

companies are now providing, and several other topics. Paul Bullock, a research economist at UCLA, discussed the increasing use of art and other materials to decorate factory walls as a means of increasing job satisfaction, a development which several speakers from the floor warned against as a new and more sophisticated way of exerting social control over employees. Yank Mojo, former Director of Public Transportation in Aspen, Colorado, presented evidence of similar manipulation occurring in his field. Others linked these fears directly to the need for workers' control in industry.

Altogether, it was an excellent convention.

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SMITH COLLEGE SYMPOSIUM ON THE "NEW LABOR HISTORY" AND THE NEW ENGLAND WORKING CLASS

A small group of scholars gathered at Smith College March 4 through 6, 1979, to participate in a symposium on the "new labor history" and the New England working class. The symposium was organized by Herbert Gutman and Stanley Elkins, and it was sponsored by the Smith History Department and American Studies Program, with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation.

The symposium seemed to have been publicized most widely at Smith. There was little publicity at the other area colleges and no public notice of the conference at all outside of western Massachusetts. This lack of publicity meant that the symposium was in effect closed to interested students of labor from other New England colleges and universities. The fact that the conference was held during the week further limited participation to those with an academic work schedule. Area labor unions were not encouraged to send representatives. The papers presented at the symposium raised exciting conceptual issues and the discussions were provocative and wide-ranging. But the potential of the conference to influence future questions and directions of New England labor history research was undermined by the failure to bring together a wider public audience.

In her opening presentation on the new labor history, Joan Scott speculated on the effects of the New Left critique of organization, the sociological challenge to modernization theory, and quantitative methodology on the formulations of questions and the direction of research in this field. In her comments, Jill Conway suggested some of the ways in which women's history and family history must force a revision of the traditional categories of labor history. Herbert Gutman emphasized that ethnicity and class cannot be separated in the search for the origins of consciousness.

In a session on personality, Alfred Young used the biography of an eighteenth century Boston artisan, George Robert Twelves Hewes, to examine the development of political consciousness during the American Revolution. Carol Lasser's paper, "The World's Dread Laugh: Female Domestic Servants in Boston, 1800-1880," utilized the technique of collective biography to suggest the options available to single women in nineteenth century Boston.

In a session on work, Jonathan Prude analyzed the tensions between accommodation and resistance, and between individual and collective response, in the lives of millworkers who lived in family groups in Samuel Slater's milltowns. David Bensman's paper, "Hatmakers and the Culture of Work," described the particular collective resistance to industrial discipline of a hatmaker's union, built on the foundations of their special craft subculture. Cecelia Bucki's paper, "World War I Munitions Workers' Radicalism and Craft Tradition in Bridgeport, Conn." described the strengths and weaknesses of craft-based militancy in the munitions industry in wartime, capable of sustaining organization, but unable to transcend conflicts between skilled and unskilled men and women workers.

In a session on culture focusing on workers' lives outside the workplace, Gary Kulik's study, "Artisans, Farmers and Early Mill Owners and the Uses of Land and Water," identified the eighteenth century struggles over water and land rights as class conflict between artisans and farmers on one side and the mill owners on the other. Roy Rosenzweig's Piece, "Middle-Class Parks and Working Class Play: The Struggle Over Recreational Space in Worcester, Massachusetts: 1870-1900," pointed to a similar struggle over the definition of public vs. private urban space as an important arena for nineteenth century class conflict. Judith Smith's contribution, "Family and Kinship in an Immigrant Working Class Community," described the reorientation of kinship networks and the resulting transformation of family life and community institutions in the migration and settlement process of Jewish and Italian immigrants in Providence, Rhode Island in the early twentieth century.

In a session on politics, Leon Fink's paper, "Politics as Labor History: Labor Organizations, Town Meetings, and Political Partisanship in Nineteenth Century New England," showed the political consequences of social and class transformations by analyzing the social and economic upheaval behind the transition from a consensual, deferential, non-partisan town meeting system to a pluralistic two-party system in Rutland, Vermont, Alex Keyssar's essay, "The Impact of Unemployment on the Labor Movement in Massachusetts," argued that the shortage of jobs in almost all occupations had a significant impact on the size, shape, and structure of the nineteenth and early twentieth century labor movement and offered a partial explanation of its divisive and defensive strategies.

Discussion sessions were held on Alan Dawley's book, *Class and Community* and on James Henretta's article, "Families and Farms: Mentalité in Pre-Industrial America," in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 1978. Discussion of Dawley's book focused on these questions: 1) What other arenas besides politics provided mechanisms for muting class conflicts? 2) How characteristic was

Lynn's particular kind of radicalism in comparison with that which developed in other US factory towns? 3) Why was opposition to the state a foundation of artisan consciousness in Europe and not in the United States? The discussion of "Mentalité" centered on these questions: 1) Was lineal family consciousness necessarily opposed to an entrepreneurial outlook? What was the difference between acquisition and accumulation? What about a Puritan consciousness which opposed family "tribalism" in conflict with community orientation? What about competing interests for land within the lineal family? 2) Was the family the defining unit consciousness? In an agricultural setting, the family was enmeshed in work relations, but in an industrial setting, men and women had a different relationship to work. If occupation was the critical determinant of consciousness, where were the women?

This last question—Is class consciousness being defined as male consciousness in labor history?—was raised at different points during the conference as women participants pressed discussants for analyses informed by an awareness of gender as a category, and by the theoretical concerns of women's history.

The symposium included visual as well as intellectual stimulation in the form of a slide presentation by Al Young on "New England Artisan Culture and the Shaping of the Young Nation," and a special exhibit in the Smith College Museum of Art called "A Song for Occupations: Labor and the Laboring Classes in America." The museum exhibit demonstrated the iconography of America's working men and women in nineteenth and early twentieth century paintings, prints, sculpture and decorative arts.

Immersed in the issues of the "new" labor history, conference participants were reminded of the contributions of an earlier generation of New England labor historians by the presence at the conference of Caroline Ware and Vera Shlakman. Special presentations of merit to these scholars were awarded in an attempt to acknowledge our collective debt to them.

Judith Smith

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WORKING CLASS HISTORY AT THE SOCIETY FOR FRENCH HISTORICAL STUDIES 1979 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The twenty-fifth annual meeting of the Society for French Historical Studies, which met in Pittsburgh March 30-April 1, 1979, included several papers of interest to the readers of ILWCH. Most obvious were those in a session entitled "From Field to Factory: the Role of Work Structure in French Labor History," chaired by Jean Joughin (American U.). J. Harvey Smith (Northern Illinois/U. of North Carolina), "Work Structure and Labor Organization in Rural Languedoc, 1880-1910," stressed that while the great strikes among vine workers