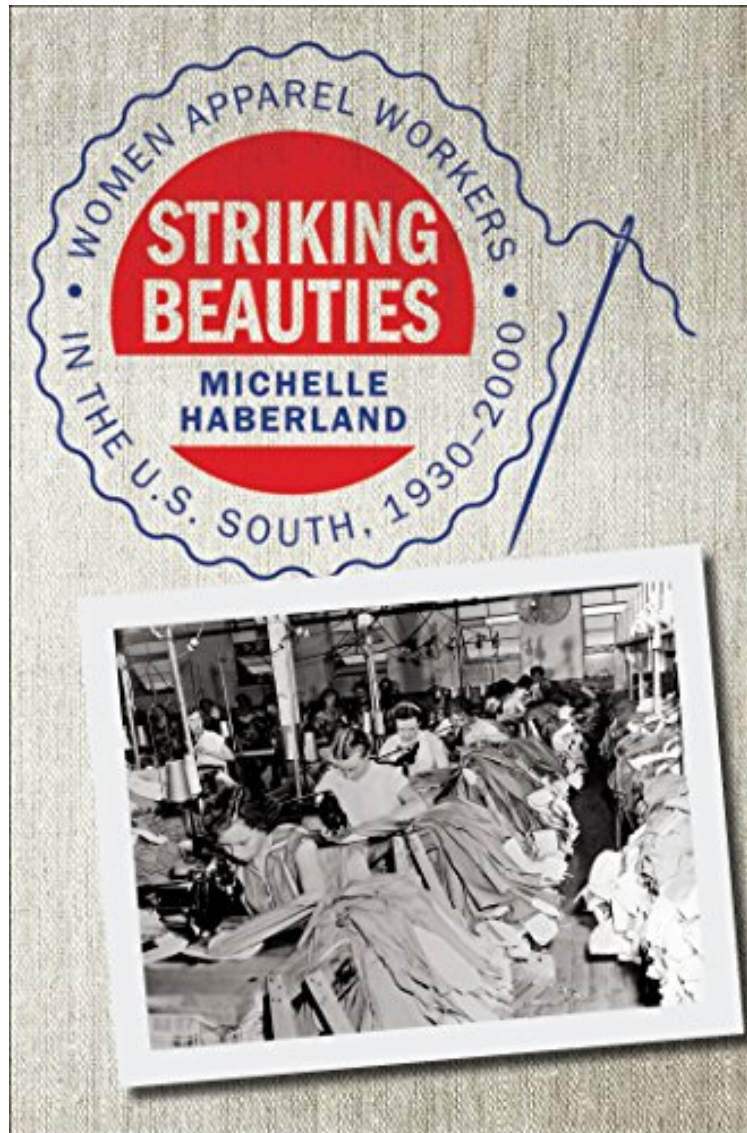


[FREE] Striking Beauties: Women Apparel Workers in the U.S. South, 1930-2000

## Striking Beauties: Women Apparel Workers in the U.S. South, 1930-2000

*Michelle Haberland*

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**Michelle Haberland : Striking Beauties: Women Apparel Workers in the U.S. South, 1930-2000** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Striking Beauties: Women Apparel Workers in the U.S. South, 1930-2000:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Striking Beauties is striking history! By Jonathan M. Bryant Based on numerous interviews with women who worked in the garment factories, as well as deep archival research, this book brings alive the struggles of Southern Women fighting for a measure of control over their working lives. Early in the

story there appears to be a great deal of hope for more just working conditions and treatment, but then Haberland details how both the companies and the changing global economy worked to undercut these efforts by literally destroying the garment industry in the American South. Well written and even illustrated, this is a must read for anyone interested in the economy of the 20th century South.

Apparel manufacturing in the American South, by virtue of its size, its reliance upon female labor, and its broad geographic scope, is an important but often overlooked industry that connects the disparate concerns of women's history, southern cultural history, and labor history. In *Striking Beauties*, Michelle Haberland examines its essential features and the varied experiences of its workers during the industry's great expansion from the late 1930s through the demise of its southern branch at the end of the twentieth century. The popular conception of the early twentieth-century South as largely agrarian informs many histories of industry and labor in the United States. But as Haberland demonstrates, the apparel industry became a key part of the southern economy after the Great Depression and a major driver of southern industrialization. The gender and racial composition of the workforce, the growth of trade unions, technology, and capital investment were all powerful forces in apparel's migration south. Yet those same forces also revealed the tensions caused by racial and gender inequities not only in the region but in the nation at large. *Striking Beauties* places the struggles of working women for racial and economic justice in the larger context of southern history. The role of women as the primary consumers of the family placed them in a critical position to influence the success or failure of boycotts, union label programs and ultimately solidarity.

Haberland touches on a number of interesting events and personalities concerned with working conditions, wage distributions, racial and gender inequities, consumerism, unionization, and labor disputes; thereby, the author entices readers to contemplate the interconnections between cultural and economic factors—not only as they pertain to the lives of women and their families, but also to the path and pace of regional development. (T. E. Sullivan *Choice*) *Striking Beauties* works well as an overview of the southern garment industry, as it traces the industry from expansion in the southern United States to its move to the global South. It also serves as a jumping-off point for scholars who want to delve more deeply into the labor policies, work and gender cultures, and business models of the apparel industry. (Jessica Wilkerson *Labor: Studies In Working Class History of the Americas*) *Striking Beauties* is impressively researched (enriched in particular by oral histories) and makes a compelling case for the importance of apparel workers to understanding labor, gender, race, and industrialization in the South. (Kathleen M. Barry *Journal of American History*) About the Author MICHELLE HABERLAND is associate professor of history and director of Women's and Gender Studies at Georgia Southern University.