

Mill village and factory: Voices

As you read...

These interviews were part of a larger collection of oral histories collected in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The interviewers were interested in capturing the experiences of the men and women who were part of the early textile industries in North Carolina at the turn of the twentieth century.

The interviews were the basis of *Like A Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World*, published by University of North Carolina Press in 1987. You can learn more about this project and listen to more interviews at the Like A Family (see <http://www.ibiblio.org/sohp/laf/overview.html>) website.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What job did each woman have at the mill?
2. How old were they when they started working at the mill?
3. How much did each woman make per day at the mill?
4. What were some of the deductions taken from a mill worker's pay check?
5. Who trained new employees at the mill? How much were people paid while they were trained?
6. How long did it take to learn a new job at the mill?
7. What types of breaks did mill workers take during the work day?
8. Who was injured? How were they injured? What compensation did they get from the mill?
9. How long were the shifts at the mill?
10. How did each woman describe living in a mill town?
11. What was the relationship between the mill and the church in the mill town?
12. In addition to providing each family with a house, the mill allotted each family space in a barn and a garden. What did Mary Thompson's family grow in their garden? What type of animals did they keep?
13. Mary Thompson worked at a store during one Christmas season. What did her co-workers at the store say about working at a mill? What does this tell you about the way other people viewed mill workers?

Flossie Durham

Flossie Durham talks about beginning work at the mill in Bynum. (1:10)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Flossie Durham describes her first wages. (0:53)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Flossie Durham talks about her first day of spinning. (0:52)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Flossie Durham talks about her friends in the mill and the mill village as one big family. (1:43)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Flossie Moore Durham interviewed by Mary Frederickson and Brent Glass, Bynum, North Carolina, September 2, 1976. Interview # H-66 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Eula McGill

Eula McGill talks about her first job as a spinner. (2:42)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Eula McGill talks about her dislike of work and how show would get through her day. (2:24)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Eula McGill interviewed by Jacquelyn Hall, Atlanta, Georgia, February 1976. Interviews #G-39 and G-40 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Mary Thompson

Mary Thompson talks about drawing in. (3:13)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Mary Thompson talks about the gardens and animals her family kept in the mill village. (2:59)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Mary Thompson talks about going to work over the summers when she was 14. (3:34)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Mary Thompson talks about the lack of competition among coworkers. (2:25)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Mary Thompson talks about company support for the churches in mill villages. (2:16)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Mary Thompson describes the close-knit community of the mill village. Her husband, Carl, speaks as well. (2:42)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Mary Thompson talks about workers singing on the job. (1:29)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Mary Thompson talks about workplace pranks and practical jokes. (0:51)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Mary Thompson and her husband Carl discuss injuries in the workplace. (1:36)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Carl and Mary Thompson interviewed by James Leloudis, Charlotte, NC, July 9, 1979. Interview #H-182 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Naomi Trammel

Naomi Trammel discusses her first job spinning. (1:04)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Naomi Trammel talks about long hours and playing in the mill. (1:21)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Naomi Trammel discusses the work hours and pay in the spinning room. (1:49)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Naomi Trammel describes her work routine. (1:41)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Naomi Trammel explains how workers got lunch without having a lunch break. (1:40)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Naomi Trammel talks about transferring to the weave room, but transferring back to avoid illness. (1:03)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Naomi Trammel explains how she learned to weave from her husband at Poe Mill. (1:06)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Naomi Trammel talks about entertainment in the mill village. (1:48)

This media is available in the web edition only.

Naomi Trammel interviewed by Allen Tullos, Greenville, South Carolina, March 25, 1980. Interview # H-258 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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