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A century before there was the New South of Bill Clinton and Jesse Helms, of Nissan and BMW plants, of interstate highways and Wal-Marts, there was the New South of textile mills. A generation after the Civil War, southern boosterism merged cheap southern white labor with northern machinery and management expertise, promising regional salvation through the obliteration of regional distinctiveness (and, incidentally, generous profits for the millowners). High technology and low wages, owner-dominated governments and weak or nonexistent unions, overblown propaganda and strenuous efforts to create contented, controlled workers—every New South is the same.

Much of the scholarship on the New South is similarly stereotyped and mechanistic. While some scholars romanticize millowners, picturing them as selfless, patriotic paternalists, others demonize the same capitalists as brutal, hypocritical, heartless profiteers and glorify workers as heroic victims, sorely oppressed but inexorably doomed to defeat. In these portraits, figures on both sides are flat, one-dimensional, and dehumanized.

This well-written, thoroughly researched, and beautifully produced new book by Doug Flammig, assistant professor of history at Caltech, avoids such clichés through an extensive and intensive look at 80 years' experience in the Crown Cotton Mills of Dalton, Georgia, a small town in the hills south of Atlanta. Combining oral histories and traditional research in manuscripts, newspapers, and company and union records with revealing statistical analyses, especially of workers' behavior during the pivotal 1939 strike at Crown,

Flammig gives new depth and breadth to our image of both millhands and their bosses. Joining the concerns of the "New Labor History" with the quantitative techniques of the "New Social History," Flammig has produced a major work in what is in many senses a "New Southern History."

The symbolic heart of the southern textile industry was the mill village, a separate town where the company owned not only the houses, but also the schools, churches, playing fields, stores, and, largely, the government. The mill village lies at the center of Flammig's book, as well. Why did companies go to the trouble and expense of building mill villages, why did workers agree to live in them, and what were the consequences, unintended as well as intended, of the existence of these socioeconomic arrangements? Did these towns represent for the owners a continuation of the paternalistic tradition of social control that some historians believe characterized slavery and, for the workers, a continuation of a tightly knit preindustrial farming community? Were mill towns full of contented ex-peasants or seething, oppositional proto-unionists? Was the mill village imposed on the workers or chosen by them?

Pointing out that at Crown and elsewhere, the mills operated for a generation before building a mill village, Flammig sees the construction of the village and the provision of a whole range of company-sponsored services, from sewers and running water to semi-professional baseball teams, as a response to labor turnover rates that often exceeded 90 percent a year before World War I. The women and children who made up the bulk of the labor force at

the turn of the century were cheap and often efficient workers, but they did not stay long. The mill village, which attracted whole families, who subsequently provided a stable and flexible work force, was much less a charitable act by the company than a business proposition.

Nonetheless, to attract workers, the mill village had to be attractive to them. Only someone who has never lived an isolated rural existence, and who has always enjoyed piped water and indoor plumbing, can romanticize places without those "conveniences." For some upcountry poor whites (Crown never hired a single African American), the mill village was such a change for the better that the company won their loyalty almost without reservation. However, at the same time that it bound workers to the company, the mill village also linked them to one another. Ironically, it was company paternalism that created a community of workers and the potential for unionization. For once the company formed expectations among workers about the "benevolent" way it would behave, it could violate that implicit contract only at the risk of outraging many of them.

The Great Depression of the 1930s brought the crisis. When profits plunged, Crown cut wages, laid off workers, and speeded up the work

process. Workers, feeling betrayed, joined the textile workers union and eventually struck. Although the strike failed and World War II brought a dramatic increase in profits and wages, the old feelings between workers and owners never returned, and the mill village crumbled as a social institution. Autos gave the workers mobility, McCarthyism and prosperity sapped the union, textiles eventually resumed their southward migration, this time moving to Mexico, the Phillipines, Malaysia, and elsewhere, and Dalton became a bedspread- and carpet-making center. Crown finally closed its doors in 1969, symbolizing the end of one "New South," of one stage of modernization.

What a short and necessarily skeletal review cannot convey is the way Flammings makes the people of Dalton and Crown come alive. If you want to make the acquaintance of owners like George Hamilton and Frank Hardwick, of workers like Lillie Ann Hill and Sibyl Queen, of union leaders like Tom Crow and Don West, you will just have to read the book. At once deeply humane and informed by social scientific thought and methods, Doug Flammings's book is an appropriate product for a member of Caltech's Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences.

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