski, 1985; Korstad, 1987; Peiss, 1986). While careful study of working-class experience has revealed that forces such as federal policy and economic transformation shaped working people's lives and communities, few leisure researchers or historians have considered the role that leisure has played in the creation of social identity (Cross, 1990; Fischer, 1994; Stokowski, 1990). In fact, the paucity of historical study focused on leisure could reflect the degree to which leisure scholars and historians have failed to look to each other to illuminate their work and intellectual contributions (Burton & Jackson, 1989). The purpose of this paper is to explore the leisure expe-

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riences of Southern women textile and tobacco workers from 1910 to 1940 as a way to analyze the meaning of recreation to working-class Southerners and the role of leisure in the development of communities of workers. By refocusing the historical lens toward a concept of social leisure, we hope to demonstrate the critical need for a leisure-based perspective on history as well as a historical perspective on leisure.

Background

Following the Civil War, distinctions in southern culture and traditions began to emerge. These distinctions essentially separated the slave South (the "Old") from the Southern society that resulted from Reconstruction (the "New" South) (Ayers, 1992; Tindall, 1967; Woodward, 1951). Ayers (1992) described this time in the following way:

The era was crucial in the history of the region and of the nation, a time when Southerners of both races confronted the aftermath of emancipation and the reassertion of control by White Southerners. The Southern economy went through wrenching change; politics witnessed desperate conflict; Blacks and Whites redefined their relationships to one another; farmers launched the largest electoral revolt in American history. Other, more hopeful, things marked these years as well, for they saw the birth of the blues and jazz, the rapid spread of vibrant new denominations, an efflorescence of literature. (p. vii)

The New South faced a staggering economic crisis. Without slave labor upon which the area had relied for so long, how could the South re-establish its economy and compete with the industrial North? The South needed to transform the entire system of labor relations and at the same time, alter the race relations that existed with slavery. The post-Reconstruction years seemed ripe for dramatic change. The New South's economic salvation lay in textiles and tobacco. Somewhat ironically, these two industries largely *reinforced* rather than revolutionized the hierarchies of race, class, and gender inherent in the Old South.

Mills and factories sprang up across the South beginning in the 1870s and continued to multiply until the Great Depression. For example, many mill owners, like Alexander Chatham, owned large plantations prior to the war and amassed a huge fortune from the slave-based agricultural economy. Chatham purchased a small cotton mill on a bend in the Yadkin River in North Carolina in 1877 with a business partner, Thomas Lenoir Gwyn. Over the next fifty years, Chatham built that small concern into the Chatham Manufacturing Company which became a powerful force in the textile industry in both Winston-Salem and Elkin, North Carolina well into the twentieth century (Town of Elkin, 1989). Chatham's example indicates the transition from master of slaves to mill operator often proved an easy one.

Ambitious owners were aided by a widespread impulse to create Southern industrial success. Politicians, bankers, ministers, and other community leaders used their influence to pave the way for mill and factory men to open plants in their towns and invited them into partnerships for the new

Southern dream of textile and tobacco capitalism. Railroads and the improved transportation networks of the late nineteenth century pushed the process along, and the growing demands of industrial cities provided an unprecedented market for Southern-milled cloth and tobacco products (Hall, Leloudis, Korstad, Murphy, Jones & Daly, 1987). Owners had the capital, the community support, the technology, and the market to build the textile and tobacco industries. Their final need was labor.

The South had remained a predominantly agricultural region long after many yeoman farmers of the New England countryside had traded their ploughshares for the industrial timeclock. Even into the 1920s, most Southern states had populations that were at least two-thirds rural (Kirby, 1987). Southerners were used to earning their living from the land and setting their own hours. The transition to factory work did not come easily for Southern workers. The appeal of factory work at the local mill did not pull the majority of workers to the mills and factories; rather they were pushed in that direction by larger, more impersonal economic forces such as the boll weevil attacks and the collapse of farm prices in the 1920s, the Great Depression, and the mechanization of farming (Hall, et al., 1987; Janiewski, 1985; Kirby, 1987).

As the economic crisis deepened, rural people sought out the surrounding towns and cities for work. Janiewski (1985) suggested that intensity and the direction of the flow depended on the prices paid for tobacco and cotton, the cost of land, the level of indebtedness among farmers, and the economic opportunities available. Since agriculture rewarded female labor less than male, these expendable young women were more likely to turn to factory work as a source of income. There they evolved into industrial workers in a complex procedure that reconstructed racial, gender, and class relationships within the factory, the household, and the surrounding community (Janiewski, 1985).

Southern employers often influenced the migrants by actively soliciting particular types of workers for certain kinds of jobs. North Carolina census data from 1910-1930 illustrate this trend. For example, the 1920 data show that White women were dominant in textile factories (laborers = 92%, operatives = 99%) while Black women were concentrated in the tobacco factories (laborers = 79%, operatives = 71%) (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1923, p. 987-989). The work opportunities were more plentiful in textiles, so the percentage also demonstrates greater access to employment for the White women.

As indicated by the census data (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1914, 1923, 1933) and other research (Hall, et al., 1987; Janiewski, 1985; Kirby, 1987; Wood, 1986), Southern women formed the backbone of the initial labor force as many families tried to maintain a farm in the countryside with men staying at home to tend the land while women ventured to the mill to bring home much-needed income. Even after most mill families gave up all but a small garden plot and perhaps a cow and sent all eligible workers into the mills, women's predominance made them central members of the labor

force. These women were not only balancing full-time occupations as paid workers but were also fulfilling roles as housewives and mothers.

With this background in mind, the stage is set to explore the way gender and race became instrumental in establishing social identities within the mill and factory towns. By examining leisure from these women's perspectives, we begin to understand better the role of leisure in reshaping their worlds, developing class consciousness, and building social constructions of community institutions.

Methodology

While historians have explored a number of influences such as welfare capitalism on the formation of working-class communities, few have deeply considered the role that leisure has played in the creation of social identity. Too often, historians focused on cultural meanings or social power relations that emerged from leisure experiences rather than the intrinsic meanings of those experiences. Even those historians who considered leisure in their analyses often failed to take into account the findings of leisure scholars when considering the choices historical actors made or the meanings those actors found in leisure (Hall, et al., 1987; Janiewski, 1985; Kasson, 1978; Korstad, 1987, Peiss, 1986; Rosenzweig, 1983).

Leisure scholars, on the other hand, have addressed the importance of leisure to the building of communities and social identity but seldom within a historical context. Cross (1990) provided a broad social history of leisure but focused on a generalized perspective of leisure activity. While useful as an overview, Cross does not delve into historical foundations of leisure related to factors such as race and class, nor does the book address the complexities of social identities. Recent studies (Stokowski, 1990; Stokowski & Lee, 1991; Wynne, 1990) indicated leisure had an important part to play in the building of social networks and communities, but they have seldom branched out beyond present-day sources for data. For example, Stokowski offered new methods of social network analysis for leisure scholarship. However, her prescriptions for accurate data collection involved surveys or interviews where the researcher carefully controlled both the questions asked and the interpretive methods used while working with currently active leisure participants. Such an approach is certainly useful, but nonetheless, limited. Contemporary social network analyses rule out many historical sources in which the leisure participants might be deceased, the interviews conducted or narratives produced have different research agendas in mind, or incomplete collectible materials are used. For the most part, the accepted methods of leisure research have failed to consider ways in which less controllable historical sources might be used as data for leisure studies. Thus, the two disciplines of history and leisure studies each note the conclusions about the nature and meaning of leisure as suggested by their own methodologies and data sources without venturing into one another's terrain.

Unfortunately, the two disciplines of history and leisure studies have not yet entered into meaningful conversation. A survey of active leisure scholars

indicated that while 60.8% of respondents thought that historical scholarship made minor contributions to the development of leisure and recreation research, only 6.3% believed major contributions had resulted (Burton & Jackson, 1989). The study went on to conclude that while recreation and leisure studies are perceived to have developed on several disciplinary fronts, some fields such as history, have made little, if any, impact. This perception reflects the paucity of historical study focused on leisure, the degree to which leisure scholars have failed to look to historians to illuminate their work, or, most likely, a combination of the two perceptions as neither group has turned to the other for intellectual contributions. This paper is an attempt to provide such an interdisciplinary perspective on the leisure experiences of Southern women textile and tobacco workers.

This research used traditional historical methodology as the basis for data collection and interpretation. The main technique used for the primary sources in this research paper was oral history. Oral histories can fill some of the many gaps that exist in our knowledge of women and allow researchers to create some of the sources we lack (Nasstrom, 1992). These oral histories bring visibility to women often overlooked in traditional written histories as well as capture the memories of women whose cultures favor oral ways of preserving their heritage. Many of the oral history interviews used in this study were undertaken with the aim of recovering previously hidden histories and charting new interpretations of southern women's lives (Nasstrom, 1992). As suggested by Nasstrom:

Oral history begins with the spoken word, generated in a conversation between interviewer and interviewee. In the process of telling their stories, informants define their own identities and suggest the meaning of their lives. (p. vii)

Researchers who use oral histories must consider how time may alter memories. As a general rule, however, recurrent processes and routines of daily life are better remembered than singular events (Nasstrom, 1992). The promise of these Southern oral histories lies in the challenges they present to existing historical interpretations, particularly related to women's factory work as described from a primarily northeastern perspective. "As they define their connections to the past, southern women resist their marginalization in the historical record and encourage us to do likewise" (Nasstrom, 1992, p. ix).

The primary data sources for this research paper were oral histories from the Piedmont Industrialization Project (Series H) held by the Southern Oral History Program Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Oral history interviews were conducted with approximately 300 individuals as a way to focus on the lives of working class men and women in the South. Of these interviews, approximately 150 were with southern women who worked in textile mills and tobacco factories from 1910 to 1940. The interviews were completed between 1976 and 1980 with a focus on the physical and social changes that accompanied the arrival of the industrial revolution in the piedmont South. While recreation and leisure was not a focus of the original study, an examination of the interview data uncovered

an acknowledgment of the role of recreation and leisure in the women's work and private lives. After initially screening for interviews that addressed issues related to recreation and leisure, 50 tapes and transcriptions of women workers were analyzed with the purpose of discovering ways in which women talked about the importance of recreation and leisure in their lives.

Major emergent themes were identified and corroborated by both researchers during the analysis and interpretation of the data. A modified constant comparison was used to maximize credibility through comparison of groups and data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Henderson, 1991). This technique allows the researcher to compare different data sets, literature, and different groups. As is true for all historical analyses, the emergent themes were analyzed and interpreted within the context of multiple secondary sources. These processes were instrumental to understanding the ways in which gender, race, and class operated within work and leisure experiences of working women in the Industrial New South.

Findings

The Work Setting for Women

Tobacco factories and textile mills often grew up alongside one another and came out of similar social and economic trends. Born of the post-Civil War need to revitalize the Southern economy, both laid their foundations squarely on the region's agricultural background and drew their labor force from the increasingly harsh realities of late nineteenth and early twentieth century subsistence and tenant farming. Textiles and tobacco both relied on traditional Southern notions of racial and gender hierarchies to distribute jobs, set pay scales, and divide workers based on their differences (Janiewski, 1985; Kirby, 1987; Newby, 1989). Most importantly for the purposes of this study, both industries relied strongly on the workers most overlooked—women.

While many women worked in the same factories as their fathers, husbands, or sons, they did not do the same kind of work within the mill nor were they compensated equally (Newby, 1989). White women found many work opportunities, but those jobs were firmly rooted in the prevailing gender system. While White men were often assigned high-paying skilled jobs involving heavy physical work or some sort of authority, women found themselves doing repetitive low-skill jobs on machines. As described by one woman textile worker:

They just had the women's jobs and the men's jobs. The men's jobs were for a heavier or stronger person and all. That's the way it was divided up. The spinning room downstairs was mostly women. They had boy doffers and some help like that, and the winding. Of course, they had a boy bring us bobbins and put them in our trough, we called it, for us to wind and like that. (Louise Jones)

These work patterns fit neatly into employers' assumptions that women would not mind the lack of intellectual stimulation and that they would be

temporary workers who would not warrant the long-term investment required for more skilled training (Hall, et al., 1987; Kirby, 1987).

Wages matched the employers' assumptions about the value of sex-typed jobs and the workers who filled them. White women often received wages on a "piece" basis in the spinning or weaving rooms, being paid by the amount produced rather than by the hour or by the week, making their wages far less dependable than men's wages. For example, in an interview with Alice Evitt who was a spinner in the textile mills, she described how she earned twenty-five cents per day as a twelve year old girl in the mills and, by 1915 when she married, she earned \$1.44 per day. In contrast, Martin Lowe began making \$1.00 per day at Poe Mill in Greenville, NC in 1912 and within a few years was making \$2.25 per day grinding cards. While White women had a rare opportunity to be gainfully employed in the textile industry, the options for their employment and their wages still firmly reflected traditional gender ideals and role expectations (Wood, 1986).

The heavily mechanized textile industry drew almost exclusively White women into its labor force to run its expensive machinery (e.g., U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1914, 1923, 1933). Only a few Black women were ever employed by the mills, and they worked primarily as cleaning women (Hall, et al., 1987; Newby, 1989). However, the tobacco factories were a different situation. Tobacco processing relied on hot, dusty hand-work that was both repetitive and physically taxing, so the work appealed to few people. Not surprisingly, this work was reserved for African Americans, especially Black women since this group was perceived as lowest on the Southern social ladder (Janiewski, 1985). Kirby (1987) described the Black migration to tobacco towns in this way:

Migrants settled into crowded, established Black neighborhoods, where there was little or no room for gardens, livestock, or the other requisites of living at home. The warehouses and factories employed men and women of both races and rigorously discriminated against Blacks. They might load boxes or baskets of tobacco, sweep floors, sort tobacco, or work as 'stemmers,' performing the dirty, tedious task of stripping leaves from stems at the beginning of the manufacturing process. (p. 288)

The tobacco industry had its cleaner jobs, such as machine operation in the cigarette plant or the supervision of other workers, but those jobs went to White workers (primarily men) who were paid better wages for their efforts. Black men, in contrast, moved tobacco and worked in the casing and cutting departments where the work required heavy lifting and often posed risks to personal safety. African American women tended to work in stemming, stripping the leaves from the stems of goldleaf tobacco by hand and were paid by quantity rather than an hourly or annual wage (Kirby, 1987; Korstad, 1987).

The work settings of the textile mills and tobacco factories provide an ideal illustration of the dismantling of the structures erected by Reconstruction Radicals after the Civil War to protect the civil and other rights of Black

people (Newby, 1989). The mill owners replaced the protective structures with an elaborate system of White supremacy that rested on the cornerstones of segregation and disfranchisement. "The system incorporated rigid barriers of social separation between the races, and a spreading segmentation of labor markets that reserved more and more jobs exclusively for Whites or Blacks. The social and political aspects of this system were written into [Jim Crow] law in the quarter century after 1890" (Newby, 1989, p. 463).

As illustrated by the preceding descriptions, the work settings for White and Black women were different from the beginning. Race as well as gender dictated the jobs available and their environments. Nevertheless, while the women in the mills and factories performed demanding and dangerous jobs for poor compensation, they formed the backbone of their respective industries (Hall, et al., 1987; Janiewski, 1985). Their initial willingness to come off the farms before their husbands and brothers and enter the industrial economy meant that they enjoyed a firm foothold in the factory and mill settings. Thus, these women workers who were considered less valuable than men for farm labor became the critical component to production in the burgeoning textile and tobacco industries.

Recreation in the New South Textile Communities

The White women textile workers had little trouble finding recreational activities in the mill towns of the South. Along with the mill housing, health care, educational programs, stores, and insurance that welfare capitalists offered in an effort to secure worker loyalty, many mills sponsored recreational activities for their workers. These mill-sponsored recreation programs included bands, parties, and sports teams. Louise Jones, one of several women who talked about athletic teams sponsored by the company, mentioned "they had real good ball teams here then. And ooh, I used to go and just holler my head off." Myrtle Cleveland recalled that the mill "would have street cars to come, and they would take all the children on a picnic... on some Fourth of Julys, they would have an all day outing and give away prizes and things." Alice Hardin also recalled that "if I got a band together and wanted to play at something or other, why, they'd usually give you a little something." Another woman millhand, Pauline Griffith, recalled that the mill sponsored a picnic "every Fourth of July- they'd have a big to-do over there with fire-crackers. They'd have a greasy pig and baseball game over there." She also remembered:

(The mill) used to have a playground, they called it, up here in the mill yard. And they had swings. They had different things, you know, to enjoy. And they would have things up there, you know, for the people to go and be amused and enjoy.

Tessie Dyer and Mamie Shue both recalled attending a cooking club sponsored by the mill:

We'd (the club) meet every Tuesday night or every Thursday night, so we'd used to meet on Thursday night. We was asked to cook [the band] a supper,

so we did. They had one that they were going to ask to eat supper with the band boys that night. I never will forget that. They called my name out, and I just almost fell in the floor! (Tessie Beatrice Helms Dyer)

The mill, they would sponsor it. And they had a house back down—built way back here, and had it fixed up for that. And we'd go down there, they'd teach us to cook. And we'd have dances down there... We just went for the fun of it. We didn't care nothing about cooking... But we had a good time. (Mamie Shue)

As a part of the welfare capitalist traditional, mill owners hoped these inexpensive recreational activities would instill in their workers a sense of loyalty and pride in the company, and would translate into increased profits and decreased labor troubles. However, there was no evidence that the women workers saw it that way. Instead, they took from the opportunities the intrinsic value that they could and ignored the remainder of the message (Hall, et al., 1987).

Even when attending events not sponsored by companies, the interview data supported the idea that White mill women often participated in leisure activities together, most notably at church. Church was an important outlet for not only Christian teachings and charity, but also recreation. Churches, like other activities and institutions, were often company-sponsored, and mill workers were strongly encouraged to attend. Myrtle Cleveland remembered, "Every time the doors opened, we were there. We were brought up in the church." Pauline Griffith recalled that after work, she would teach Bible classes, "seven 'til nine. I had forty juniors myself. I gave out more certificates. Over half the Bible school was in my class." Several other women talked about the importance of church activities:

We finally organized a class, you know, later on in years, the young ladies, the girls and married women had a class... And I mean maybe there was seven or eight members of that class, you know, all the same age, and we were really close together. And we loved our Sunday school and our Sunday school class and our Sunday school teacher and all, always. We loved going to church.... And sometimes the different churches would gather at one church for a song festival to carry dinner and have a dinner on the grounds. And our church would go to picnics sometimes. I know we went to Raleigh one time. We had to go by train. (Louise Rigsbee Jones)

We didn't have any recreation, only what the church put out, because we wasn't allowed to go just anywhere. Some people may not have been as strict on their children, but my father and them did. Anything the church had to do, parties and all, we got to go to, but we wasn't allowed to go to dances. (Mary Thompson)

Church work for many mill women served as an outlet for religious expression and as a form of leisure. The emphasis that the women placed on the *people* in their congregations and the group activities seemed to indicate a social form of leisure that enabled workers to enjoy one another's company outside work. While the church may have served a recreational purpose, it did not serve a politically active one (e.g. Hall, et al., 1987). Due to the fact that many ministers and churches were wholly funded by the mill

owners, they both stood to lose if workers began to organize along class lines for social change. Alice Hardin remembered that the mill "helped build the church and give them the land it's built on."

Outside church, women textile workers found other ways of spending their free time. Some, like Alice Hardin, devoted that time to their children. She recalled going to the PTA:

I was in the grammar schools. I helped out in them all the time. I was grade mother, and if I could help the teachers any way, I did, and I went with them on parties with the children and helped with them, and the PTAs and everything. I was always there.

Some White women workers also found recreation and leisure in the home and during home-centered social occasions such as playing music or quilting. Ethel Marshall Faucette recalled, "sometimes half a dozen different families might gather to sing and listen to music at one worker's house." Louise Jones described the importance of visiting neighbors at home:

People always got along good together here, and they thought well of one another because there were good people here most of the time. And we would all visit one another. They worked all day; they visited more at night. We called it going and staying till bedtime with neighbors.

The social element of leisure that was evident in church work was also clear here. Women, more so than men, chose to use their leisure time in their children's schools or in home-centered activities. While these leisure activities may have had some intrinsic value, they also provided a specific benefit to the family and reinforced gender roles.

These women textile workers may have had more opportunities to participate in their own recreation and leisure pursuits because of a common practice of hiring African American domestic workers to help out in the home and with the children (e.g., Janiewski, 1985; Kirby, 1987). Black women comprised more than 86% of all domestic workers (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1923), and White women mill workers often made sufficient weekly cash to hire Black women to do their washing and provide childcare while they worked or engaged in other activities (Kirby, 1987). Janiewski (1985) suggested one possible insight for this phenomenon:

The household supplied one of the few acceptable areas for encounters between women of different races: the Black maid or washerwoman relieved her female White employer (possibly a wage-earner like herself but better paid) from some burdens of housework. White women thus shared the privilege of exploiting Black labor. (pp. 128-129)

Myrtle Cleveland recalled that her mother, who also worked in the mills, "always had a colored person do the washing." Several of the women interviewed talked about the help of Black women domestic workers with household chores:

We had a colored woman that done the wash. Well, we'd pay her the last of the week. And sometimes momma pay her when she done it, so she wouldn't have to come back. They had a big wash place right down here at this old

poplar tree. Maybe there'd be five or six colored people down there washing clothes. (Ethel Faucette)

Well, here in this area domestics have always been Black, because there never were any Whites... We didn't have one that stayed all that long a time. We had the cook that stayed at home all the time. Then we had a laundry woman or washer woman as she was called then. We'd have to take the laundry to her and go get it. She lived over in what we called the Negro section. (Grace Moore Maynard)

Many of the women also talked about the importance of Black women's help with childcare:

Old Aunt Mary Hemphill. She was a Black lady. I never will forget that old soul. She was just like one of the family. She stayed with me all during the children's small years, and after they got up big enough to look after theirself, why, she quit, she got so old. She looked after all the children, done the washing and ironing, cooking, cleaning the house, and never charged me but five dollars a week the whole time. You know, they're kind of close-mouthed about themselves and all their generations. But she was a fine old Black lady, I'm telling you. (Ada Mae Mosely Wilson)

But I know when Mama was working she had a colored lady to stay with us, and she stayed nights. And then when I went to work (on the night shift), I had a colored girl to stay with my children, and she stayed nights, too. She had a baby, and she wanted to know what she could do with the baby. I said, 'Bring it on with you.' I needed somebody to stay, and she stayed nights. She'd go home on weekends. She'd be there in the mornings to start fixing the breakfast and all. That was before I went on the first shift... I think about some people talking about colored people doing this and doing that and the other. Well, why did they used to.... They trusted them with the most precious thing in the world, with their children. (Stella Foust Carden)

With the help of these part-time domestic workers, many of the White women were able to maintain their jobs at the mills without neglecting family and household responsibilities. Black women domestic workers indirectly as well as directly freed White women to pursue their own work and leisure interests as well as be involved in community volunteer and social events. An obvious function of racial hierarchy, working class White women enjoyed the socially accepted luxury of hired help from women in the Black community.

When women got together for social activities, they were likely employees of only one particular mill. As most White women workers lived in mill housing, the opportunities for friendships and activities outside the worker community were extremely limited. The women lived in the mill villages, worked in the mills, and developed ties with other women based on shared experiences. Kinship found in the mill towns is evidenced in this quote:

You grew up here and you knew everybody. It had its bad points. We didn't make too much money. I know my father didn't. But like I said, it was kind of one big family, and we all hung together and survived. (Hoyle McCorkle)

Women workers also managed to interject their own ideas about leisure into the workplace. They recalled trying to make the job more fun by playing

practical jokes or having time to visit with the other women workers. The following quotes illustrate these ideas:

We was just playing like, and we was all young, right in there. You have to have some fun as you go along with your work, to make it interesting. (Pauline Griffith)

Sometimes they'd get under the spinnin' frame and reach under there and get a-hold of somebody's dress and jerk 'em. Make 'em think the machine'd had 'em. They'd do that. Try to scare them. But they was good. They didn't mean no harm—havin' fun. Sometimes there at Concord, back then, they'd play Black Jack... We'd get to our spinnin', get all our ends up, and all our stuff done on the frames. We'd go out there and play... Then we'd have to jump up and run and catch up with our work, and go back and play a little more. (Alice Parker Evitt)

Yes, it was noisy, but we learned to talk. And when you're used to the noise, you can understand better. Somebody going in wasn't used to it, you'd have to talk louder to them. We'd have to talk louder than just natural talking... Yes, we had the privilege of speaking to anyone in there if we wanted to. If we were on up through the spinning room, we could stop and speak to different ones that were working up there if we wanted to, just so it didn't affect our work... I think that's one reason people liked to work there, even though they didn't pay as good wages here as they did in some other places. (Louise Jones)

Several women recalled that they also would sing on the job:

Yeah, they'd sing, but you couldn't hear 'em [because of the machines]. You knowed they was doing something, you'd see their mouth working... [T]hey'd sing sacred songs and they would sing jazz. (Ethel Faucette)

People used to sing all the time.... I used to sing all the time. When I was working, I'd just sit there and just sing, sing... at work we'd sing by ourself, because we couldn't hardly sing together, not any job. But just sit there and sing and work. (Mary Thompson)

Just as their refusal to accept the welfare capitalist message of mill recreation indicated the women's insistence on a leisure meaning of their own, the singing and socializing on the job stated their demand that some of the company's time should also be their own to be used as *they* saw fit.

In summary, the White women managed to find time for leisure activities at work, after hours, or on days off despite the long hours worked in the textile mills. Their activities often reflected family-oriented values and were seldom outside the social paradigm. White women in the mills had the opportunity to participate more than they would have in other contexts due to the labor of hired African American domestic help. Mill managers hoped that recreation activities would encourage company loyalty and create a docile, easily-controlled workforce. However, the women seemed to chose to focus on the intrinsic, not extrinsic, values of their activities. They took away cherished memories of friendships and enjoyment. By experiencing leisure in this company-dominated setting, women managed to meld their recreation, work, family, interpersonal, and religious lives. Leisure experience be-

came a relief from work but was almost entirely constructed through a work-place context.

Recreation in the New South Tobacco Communities

African American women tobacco workers had more limited opportunities for leisure than their White counterparts in the textile mills. One of the largest factors was the residential segregation that marked the estrangement between the two racial groups. Black and White workers shared no common meeting places such as churches, schools, clubhouses, parks, or athletic facilities (Janiewski, 1985, p. 140). Their jobs paid less than textile jobs or the tobacco jobs held by their White co-workers and often left them in desperate economic straits that required them to take on additional employment to make ends meet (Janiewski, 1985; Wood, 1986). Moreover, White tobacco factory owners felt no compulsion to offer services, including recreation services, to their African American employees. While the owners had a vested interest in maintaining the loyalty of White workers in order to keep a happy, stable labor force that reinforced cross-class ties of the New South White dominance, they had no such reason to cater to their Black workforce. Hallie Caesar, a stemmer for R.J. Reynolds and Liggett Myers recalled that "Liggett Myers didn't do too much for the people- no more than work them and pay them."

Unlike White textile mill workers, tobacco employees did not generally live in housing owned by their companies, probably due to the large numbers of African American workers whom Southern industrialists were disinclined to assist (Korstad, 1987; Newby, 1989). The lack of close living quarters, however, did not mean that Black women tobacco workers found no sense of community amongst themselves. The bond of poverty created cohesion among many neighborhoods, sometimes extending across the color line, but usually stopping at the borders of segregated housing areas. Margaret Turner, a worker for American Tobacco, recalled:

We lived as neighbors. We knew everybody in the community, all the way up the street, everybody. Every house, you could say 'Well, this family lives here; this family lives here.'

In tobacco towns like Durham and Winston-Salem, most residents of Black communities were employees of one of the factories although not always the same one. Margaret Turner stated, "most of the people that lived in the community where I lived worked in the tobacco factories. That was the only thing that a Black person had to turn to." Dora Scott Miller recalled that in her Durham community "quite a few was employed in tobacco," but there were also "people working out"—maids and other types of domestic workers. These neighborhoods provided a source of friendship and community among the residents regardless of their residents' source of employment.

Black women frequently found themselves to be the most abused members in the tobacco factories. Margaret Holmes Turner recalled that "the

White people were nice to you, because they knew what you come for, and they felt that you was their servant. They used you that way.” Similarly, Dora Scott Miller, a butt machine worker at Liggett Myers, remembered one foreman who would “get on top of that machine and watch you, see if you was workin’ all right and holler down and curse... That’s what we had to undergo.” Ruby Jones commented that “the foremen didn’t respect you unless you done their dirty work or went with them.” Annie Mack Barbee subtly referred to the fact that Black women were frequently subjected to unwanted sexual advances or sexual humor in the workplace in this quote:

They’d laugh and play them old nasty jokes and here they go. And I would never laugh. Someone’d say you so solemn. I said ‘I’m up here to work.’

Despite their working and living conditions, Black women managed to find their own recreation on the job as well as in their communities. Working together in hot, dusty stemmeries, African American women forged fast friendships on the job. Blanche Scott, a stemmer, recalled:

We would have a lot of fun together. We tried to keep it so the bossman couldn’t see it, but we just got along nice together. We formed a little club. Just like your birthday’s in one month, maybe in December, when your birthday come, all of us that worked together, we’d go in and give so much money to you. Either we’d take the money and go and buy you a gift. It would make you feel very good.

Dora Scott Miller remembered when workers had problems in the home, they could turn to their network of coworkers for support: “we always did that. We’d always visit each other, and we had very close communication with each other like that.” Spending time on the job celebrating birthdays or chatting with friends surely helped to alleviate the boredom and weariness associated with a long day of stemming tobacco. In the absence of company-sponsored social activities, such informal moments set aside for leisure surely made a tremendous difference in the quality of life on the job.

Music played a critical role in the leisure experiences of African American women tobacco workers, both on the job and outside the work place. Hallie Caesar remembered:

We would sing every day in the factory. Sometimes they would sing in the morning when they was working, and they’d sing in the evening while they was working... contests were held among the different lines—they’d just sing... Everybody would join in the singing. It was all Christian music and they didn’t sing blues.

Black women workers also sang on their lunch break outside the cafeteria. Company officials frequently encouraged these activities. Caesar remembered that “The foremen loved the singing. They’d gather around and listen” to the Christian music workers sang.

In his recent research on music in New South Atlanta, Campbell (1995) suggested that Whites frequently listened to the music of African Americans at various music festivals, revivals, and other occasions. While they may have

commented favorably on a variety of Black music, their primary interest was in the singing of spirituals and traditional hymns representative of songs sung by slaves prior to emancipation. By showing such obvious preference for music associated with African Americans' enslaved past, Whites consciously or subconsciously sought to reaffirm their role as "master" and reaffirm White dominance in the context of freedom (Campbell, 1995). For African American musicians, this music obviously had different, less power-laden meanings, and workers' interest in music (both spiritual and secular) often carried over outside the White-dominated workplace, as families listened to quartet records and choirs and heard music at church.

Within the African American community, inexpensive forms of recreation spontaneously sprang up on the weekends and after working hours. Excluded from recreational services offered to Whites and with little money for entertainment, Black women and men workers formed what Korstad (1987) termed a "separate and meaningful world" where their recreational and spiritual needs could be met. Margaret Turner remembered that in Durham in the 1920s and 1930s:

[W]e did have people that drank a lot during that time, and they would get dressed up on Saturday night and go out. They'd come down the street singing the blues and different things like that. They were going to see the girls. They just had a good time. But they were nice people.

Occasionally, people would get together at one of the few Black-owned movie theaters where they wouldn't have to sit in a balcony or they organized baseball teams in the neighborhood. While tobacco workers exercised great creativity and initiative in developing these informal networks for social activities, they could not, ultimately, watch a film from the main floor of the best White-owned theaters in town, could not eat in many Southern restaurants, and could not hope that their interest in sport might one day lead to a professional contract (Hall, et al., 1987). Their opportunities for leisure activities as individuals were, at best, circumscribed by the racial dynamics of the New South.

As it did for economics, politics, and other arenas of social life, the African American church formed the backbone of Black women workers' leisure experiences (e.g., Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996; Higginbotham, 1993). Unlike textile communities where the group of people gathered for leisure activities was almost entirely composed of workers from a single company who lived, worked, and prayed together, African Americans frequently participated in leisure activities in race- and class-based, but not company-specific, groups at church. With few public or private recreation facilities and virtually no company sponsored activities available, the church was the natural location for recreational activities that required complex organization or involved large numbers of people. For example, the African American neighborhood in Winston-Salem known as "Monkey Bottom", had no public recreational facilities, and beer gardens formed the only commercial form of entertainment. The community did, however, boast

35 Black churches (Korstad, 1987). The choirs, picnics, Bible and self-help classes, and the fellowship of Christianity offered at church were more appealing ways for Black women to spend their time rather than go downtown where they were denied a seat at the local lunch counter or refused service in a retail shop. As stated by Margaret Holmes Turner:

(the church) was the only place we could go and feel free, free at home... We'd shine up those shoes and get everything ready to dress up and go to church.

In the churches, Black women could not only relax and enjoy themselves but could also do so in an environment in which they would not be subject to the racist realities of the larger community. The church became a center for a wide variety of activities and activism, but importantly, the church became a vehicle for pride in the African American community.

For these African American women, recreation and leisure perhaps most strongly represented something that Whites could *not* appropriate. African Americans could be denied access to higher education, good jobs, and the power of the ballot box, but they could not be denied the meanings they derived from their own communities' spiritual and recreational activities. The institutions within the Black community provided strong ties upon which to build group identity. Not only did these bonds arise from poverty, but they were strengthened with shared experiences of racism, segregation, and religion and were solidified through the social interactions in recreation and leisure experiences.

Union Organizing in the New South

Efforts to organize and promote unions were also linked to the recreation and leisure lives of the women in the mills and factories. A closer look at the early organizing activities showed the involvement of women as well as ties to their leisure. Organizing efforts often centered on existing social structures such as the church or social activities as a way to gain entry and establish trust. While unionization largely failed in the New South, the following description of organizing efforts illustrates interesting relationships between race, gender and leisure.

The textile and tobacco industries experienced crises in labor relations in the first half of the twentieth century. The textile industry was wracked by strikes in 1929 and 1934 in response to employers' desires to speed up work while decreasing wages. The strikes, though, were not universal and many workers stayed out of what they perceived to be trouble caused by outsiders. Pauline Griffith remembered that a bunch of strangers came in to organize a union at Judson Mills and that "it was a bunch that really meant business... They were really rough." Many women textile workers believed that the mill owners had their best interests at heart and were hesitant to oppose them in hopes that their loyalty might be rewarded later on. Ultimately, the textile unions failed to deliver on their promises and workers wound up suffering defeat for their efforts (Hall, et al., 1987).

Trade unionism in the tobacco industry was often more militant and widespread. While White workers might have been skeptical of outsiders, Black workers had little reason to trust the White "insiders" with power in their workplaces and had nothing to lose by listening to national union or government agents (Korstad, 1987). Southern activists and national or international union leaders provided tobacco workers with a wealth of experience, strategies for union success, and intellectual tools to help them enact change. These leaders were welcomed with open arms by the African American community.

As tobacco unionism swept the South, Black women often stepped forward into leadership roles. As workers with the most complaints of poor treatment, low wages, and disrespect, African American women had the least to lose from unionization and made natural union leaders (Korstad, 1987). While men held some of the most powerful positions in the unions, women served as shop stewards and organizers, playing an instrumental role in the trade union movement.

Initially, the unions relied on the leadership, songs, prayers, and associations of the Black church in their efforts to organize tobacco workers. Margaret Turner remarked that an all-Black union at American Tobacco was beneficial to workers and mentioned that "we dressed up like we were going to church"—a connection symbolic of the seriousness with which workers approached their unionism and the meaning it had for them. When union groups got together, they frequently started with a religious song or a prayer. At R.J. Reynolds in Winston-Salem, the union theme song became "Do Lord, Remember Me," and the hymn was frequently led by Theodosia Simpson, church leader and union organizer. Velma Hopkins, a Reynolds worker and union member, recalled that "We always started off with a song and a prayer. We had a real prayer meeting going because we had some good Christian women on the committee."

Union organizers also drew upon the recognition within the Black community of the value of recreation facilities and opportunities often provided to the White mill workers. Local 22 at R.J. Reynolds provided a good example of this concern when Mabel Jessup wrote to the Winston Salem Journal and argued:

As for the... recreational centers, we deserve them. Have not the colored people of Winston-Salem helped to make R.J. Tobacco Reynolds Company the great manufacturing plant that it is today? Have not many of our people worked long hours for low wages, and for many years before R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company used their money for any such humanitarian purpose? (Korstad, 1987, p. 127)

Workers struck for higher wages, better benefits, and decent treatment in the workplace, but it is significant that among their demands was a plea for construction of recreational facilities for Black working-class communities. Interestingly, Whites responded to Black trade unionism with threats to what few recreational facilities the African American community did have. One advertisement (Korstad, 1987, p. 151) cautioned union members:

The Hospitals, the Schools, the Churches, the playgrounds, the Health Department, and the recreational facilities, the best in the entire South, are not the result of any trading—not the result of any demands... Will this growth continue?... It's up to you.

The unions not only recognized the importance of leisure in their demands, but their leaders also realized the importance of recreational activities to recruitment and morale, perhaps learning that lesson from the African American churches with which they worked. The union hall served as a supplement to the church in a number of ways including offering voter registration services, educational programs, and self-help classes as well as a recreational center. The library stocked not only labor journals and books on Black history but also novels, biographies, and poetry in an attempt to make the union a place where employees would want to spend their free time after a long day's work (Korstad, 1987). At R.J. Reynolds, organizers made records available that combined the inspiration of Negro spirituals with the message of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), enabling the union to reach workers who were not literate and bridge the sacred world of the church and the secular world of the union.

Union leaders brought in outside performers to further draw upon workers' love of musical entertainment. Paul Robeson, a famous African American entertainer, sang for the union in June of 1947 in an effort to raise awareness and foster support (Korstad, 1987). While White foremen may have loved to hear African American workers sing spirituals that harkened back to the days of slaves and masters, Robeson tried to elevate Black culture and place the spirituals on the same cultural plane as the classical works he also sang. Korstad argued that the use of music drew people into the union who, while they felt right at home singing in a church choir, might have been hesitant to speak up at a union meeting. By superimposing class consciousness and trade unionism over a musical tradition that was a large part of the recreational and spiritual life of many workers and by celebrating that tradition as a superior cultural form, the union in Winston-Salem managed to craft a particularly powerful movement.

Interestingly, unions also relied on union hall recreation to draw in the support of the White workers. A predominantly Black union in Winston-Salem sponsored segregated social activities, a recreational center, and dances for White workers (Korstad, 1987). African American workers realized their dues were used to pay for non-dues-paying Whites to enjoy these activities, but they were willing to accept that for the purposes of gaining White support for their movement. By relying on established networks for social change and taking on some of the church's roles as educator, political voice, and leisure provider for the Black community, unions engaged African American support. Later, with the help of segregated dances and the provision of a recreational space, the unions gained a foothold in the White community as well (Korstad, 1987).

Effects of Union Activities

Although the union at R.J. Reynolds was ultimately disbanded and unions in other factories failed due to mechanization of factories, accusations of communism, or the vigilance of White opposition, some gains were won. While Whites continued to make every effort to squelch Black political and economic power, the White community began to take more seriously the race relations problems that plagued their communities. For example, one of the first cases of Whites' new attitude of philanthropy toward the African American community was the construction of a new YMCA-YWCA in 1948 in Winston-Salem with R.J. Reynolds company money (Korstad, 1987). Whites were concerned about juvenile delinquency and the need for moderate Black leaders with whom they could work in future years, and so they had a vested interest in such a facility, while African Americans knew that Black youth needed more outlets for recreation and social interaction. That both the White and Black communities saw this recreation center as a real need, although for very different reasons, attested to the importance of recreation and leisure to leaders of both races. Through recreation, they expected youth would avoid trouble, develop leadership skills, and have a more wholesome transition to young adulthood. Moreover, the fact that the company saw this center as important enough to use as a potential bargaining chip further emphasized the centrality of recreation to the community and its sense of identity.

The leisure community of women tobacco workers was based primarily on race and class and was bound by racial uplift and spiritual life as leisure services also became entwined with church and union work. While tobacco workers shared recreational experiences among themselves, they also sang, danced, and participated in other activities with members of their congregations who did not stem brightleaf for a living, but rather held other jobs in the working class. For all of these African Americans, recreation and leisure perhaps most strongly represented the meanings that they derived from their own communities' spiritual and social sense of identity.

That African Americans, and particularly African American women tobacco workers, chose to layer their leisure experiences with religious, political, or union activism is not surprising. Their time was stretched to the limit by long hours in the factory, possibly a second job, housekeeping, and children who needed care. Dora Scott Miller recalled that by the time she got home, her husband had usually cooked dinner, but she still had to do housework:

[M]aybe I had to wash. Didn't have but a scrubboard, no washing machine and no washerette to go to. I went on that scrubboard and wash my clothes, hang them out.

Blanche Scott remembered working at Liggett Myers, going to beauty school in the evenings, and continuing her work at Mount Vernon Baptist Church,

commenting that "with the help of the Lord, I've got along just fine. You have to put God in the front, you can't do nothing without him." In both the Black churches and the unions, the women workers were often the base of support and exerted key leadership capabilities that included the importance of recreation to quality of life issues.

Conclusion

Important differences in recreation and leisure opportunities for Black and White working class women became clear in the analysis. While White women's recreation was relatively politically uncharged, perhaps posing only a minor challenge to employers' intentions, African American women transformed recreation and leisure experiences into a vehicle for social change based on race and class issues. In textile mill villages, White women had a more limited variety of leisure services made available to them than did their husbands or brothers, and the activities in which they participated were mostly directed toward social activities with family and friends. In the Black community, however, leisure services in a formal sense were often nonexistent outside the church and the union, both of which relied heavily on women's leadership. Therefore, because of women's influence, the activities made available through the church and union were likely to serve the leisure needs of women tobacco workers as well as the men. While White workers seemed to have used leisure for its own sake, perhaps gaining some sense of solidarity with one another in the process, in the Black community leisure was almost always entwined with struggles for fair treatment in the work place, better education, a political voice, or a sense of identity.

Through these experiences, women in both industries managed to make leisure experiences a battleground on which wars over social hierarchies were waged. Although the women textile workers may have enjoyed the company games and social opportunities, recreational activities were not accepted as Trojan horses for management's ideas about absolute company loyalty and maintenance of a docile work force. Moreover, when tobacco unions used recreation based on traditional forms of African American leisure to gather support from Black workers, they mounted a direct challenge to not only class but also racial hierarchies. Women, as primary speakers and organizers, challenged gender conventions that dictated women's submersion in the private sphere.

Union dances and company bands may seem marginal on the surface, but the importance of these activities were clearly wrapped up in the meanings of community and individual identity. By acknowledging how workers used leisure, either for its own sake or for some type of social good such as racial uplift, we gain a sharper understanding of the priorities of individuals and communities; we learn about the integration of work and leisure in a way that we otherwise cannot detect. We also begin to understand the role that leisure has in specific historical moments. Whether it be on the ballfields or dance floors or in the churches or union halls, leisure played a critical

role in working-class identity and challenged the social hierarchies centered on subordination to the White male ruling class. Looking at leisure with historical specificity allows us to better understand the interplay between leisure meaning and larger social circumstances of race, class, and gender. As today's recreation professionals struggle to meet the needs of all members of their communities, some of the answers may come from a better understanding of the roots of social injustices due to race, gender, and class issues. Just as recreation served as a focal point for quality of life in the communities of textile and tobacco workers in the past, we may need to once again recognize the significance and power of recreation to bring about social change needed today.

By analyzing the experiences of women textile and tobacco workers at a particular historical moment, we can draw conclusions to further both disciplines of leisure studies and history. First, one might conclude from the use of leisure as a means to another end that leisure does not have to be intrinsic to be individually fulfilling or valuable. Leisure can be relational not only in the interpersonal sense of textile community supporters but on a larger level of race, class, and gender as participants assign meaning to activities based on the history of their communities or choose to include and exclude individuals on the basis of demographic categories. Finally, leisure can reflect social hierarchies as well as challenge them. Recreation, on the surface, may seem far less dangerous to the social order than political movements or unions, but when layered with broader community needs, can be a similarly effective tool for institution-building and social change. Collaborative efforts between historians and leisure studies researchers are imperative if we are to build a body of knowledge inclusive of the many voices from our past. Ultimately, perhaps the greatest contribution is the recognition of the critical need for a leisure-based perspective on history and an historical foundation for leisure. Historical perspectives will situate much of our understandings of recreation and leisure within historical contexts that not only establish links to our past but provide credibility to the importance of recreation and leisure in the development of social identities. Historical studies focused on emergent social concepts such as race, gender, and class will establish a foundation from which our present day assumptions about recreation and leisure can be examined and expanded. These broader understandings should, in turn, create new models for the future and directions needed for social change efforts by recreation and leisure professionals.

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