YOU MUST BE THIS TO RIDE:

CLASS, GENDER, AND RACE IN THE AMERICAN AMUSEMENT PARK

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June 30, 1960. Gwendolyn Greene, Cecil Washington, and Marvous Saunders aboard the carousel at Glen Echo Park, shortly before their arrest for trespassing.

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I dedicate this work
to Ann and William Fisher and Rita Durkin,
who first exposed me to the joy of amusement parks,
and to Max and the late Irene Hurley,
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Introduction

Amusement parks emerged during the twentieth century as among the most popular leisure places in America, yet historians have largely overlooked the rich potential for study these institutions offer. Individual operators have always designed these parks as appealing getaways for the customers they considered most commercially desirable based on gender, class, and race, making each one a site of ideological and social reproduction. While amusement parks in many respects replicated the restrictions imposed by prevailing cultural attitudes, at times they also permitted certain transgressions of those norms. Naturally, the norms imposed and transgressions allowed have changed along with the times. Scholarship on amusement parks has tended to address these three categories disconnectedly and failed to relate the parks to other popular modes of leisure. This thesis will bring together these sources, as well as sources on the predecessors of amusement parks, to address the ways in which amusement parks have both enforced and encouraged violation of restraints based upon gender, class, and race.

In colonial times, the audience for leisure pursuits included both aristocrats who pursued hardly anything but leisure while their black slaves worked and more average citizens who enjoyed themselves at home or in small groups when they found spare time. Religious reformers of this era preached lovingly of work, which they touted as a guarantee of future spiritual and economic welfare. The most austere of these reformers considered leisure a waste of time that God's people might otherwise spend glorifying Him through work, but the common people refused to forgo pleasurable activities outside work. As Gary Cross writes, "economic security and independence through hard work was too faint a hope to stake their lives on." As Americans

won independence from the British, the upper and working classes had established strong, mostly separate leisure traditions.[1]

The beginnings of industrialization, which arrived soon after independence, disrupted the leisure traditions of the working classes by drastically changing the relationship between work and play. Americans had begun to work outside the home, and the clock had given employers the ability to set working hours more strictly, which in turn more strictly demarcated the time available for leisure. The rise of the factory and its machines made work environments still more regimented. Overseers sought to prevent any worker from falling behind, but they expected employees to police themselves first. One factory's rules held that "no talking can be permitted among the hands…except on subjects relating to their work" and strictly prohibited "spirituous liquors, smoking, or any kind of amusements…in the workshops or yards."[2] Men and women of the white working classes worked in factories during the nineteenth century, as frequently did their children. Cross writes that these "workers' day[s] became segmented into hours of work and hours of leisure, each conducted in different…places." In response to the needs of these workers, and those of the growing middle class, to make the most of their time off work, the efficiency of mass leisure became increasingly desirable.[3]

The elite classes soon found that they had an interest in efficient leisure, since they believed that providing such opportunities kept the lower classes calm. Landscaped parks were the most popular option at mid-century, because members of the upper class in cities throughout the nation believed that these parks exerted a calming influence on working class citizens. The upper classes also wished to emulate European pleasure gardens for their own enjoyment, and therefore pressured local governments to open multiple parks in many cities. Men and women,

[1] Gary Cross, *A Social History of Leisure Since 1600* (State College, PA: Venture Publishing Inc., 1990), 25-54.
[2] Ibid., 54-70.
[3] Ibid., 123-139.

adults and children all enjoyed these parks at once, albeit often engaging in different activities. Members of all classes, and all nationalities within the working and middle classes, sometimes enjoyed these parks together, but this often did not last. Roy Rosenzweig writes of the division of the largest park in one representative city, Worcester, into sections for different activities: the Commission on Shade Trees and Public Grounds there separated baseball and other more exuberant activities enjoyed by the working class from the fountains and shrubs the elite and middle classes wished to enjoy in peace. Annoyed at their exclusion, working class citizens successfully petitioned for new parks in their own neighborhoods in Worcester and in other cities. Although these parks lacked the mechanized entertainment that characterizes the modern amusement park, the former directly precedes the latter. Historians considering these staid public parks have not considered that thrilling amusement parks partially emerged as a response to their too-rigid predecessors.[4]

While the use of public parks skewed toward the working classes, the organizers of the World's Fairs, the other most important institutions preceding modern amusement parks, geared them toward the elite and middle classes. These large temporary public exhibitions provided opportunities for individual inventors and larger companies to show off new technological advancements, and for visitors to marvel at these products. For prospective buyers, each new exposition provided an opportunity to learn about new products. The majority of visitors, however, did not intend to purchase many or any products, because the fairs provided as much entertainment as education. No particular group organized or funded these exhibitions, which began in London in 1851 and continued across Europe and the United States according to the whims of different host localities. The businesses presenting at the Fairs paid for much of their

[4] Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 127-152.

spectacle, and controlled much of their content. Later, operators of amusement parks would be able to control the ideology replicated at their facilities in much the same way.[5]

The rise of World's Fairs in the United States resulted largely from the panics and depressions of the 1870s that resulted from the Civil War, and a subsequent lack of faith that the country was moving in the right direction. Robert Rydell, John Findling, and Kimberly Pelle call the fairs necessary tools to "restore public faith in the legitimacy of [America's corporate leaders'] authority to direct American society." They also confirm that members of the economic elite generally paid for the fairs and reserved for themselves the right to dictate all aspects of the events, including the ideologies presented. These white backers, aware that white visitors constituted a majority of each fair's audience, "propagated a particular view of the world that insisted on the presumed fact of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority as a way to unite whites, regardless of social class, at the expense of people defined as racially determined 'others.'" This cynical worldview promoted a way for white citizens to move forward from the previous decades' economic setbacks without including their non-white fellow citizens.[6] The World's Fairs did encourage the education of those adults who attended, as did the Chautauqua movement, founded in 1894. This movement proved far more inclusive of women than the World's Fairs, but restricted themselves mostly to the upper classes much as the World's Fairs did.[7]

The amusement park as a distinct form emerged from the coalescing of these forms, each of which encouraged public mass leisure but in exclusive ways. Sea Lion Park, the first modern

[5] Robert Wilson, *Great Exhibitions: The World Fairs 1851-1937* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2007), 10-17.
[6] Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington: Smithsonian Institutipn Press, 2000), 14-44.
[7] Jeanne Halgren Kilde, "The 'Predominance of the Feminine' at Chautauqua: Rethinking the Gender-Space Relationship in Victorian America," *Signs* 24, no. 2 (1999).

amusement park, opened in Coney Island in 1896, the first collection of mechanized rides and other attractions in a fixed location. Standalone rides and attractions, often portable, sometimes toured throughout the United States or appeared in clusters as at Coney Island prior to the opening of Sea Lion Park, but the collection and enclosure at one location of several such rides and attractions there begun a trend that caught on quickly at Coney Island and spread throughout the nation. Steeplechase Park, Luna Park, and Dreamland soon joined Sea Lion Park at Coney Island, alongside standalone concessions that continued to operate. Where landscaped parks and World's Fairs had divided Americans, the amusement parks at Coney Island began, in some aspects, to unite them.[8]

In recent years, some amusement parks have achieved recognition as historic landmarks, and certain types of rides have attracted relatively considerable interest as art objects. An unfortunate consequence of these developments is that they seem to have led some circles to dismiss amusement parks as quaint historical curiosities, relics of a bygone era of fun, and nothing more important. A casual, romantic view of the amusement park robs that institution of its potential for study as a site of oppression and of unification, of reproduced sociocultural ideology and of relaxed norms, of anachronism and of technology. This thesis will consider the scholarship described above along with other primary and secondary sources, and will present a cogent narrative of simultaneous separation and unification of cultural norms pertaining to gender, class, and race.

In the first chapter, I analyze shifts toward inclusion of all classes in the amusement park. Because of the deep roots of the amusement park in forms like the public park and World's Fairs, the developers of which made them purposefully exclusive of members of the working classes,

[8] Judith A. Adams, *The American Amusement Park Industry: A History of Technology and Thrills* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 41-56.

these citizens initially did not find a welcome at all amusement parks. In fact, members of the elite who sought to guard the sanctity of spaces of refuge like Coney Island sometimes deserted those spaces when they became more inclusive in terms of class. As local amusement parks became important public gathering spaces, they served their initial intended purpose of entertainment to occupy the masses in broader ways, as government entities exploited their mass popularity for wartime propaganda and similar purposes. In the 1950s, members of the upper classes again sought their own spaces and flocked to amusement parks that purposefully excluded working class families with high prices and geographic distance from centers of population. In the 1970s and 1980s and beyond, however, as cities in the Steel Belt and other areas with high concentrations of amusement parks struggled economically, communities again came to espouse local amusement parks as civic gathering places, and national amusement parks remained popular for all Americans despite their high ticket prices.

In the second chapter, I analyze the opportunities women had to enjoy the amusement park. The initial exclusion of women from many amusement parks mirrored their exclusion from participation in other activities, like sport, but public leisure movements like the Chautauqua movement brought women into their fold in purposefully progressive ways. Meanwhile, amusement parks expanded access to women mostly so that they could take advantage of the money women had begun to earn on their own. Reformers, concerned that women would ruin their souls and reputations at amusement park dance halls or enjoying mechanical rides too rough for their constitutions, attempted to exert influence in the media to restrict women's activities at amusement parks. Most women, however, ignored the complaints of these reformers and took advantage of the opportunities amusement parks afforded them to interact sexually or romantically with men in ways not considered appropriate elsewhere. After

World War II, women's interactions with amusement parks shifted slightly as increasing numbers of women became mothers and amusement parks marketed themselves for families to enjoy together. Women have continued to enjoy amusement parks in their own right, however, and have also exercised agency in recent years to protest amusement park attractions featuring dated and disempowering depictions of female sexuality.

In the third chapter, I recount the focused efforts necessary to make amusement parks accessible to members of non-white races. Like the forms that preceded it, amusement parks either did not encourage non-whites, particularly African Americans, to attend or did not admit them by law in the South. Wealthy African American businessmen sometimes opened amusement parks to cater to their own communities, but average African Americans became tired of their exclusion from widely advertised and popular amusement parks, particularly after World War II, during which these parks had become increasingly important gathering places. Borrowing tactics from the growing student movement, protestors placed fiscal and moral pressure on Amusement parks, leading to their integration during the 1950s and 1960s and often to subsequent abandonment by racist whites. Often amusement parks' histories are tainted by explanations that try to skirt this past or reframe it to paint protestors as lawless rioters, but reform leading to the inclusion of non-whites in amusement parks took on the same aspects as other civil rights efforts of the period.

The apparent democratization of the amusement park, as explored here, belies the reality that increased inclusion in some aspects of an important mass leisure form does not resolve all problems of inclusion in a society. The numerous intersections between the amusement park and other forms of mass popular culture make it difficult to study the amusement park on its own, particularly when first-person accounts and even superficially reliable sources prove, on further

inspection, to be colored by either sentimentality or a desire to speak well of institution that has had deep personal meaning in individual lives. The instinct to "protect" amusement parks in this way deserves further study, but this paper traces some major apparent developments in the American amusement park relative to other major moments in American history, and sets the stage for this necessary additional discussion.

I: Fun for All Classes

Leisure in the United States before the nineteenth century had been restricted to those with sufficient resources to avoid continuous work. When the Industrial Revolution changed the nature of work for average Americans and helped funnel more material resources to the very wealthy, a more democratized culture of national leisure also developed. By the turn of the century, older leisure patterns had given way to more heterogeneous amusements. The earliest amusement parks developed when a number of related sorts of public amusements realized the benefit in combining their discrete businesses and marketing them more broadly. The initial profit motive led to the creation of an important space in which Americans of all classes could interact, although distinctions based on race and gender continued to separate them.

After members of all classes had started to mix at these amusement parks in the early twentieth century and grew even closer together during World War II, beginning in the 1950s, some operators sought to offer a revised amusement park experience at significantly higher prices that precluded those without disposable income. When many smaller local parks, which had always offered free admission and welcomed all visitors, erected gates around their property and sought to monetize all visitors, it seemed that the amusement park might cease to offer an inclusive experience, but more and more communities have realized the value of their amusement parks as leisure institutions partially because of their inclusiveness, and have often worked hard to reclaim the local amusement park as a gathering place for all people.

Leisure and the Industrial Revolution

The roots of the American amusement park reach back to colonial times, when the landed wealthy pursued hardly anything but leisure while more average citizens enjoyed themselves at home or in small groups when they found spare time.[1] Religious reformers of the colonial era touted work as a guarantee of future spiritual and economic welfare. The most austere of these reformers considered leisure a waste of the time God's people might otherwise spend glorifying Him through work. Despite these admonitions, most Americans refused to forgo pleasurable activities.[2] As historian Gary Cross writes, "economic security and independence through hard work was too faint a hope to stake their lives on," so the majority of Americans hedged their bets by both working hard and enjoying leisure.[3] After Americans won independence from the British, the upper and working classes had each established strong, distinct leisure traditions. For both groups, gambling and drinking in groups constituted popular pastimes. In addition, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought some of the first major leisure institutions outside the home, including resorts and clubs and the occasional traveling carnival.[4]

Industrialization disrupted working-class leisure traditions by changing the relationship between work and play. By the early nineteenth century, more and more Americans had begun to work outside the home. The clock had given employers the ability to set working hours more strictly, which in turn more strictly demarcated the time available for leisure. The rise of the factory and its machines made work environments still more regimented. One factory's rules,

[1] In fact, the amusement ride inventor and manufacturer William F. Mangels starts his history of the American amusement park industry even earlier, claiming that "public amusement is as old as recorded history. The public has always craved spectacles." He continues: "even in the Dark Ages and in medieval times, the common man of Europe, although bent to the plow nearly every day, from dawn to dusk, sought amusement on occasion."
[2] Those who believed they should forsake all leisure could join religious communities outside the mainstream of society, but few did so.
[3] Gary Cross, *A Social History of Leisure Since 1600* (State College, PA: Venture Publishing Inc., 1990), 36.
[4] Ibid., 39-54.

for example, held that "no talking can be permitted among the hands…except on subjects relating to their work." These same rules strictly prohibited "spirituous liquors, smoking, or any kind of amusements…in the workshops or yards."[5] Men and women of the working classes found employment in these factories in increasing numbers during the nineteenth century, as did the children of families who needed additional income. Cross writes that the days of these workers became divided more strictly than when they had worked at home into "hours of work and hours of leisure, each conducted in different…places." The fact that workers traveled away from their homes to do work helped make this new separation of home and work spheres extremely clear.[6]

It therefore became even more important for these industrial workers, and other workers in the growing middle class, to make the most of their increasingly limited time off work. Many reformers stressed the positive effects of organized leisure.[7] The reform-minded remained concerned about what sorts of activities Americans engaged in. A Rev. Dr. Murray wrote for the *New York Evangelist* wrote in 1857: "I have known, and now know, many young men, who, if they devoted to any scientific or professional pursuit, the time they spend in games of chance, and lounging in bed, might rise to any eminence."[8] To protect working class morals and safeguard the social order, some middle and upper-class reformers advocated providing the working classes with both moral instruction and some structured leisure opportunities. For example, Dr. Lemuel Shattuck, a noted reformer, suggested in 1850 that governments should

[5] Ibid., 58-59.
[6] Ibid., 61.
[7] Cross, 128.
[8] "The Young Man's Leisure," *New York Evangelist*, 12 March 1857.

allocate funds to provide "open space [that] would afford to the…poorer classes the advantages of fresh air and exercise, in their occasional hours of leisure."[9]

Reformers like Shattuck expressed particular interest in sporting activities to promote traditional American values, teaching valuable new virtues, and developing "higher standards of character."[10] Once given the opportunity to enjoy them, sports quickly became popular among the laboring classes.[11] The emergence of leagues based on town or workplace affiliation strengthened the bonds between people who relied on one another in working class communities. Particularly extravagant sporting events formed major parts of holiday celebrations. The *Washington Post* reported in 1891, for instance, that "various amateur athletic events arranged for Decoration Day in and around Washington will afford attraction and pleasure for thousands." These activities included baseball, cycling, and rowing, and participants could choose to participate or watch. "Taken all in all, it will be a great day for clean, healthful sport," the *Post* promised.[12]

The rise of large public parks complemented this new emphasis on organized sports, and their popularity among the working classes encouraged members of the elite class to offer more such opportunities. Reformers believed that providing such opportunities kept the lower classes content enough to continue supporting industrial production. Famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted once claimed that New York City's Central Park "exercises a distinctly harmonizing and refining influence upon the most unfortunate and lawless classes of the city, an influence favorable to courtesy, self-control, and temperance."[13] Hoping to quiet industrial

[9] Ibid., 17.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Steven A. Reiss, *Sport in Industrial America: 1850-1920* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1995), 3.
[12] "A Carnival of Sports: Athletic Attractions for Lovers of Sports on Decoration Day," *Washington Post*, 29 May 1891.
[13] Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 127.

unrest and to emulate pleasure gardens constructed in Europe for the enjoyment of the upper classes there, members of the elite classes in America began to pressure local governments to open parks. Cities competed with one another over the quality, size, and beauty of their parks, and the announcement of a new park tended to lead to the sort of articles like the one that appeared in the *Washington Post* on February 7, 1889, which announced that it "[would be] easy to make [the newly-announced Rock Creek Park] surpass Central Park in beauty and attractiveness."[14]

Members of all classes sometimes enjoyed these parks together, although this constituted the exception rather than the rule. In Worcester, Massachusetts, for example, the city's Commission on Shade Trees and Public Grounds separated parks into sections for different activities and different classes: they separated the baseball field and spaces for other activities enjoyed by the working class from the fountains and shrubs the elite and middle classes wished to enjoy in peace. Annoyed at their exclusion, working-class citizens successfully petitioned for new parks in their own neighborhoods in Worcester and in other cities.[15]

World's Fairs replicated the kind of class segregation characteristic of nineteenth century public parks like those in Worcester. Pitched squarely to the elite and middle classes, the World's Fairs, large temporary public exhibitions, provided opportunities for individual inventors and larger companies to show off new technological advancements, and for visitors to marvel at these products. These exhibitions received both public and private funding but occurred irregularly due to their expense. For prospective buyers, each new exposition provided an opportunity to learn about new products. The majority of visitors, however, did not intend to make any purchases. The fairs provided as much entertainment as education. No particular

[14] "Rock Creek Park: Easy to Make It Surpass Central Park in Beauty and Attractiveness," *New York Evangelist*, 12 March 1857.
[15] Rosenzweig, 128-152.

group organized or funded these exhibitions, which began in London in 1851 and continued across Europe and the United States. The businesses presenting at the Fairs paid for much of their spectacle, and controlled much of their content. Later, operators of amusement parks would be able to control the ideology replicated at their facilities in much the same way.[16] Some religious reformers established a presence at various fairs, suggesting that they could "have a large influence over the social and Christian developments of the twentieth century."[17]

Although business interests were responsible for funding World's Fairs, these groups received a great deal of assistance from federal, state, and local governments. Many government officials, particularly those who relied on popular support, saw World's Fairs as an opportunity to shore up national pride after the Civil War and the frequent economic panics and depressions of the postbellum period.[18] More importantly, governmental agencies also sometimes supported World's Fairs with infusions of cash in addition to the exhibits they provided. New Yorkers may have resented the federal government's considering providing aid to Chicago for the 1893 Columbian Exposition, but they nevertheless considered government support of the fair important, if only to save national face. The *New York Times* worried that, "left to her own resources, Chicago may organize a respectable local show, but the whole country would be disgraced and shamed by so puny an outcome" as Chicago could achieve on its own.[19] "The application for an appropriation of $5,000,000…amounts to a confession that the fair is too large an enterprise for Chicago," another *Times article* alleged, but it also confessed that "the success

[16] Robert Wilson, *Great Exhibitions: The World Fairs 1851-1937* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2007), 10-17.
[17] "Religious Forces at the Fair: The Exposition to Provide for the Higher Things of the Spirit," *New York Times*, 11 July 1892, p. 10
[18] For this reason, speeches offered by these public officials at fairs' openings and closings became important opportunities to score political points.
[19] "Federal Aid for the Chicago Fair," *New York Times*, 26 February 1890, p. 4.

of [the Exposition] concerns the national pride."[20] Congress did provide funding but chose to use the Fair as an opportunity for moralizing, threatening to refuse to provide any funds unless the fair closed on Sundays.[21]

These events could have provided opportunities to depict members of the working and elite classes working together for progress, but instead they diminished the citizenship and contributions of the working classes. The upper classes felt an incentive to include their lower class neighbors in public parks as a form of social control, but they did not feel the same incentive with regard to the Fairs. Although the lower classes often had involvement in physically preparing the spectacle and occasionally praised for that work, they seldom found themselves represented in exhibits purporting to depict modern labor: the fairs instead presented machines running as if by magic.[22] Although the era of public parks and World's Fairs exacerbated the divide between the upper and lower classes and their leisure activities, these divisions begun to disintegrate as the modern amusement park began its emergence at the turn of the twentieth century.

Mixing Classes in the First Amusement Parks

The first modern amusement park, Sea Lion Park, opened on Coney Island in New York City in 1896. Sea Lion Park included mechanical rides and other attractions, with elements from both public parks and World's Fairs, in a fixed location. Visitors to Coney Island could enjoy entertainment of many different types, including amusement parks as well as restaurants, circus sideshows, and the beach itself. According to a 1911 article, "after weeks of preparation" for the

[20] Many public officials considered the success of the Fair important not merely for domestic encouragement but to stimulate the United States' international reputation.
[21] "The Government and the Fair," *New York Times*, 12 July 1892,
[22] Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

opening of the season, "spectacular and impressive parade" marched down Surf Avenue, visitors expressed disappointment that the man-eating lion on display at Dreamland had not yet taken a chunk out of anyone, and the performer Bonnie Schuman barely escaped injury in an accident during her diving routine. These sorts of thrills appealed to everyone, since they seemed to put visitors adjacent to, but not in, danger. These entertainments pleased members of the working class accustomed to danger as well as their more elite neighbors.[23]

The sense of adventure at Coney Island remained just artificial enough to avoid scaring away members of the elite. Coney Island had begun as a popular seaside resort. By the late nineteenth century, promotional materials heralded it as one of the city's "most fashionable and magnificent watering place[s]."[24] The operators of one business on Coney Island "hired…detectives to patrol the grounds and ensure that [they were] 'free from plebeian intrusion,'" lest such plebes upset the elite class of people seeking to enjoy the area.[25] Even those operators less concerned with keeping out working-class visitors hardly wanted to attract them, and development of the area stalled as existing businesses seemed to suit existing tourists' needs perfectly well.

Eventually, local business owners realized that they could make more money by welcoming more people to Coney Island. No longer interested in creating a "sanctuary of gentility," business owners began to target the common man and his family. New public transportation options, including the predecessors of the modern New York City subway system, constructed at the turn of the century made it easier for working families to get there. Coney Island did not just "fail to maintain its elite zone," it entered a state of "continuous flux" with

[23] "Coney Island Opens; Crowd of 100,000," *New York Times*, 21 May 1911, p. 7.
[24] Michael Immerso, *Coney Island: The People's Playground* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002).
[25] Ibid.

regard to the "social character" of its visitors. Although the elite did slowly begin to take their leisure dollars to other destinations where they might find a different atmosphere, Coney Island hosted a legitimately mixed crowd for several more years.[26]

The operators of Coney Island's amusements did not exclude the members of any class or seek to separate them from one another.[27] Members of the elite classes who avoided Coney Island did so because they deemed its amusements déclassé, not because anyone told them to stay away. Middle and working class Americans came together with or without their elite neighbors, in what historian Kathy Peiss calls "a liberating experience" for the middle class, "a contrast to the normative demands of conventional bourgeois society." Members of the elite vacationing at Coney Island may have experienced a kind of liberation when they encountered the just-far-enough-away danger the amusements provided, but it was the working class that forged Coney Island's liberating attitudes in the first place.[28]

By the turn of the twentieth century, workers and the middle classes alike saw a trip to Coney Island as a special occasion, despite the area's somewhat unsavory reputation. For example, the *Times* once reported on one particularly bad weekend, over which four small cells at the Coney Island Police Station filled with over one hundred men, mostly victims of "bad whisky" exacerbated by "heat and bad air." Because so many of the prisoners fainted during the night, it became necessary for officers to take them outside in shifts for an airing before returning to their cells.[29] Many business operators sought solutions that would allow the area to retain its customers in the elite classes as well as the working classes. Melissa Baldock writes that "these

[26] Gary S. Cross and John K. Walton, *The Playful Crowd: Pleasure Places in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2005) 49-56.
[27] Other important distinctions include the proliferation of mechanical rides and the variety of entertainments offered, which included dancing, midway games, and food concessions mingled together rather than in separate areas.
[28] Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 115-138.
[29] "Coney Island's Black Hole: Over One Hundred Prisoners Packed into Four Small Cells," *New York Times*, 7 July 1897, p. 3.

businessmen…did not seek to eliminate the scandal entirely from Coney Island. Instead, they aimed to contain the seedy behavior." She associates such aims with a move away from mixing between classes at the same Coney Island businesses, although members of both the elite and middle classes continued to frequent the broad area.[30]

Cities smaller than New York City but still relatively large often did include amusement parks that brought their citizens together as Coney Island did. One such park, Washington, DC's Glen Echo Park, started its life as part of the Chautauqua, a national cultural movement offering adults the opportunity to experience nature and take classes in subjects such as the Bible, fine arts, and ancient languages. A typical day of instruction included concerts of classical music, lectures arranged around a central theme, and the opportunity for fellowship with other Chautauqua attendees.[31] Members of the upper classes and particularly women enjoyed these activities. The park's grounds, however, seem to have remained open to those who wished to take a picnic lunch or enjoy some other activity in nature on the grounds without attending all or any of that day's programming. The Chautauqua formed part of a larger residential community, so the development's owners had an incentive to allow visitors, and it received the public endorsement of such august figures as the humanitarian and founder of the American Red Cross, Clara Barton. Keen public interest resulted.[32]

The Chautauqua at Glen Echo failed within a few years. Glen Echo Park reinvented itself as an amusement park. Advertising for this new park played up both its exciting mechanical rides and the connection with nature guests could find in the still-beautiful grounds. "Glen Echo

[30] Melissa E. Baldock, "Preserving the Honky-Tonk: Coney Island's Future in Its Amusement Past," *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 1, no. 1 (2004): 19. Fewer members of the middle classes visited Coney Island, because they tended to live further away from New York City's urban center than the working classes and did not have a history with the area like the elites did.
[31] "Glen Echo Chautauqua: Greater Appreciation of Its Charms as the Heat Increases," *Washington Post*, 25 July 1891, p. 8.
[32] "Glen Echo Chautauqua: Miss Clara Barton Writes Enthusiastically of the Movement," *Washington Post*, 15 February 1891, p. 6.

Park is not only the finest amusement park…for Washington and vicinity, but it is also the most beautiful 40 acres for the use of the public anywhere near here," offered the *Washington Post* simply.[33] The variety of activities available meant that surely something would appeal to each patron, and the park's advertisements attempted to make all guests feel welcome. The park's publicity stressed the variety of ways visitors could reach the park. "Glen Echo Park is reached by a delightful cooling ride aboard the spacious open cars of the Washington Railway & Electric Co., with fast and frequent service from the city direct to the park, or by a short motor ride via the Conduit road, with ample parking space," the park's management announced in 1927.[34] In other words, members of the urban working class who would more likely take the trolley and members of the elite who might own a motorcar could find equal welcome at Glen Echo.

After 1940, an increasing number of amusement parks joined Glen Echo in the ranks of those parks that brought people together across class lines. During World War II, amusement parks relied on patriotic imagery and images of a brighter tomorrow to bring together members of various classes. At Glen Echo, for instance, the management transformed the midway's beanbag toss game into "a booth where people threw a baseball at Hitler through a toilet seat."[35] Meanwhile, upbeat newspaper coverage suggested that anyone could escape the war at the park. A 1943 article referred to a particularly funny member of the park's house orchestra as a "morale booster."[36] Two years later, after the conclusion of the war, a blurb about Glen Echo's preparations for the new season remarked upon repairs to the mechanism designed to blow air up through concealed vents in the fun house's floor, lifting women's skirts: "war or no war, the gals

[33] "Glen Echo Park Boasts Unusual Natural Beauty: Nature and the Architects Have Combined to Make Perfect Playground," *Washington Post*, 18 July 1937, sec. T, p. 8.
[34] "Glen Echo Park," *Washington Post*, 19 June 1927, sec. F, p. 1.
[35] Richard Cook and Deborah Lange, *Glen Echo Park: A Story of Survival* (Bethesda, MD: Bethesda Communications Group, 2000), 75.
[36] "A Morale Booster is Sammy Ferro at Glen Echo," *Washington Post*, 25 July 1943, sec. L, p. 2.

don't wear slacks all the time."[37] The park's location made it accessible to Washingtonians of all social classes, and war-related efforts on the home front contributed to a feeling of increased social cohesion. Given these changes, it seems unsurprising that people felt more comfortable coming together at parks throughout the country.

Alternatives for the Wealthy

The postwar baby boom created significant change within the amusement parks industry. Before the 1950s, most operators made little effort to design specific attractions for children or to create attractions for the whole family to enjoy together. After the war, however, more and more families had both children and disposable income. Stephanie Coontz argues that because people of all classes chose to "elevate the nuclear family to their central source of loyalty, obligation, and personal satisfaction," amusement parks responded by reinforcing that concept of family.[38] Many amusement parks added Kiddielands, made up of attractions for children to enjoy while their parents watched, and some rides that the whole family could enjoy together. These changes made amusement parks especially appealing to middle class families. No park better exemplified this new domestic ethos than Disneyland in California.

Disneyland did not welcome all classes when it opened in Anaheim in 1955. The *New York Times* reported that "the appellation of 'amusement park' is inadequate, for [Disneyland] has no such banalities as roller-coasters, Ferris wheels and dodge-'ems in a milieu of honky-tonk." The article continued to detail several state-of-the-art attractions and note that Disneyland

[37] "Glen Echo Gets Face-Lifting, Opens April 14," *Washington Post*, 9 April 1945, p. 16.
[38] Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1992), 7.

prohibited alcohol.[39] The *Times* reported a few years earlier that Westinghouse hoped to install televisions in amusement parks "to meet head-on the swelling volume of complaints from members of the National Association of Amusement Park, Beach, and Pool Operators that the public was staying away from their establishments in droves to view television in the summer."[40] Ingeniously, Walt Disney used television to great effect to promote the new park, airing its lavish opening ceremonies to great interest despite some technical difficulties.[41]

Many Americans who viewed the opening ceremonies could not actually visit Disneyland, however. The cost to attend the park far exceeded that of local amusement parks. Confronted by a reporter about his profit margins, the park's founder, Walt Disney, claimed that "we have to charge what we do because this Park cost a lot to build and maintain."[42] Disneyland also received criticism for sanitizing elements of history. This sanitization and the park's overall cleanliness and neatness, however, attracted customers despite its expensive prices. The park welcomed its ten millionth customer on New Year's Eve, 1957, a year in which 40 percent of visitors came from outside California. Disneyland's success drew visitors away from local parks in the area.[43] Many families from the working classes simply could not afford travel to the west coast and subsequent high costs at Disneyland, and local working-class families who attended did so at the expense of other local parks.[44] After Disneyland's success, Disney expressed interest in opening Walt Disney World in Florida, "the promise of Disney's economic

[39] "Disneyland Gets Its Last Touches: Fantastic Amusement Park, at Cost of $16,500,000, to Open July 18," *New York Times*, 9 July 1955, p. 32.
[40] "Westinghouse to Install TV in Amusement Parks," *New York Times*, 15 January 1952, p. 16.
[41] Karal Ann Marling, "Disneyland, 1955: Just Take the Santa Ana Freeway to the American Dream," *American Art* 5, no. 1 (1991): 170-172.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 174.
[44] Of course, only relatively fortunate working classes could afford to visit Disneyland even in this way. Many families could not afford a visit to Disneyland under any circumstances, which did not bother Disney personally or impact his company's profits. Importantly, at its opening, Disneyland charged individually for all attractions, rather than a flat-fee admission price.

contribution to the Greater Orlando area was such that…[the] State Legislature designated Disney's acres…an independent governmental unit, giving [the company]…as much…control as the state constitution offers its towns and cities."[45] The success of Disneyland and later Disney World, along with other aspects of the Disney business operation, reduced the number of access points that Americans had to an increasingly national popular culture, as these parks fascinated families across the nation despite being accessible in person to few of those families.[46]

Local Amusement Parks Struggle

The 1970s and 1980s brought still more change for local parks. In-home entertainment, including VCRs and personal gaming systems, threatened to make the old-fashioned offerings of the older traditional amusement parks obsolete. Chain parks hoping to emulate Disneyland's success and compete for faraway tourists' attentions began to open, and local amusement parks found it difficult to stay in business. Local boosters often argued that, as creators of jobs and stimulators of tourism, small parks deserved special consideration and favorable policies. W. Bartley Hildreth and John D. Wong address arguments advanced in this regard, and point out that only occasionally did such arguments succeed. More often, local governments believed that, despite their value to communities, amusement parks did not deserve special consideration.[47] These governments preferred to spend money building athletic stadia to attract the bigger business of sports.

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[45] Stephen M. Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves: Walt Disney World and America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), 12.
[46] Disneyland alone did not narrow the national culture in this way. It did, however, both contribute to and reflected this broad change.
[47] W. Bartley Hildreth and John D. Wong, "The Theme of Public Finance in the Amusement Park Industry," *Proceedings, Annual Conference on Taxation and Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the National Tax Association* 93 (2002): 409-415.

These arguments show the desperation of local parks during this period. Their standard mix of inexpensive attractions sustained business at its present levels but could not pay for the kind of additions that managers hoped would stem the flow of visitors choosing Disneyland or other large parks in the 1980s. Most local parks did not charge admission. When they began to do so, these parks risked alienating longtime customers who used the parks as gathering places. Some operators also sold rides for quick profits, leaving some parks with fewer attractions. At other parks, management hoped to boost profits by removing historic rides with high maintenance costs but to which community members felt connected.[48]

For these and other reasons, dozens of local amusement parks closed during the 1980s. The Rockaways' Playland in Queens, for example, closed before the 1987 season, "because its owner said he could not afford a steep increase in liability insurance premiums." The park gave way to a condominium development. The park's owner also blamed "the policies of this city" for encouraging developers at the expense of local business.[49] Lincoln Park in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts closed after the 1987 season with significant debts to local government after years of changes unpopular with locals, increasing property and licensing taxes, and perceived decay and lack of safety.[50] While refusals to forgive tax and other bills in some areas led to the closure of parks, governments elsewhere tried to help parks stay in business. When out-of-town owners announced plans to close Lake Compounce in Bristol, Connecticut in 1987, "city officials responded by revoking the company's tax breaks and tallying up a bill of $250,000" in order to prevent the park's closure.[51]

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[48] Joseph D. Thomas, Marsha L. McCabe, and Tracy A Furtado, *Lincoln Park Remembered* (New Bedford, MA: Spinner Publications, Inc., 1999), 118-123.
[49] "After 86 Years, Rockaways Playland to be Razed for 300 Condominiums," *New York Times*, 24 April 1987, sec. B, p. 1.
[50] Thomas, McCabe, and Furtado, 118-123.
[51] "Bristol Fights Park Closing: City Revokes Tax Breaks for Lake Compounce Amusement Park," *New York Times*, 11 October 1987, sec. CN, p. 1.

Pennsylvania's Conneaut Lake Park, one of America's ten oldest surviving amusement parks, provides another example of government agencies' interventions in local amusement parks. The park's early history sounds much like that of many others. The Pittsburgh and Shenango Valley Railroad invested in the park and agreed to extend a rail line to meet it, and trolley and boat service from other operators followed soon thereafter. Advertised by the railroad in 1907 as "free from malaria, hay fever, and other summer ills" and an ideal place for visitors to "regain…strength" before "reluctantly leaving…better prepared to battle life's struggles," the park's success obviously owed a great deal to the common man. Despite some struggles when rail and trolley service to the park ended in 1927 and 1934 respectively, the community embraced the park, building cottages on the streets running throughout the property.[52]

Conneaut Lake even dealt well with the rise of the automobile. Its owners erected major attractions within view of the highway, built attractions to mimic those at Disneyland, including the Jungle Cruise and Fairyland Forest, and capitalized on the atmosphere created by the cottages within the park and the beautiful scenery around it, promoting the property as a resort rather than simply an amusement park. The park struggled again in the 1970s and 1980s, however, as a deep economic recession in the area and nationwide downturns shuttered several factories.[53] In 1988, the park sold the first of its carousel's historic wooden figures, a typical move for ailing parks. Conneaut Lake's owner, Charles Flynn, told the *Pittsburgh Press* that he had "tried to balance the pragmatic economics of the [park's] situation and…legacy" by selling only the animals the park could not afford to restore.[54]

[52] Jim Futrell, *Amusement Parks of Pennsylvania* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002), 425.
[53] Ibid. The decline felt throughout much of Pennsylvania reverberated throughout the Rust Belt as manufacturing jobs moved to the Sunbelt and elsewhere.
[54] "Conneaut Lake in economic battle to maintain its traditions," *Pittsburgh Press*, 11 August 1988, sec. B, p. 8.

The Washington, Pennsylvania *Observer-Reporter* reported favorably on the opening of the "popular attraction" for the 1989 season. Although business that year increased 50% over 1981, even this did not allow the park to keep pace with rising expenses.[55] The following season, Flynn decided to enclose the park and charge admission. He wrote in a letter to customers that "traditional parks are dropping like flies and it's time we all realize that we have to take steps now and save our park before it's too late to do anything about it."[56] After the 1992 season, Flynn announced plans to close nearly all of the park's rides and focus instead on concerts and similar events. The *Beaver County Times* reported that "the Kiddieland rides for young children will be retained, along with the carousel and miniature train," but the Blue Streak roller coaster and other thrill rides would not, since Flynn felt Conneaut Lake could not compete in those categories, including the corporate-owned Cedar Point just under three hours west and other more successful local parks like Kennywood, two hours to the southeast.[57]

Within months, five investors purchased the thrill rides and the park itself, fearful that removing so many rides would make the park less appealing to tourists and harm the local economy.[58] Local adults had few entertainment options in the area other than the park. Local businesses, at which Conneaut Lake spent $2 million annually, and employees, to whom the park paid $1.2 million each year, also relied on the park.[59] The new investors kept the park open until the end of the 1994 season, when it closed. New local efforts to save the park started in earnest in July 1995, when Patty and Bill Hutton founded the Conneaut Lake Park Preservation Society, first successfully lobbying for a "historic district" designation for the park before moving their

[55] "Conneaut Lake Park opens 97th season with refurbished Kiddieland, carousel," *Observer-Reporter*, 18 May 1989, p. 10.
[56] Ibid.
[57] "Conneaut Lake Park to close roller coaster: concerts move more profitable," *Beaver County Times*, 27 August 1992, sec. C, p. 3.
[58] "New buyers plan to keep Conneaut coaster on track," *Allegheny Times*, 7 December 1992, sec. A, p. 8.
[59] "Conneaut Lake Park faces mounting debts," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 25 January 1995, sec. B, p. 11.

attention to raising capital to purchase the park. The Huttons hoped to raise $3 million through benefit concerts, donation requests, and other means, and appealed to the community as members of the working class that dominated the area: "We were angry and sad [at the closure]. People with much more than we have didn't want to bother; we decided somebody had to step in," said Bill.[60] The *Beaver County Times* noted a few months later that the Huttons' efforts had proved unsuccessful, that they had lost $10,000 coordinating fundraising, and that they hoped to sell their house to recoup some of that lost money.[61]

Gary Harris purchased Conneaut Lake at the beginning of July 1996 for $2 million, and immediately attracted attention for his rap sheet, which included rape, forgery, tax evasion, and trafficking money orders. "It kind of raises your eyebrows," admitted the owner of a motel across from the park, but the locals eagerly accepted Harris' ownership, indicating the importance of the park to the community. Many area residents said they looked forward to visiting the reopened park or to submitting applications for employment.[62] An opinion writer for the *Observer-Reporter* mocked these hopes, suggesting instead that Harris would use the park to launder cash.[63] Harris ran Conneaut Lake throughout 1996 and 1997, billing the park for his time as a consultant, and had not paid most of the park's taxes before beginning a two-year prison sentence for tax evasion in September of 1997. He turned ownership and management of the park over to a nonprofit trust.[64]

Second Chances for Community Institutions

[60] "Family fights for park," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 7 February 1996, sec. N, p. 9-10.
[61] "Conneaut Lake Park stays closed," *Beaver County Times*, 15 April 1996, sec. A, p. 5.
[62] "Felon buys Conneaut Lake Park," *Observer-Reporter*, 3 July 1996, sec. D, p. 1.
[63] "Something smelly is going on at Conneaut Lake," *Observer-Reporter*, 7 July 1996, sec. B, p. 7.
[64] "Conneaut Park handed to nonprofit," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 3 September 1997, sec. B, p. 1.

Subsequent trustees and managers have struggled to repay the tax debt built up by Harris, which remains outstanding, but community members have continued to support Conneaut Lake through bankruptcy, the sale of many rides, and other recent developments. Various government agencies and financial institutions have forgiven debts or charges as locals have continued to hope for the best, despite occasional frustration with the uncertainty of the park's existence.[65] The park did not open in 2007, but a judge prevented the sale of much of its land to developers in the hope that it would remain intact.[66] Conneaut Lake reopened in 2009, and the following season the Blue Streak won a $50,000 grant from PepsiCo's Pepsi Refresh Project after online voters pushed the roller coaster's restoration to the top of dozens of proposed cultural projects.[67]

The Economic Progress Alliance of Crawford County now manages the park and has developed plans for its year-round use.[68] The Alliance has filed for bankruptcy to protect the park's assets and is arguing that its non-profit status means that the park should not be liable for certain taxes, echoing some of Hildreth and Wong's points. The park's future remains uncertain, but the impressive level of community support shown for it over the years in conjunction with governmental support and the support of external investors provide an excellent example of an amusement park deeply ingrained in the local culture, without regard to individuals' social classes.[69]

Other communities have displayed a community spirit similar to that of Conneaut Lake's neighbors, although rarely have such efforts aimed to save an entire amusement park. Communities have more often directed efforts toward the purchase of individual assets of

[65] "Conneaut Lake Park given a reprieve: Amusement park plans to open on Memorial Day," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 3 May 2006, sec. B, p. 4.
[66] "Historic amusement park won't open this year," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 23 May 2007, sec. B, p. 1-2.
[67] "Blue Streak peaks with Pepsi grant win," *Titusville Herald*, 2 September 2010.
[68] "Conneaut Lake Park poised for comeback," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 21 June 2014,
[69] "Conneaut Lake Park heads to bankruptcy court today, *Meadville Tribune*, 6 January 2015.

defunct parks, particularly carousels, and a significant number of successes in a diverse group of cities prove that these efforts can often unite communities across class lines. In one of the first such efforts, residents of Glen Echo raised over $80,000 in one month after Glen Echo Park's 1968 closure to prevent the removal of the carousel located there since 1921 to California.[70] The town's Mayor Frank Corder, who chaired the effort with Councilwoman Nancy Long, explained in simple terms why the community sought to save the carousel: "Carousels are good for you, a good thing for children and grownups too, and this one is a fine example of American folk art."[71] The National Park Service took over the carousel and the park, and today, Glen Echo functions as an artistic and cultural center for the community.[72]

More recently, Idora's carousel, after more than twenty years of restoration in the studio of Jane Walentas, became the centerpiece of the Brooklyn Bridge Park in 2011. Despite initial opposition to development there, Brooklyn residents came to look eagerly forward to the carousel's installation, and Walentas reported that "Two busloads of people from Youngstown came to visit these horses two years ago…[and] I felt I had to find a home for [the carousel]."[73] Certainly neither the wealthy suburbs of Washington nor the trendy DUMBO district need economic stimulus, but the placement of these amusement rides in the center of culturally significant areas easily accessible to urban and suburban residents of all classes demonstrates the democratized amusement industry at its best. This echoes the past importance of local amusement parks to those who could not afford to travel elsewhere, and the continuing importance of relics of these parks, even outside their original locations.

[70] "Glen Echo Keeps Its Carousel," *Washington Post*, 2 May 1970, sec. C, p. 1.
[71] "Carousel Gets Gold Ring," *Washington Post*, 18 April 1970, sec C, p. 3.
[72] "Glen Echo Park: Amusement in a Simpler Time," *Washington Post*, 13 August 1997, sec. H, p. 5.
[73] "A Ride with Head-Spinning Views," *New York Times*, 1 September 2011, sec. C, p. 19.

Walentas' comment, and the locations of these two installations, suggests that these publicly-reclaimed carousels serve the same functions as gathering places that the parks in which they originally operated did. The Idora carousel's move from Youngstown to Brooklyn places it an atypical distance from its original home, compared to other similarly-restored carousels. After Euclid Beach Park in Cleveland closed in 1969, for instance, its carousel moved to Palace Playland on Old Orchard Beach, Maine. The Trust for Public Land paid a then-record price for the carousel when Palace Playland's owners declared bankruptcy in 1996 and brought it back to Cleveland, where it reopened in 2014 so that Euclid Beach Park's "rich history can be shared and appreciated by future generations of Greater Clevelanders."[74] The move of this and other carousels to public places such as museums and parks replicates in some ways the opportunities for mutual experience that amusement parks have offered over the past century, and permits citizens to enjoy leisure regardless of their class in an increasingly classed world.

[74] "Euclid Beach Park Carousel Ready to Return to Life, Aurora Residents are Told," *Aurora Advocate*, 26 March 2014.

II: Women Finding an Outlet

A postcard sold at Canobie Lake Park in Salem, New Hampshire at the turn of the twentieth century shows a pretty young lady lifting her skirt slightly and offering a risqué suggestion: "If you want a good time, come to Canobie Lake. You'll get what's coming to you."[1] A 1950s publicity photograph taken at Glen Echo Park shows well-dressed Capital Airlines flight attendants enjoying the park's Coaster Dips.[2] Contemporary advertisements often feature women in bikinis, although now these advertisements tend to feature men as well.[3] All of these advertisements conspire to present women to the male gaze and suggest that amusement parks considered men's business more important than women's. Although women always accounted for large portions of amusement parks' attendance figures, the misogyny of these advertisements shows how the consequences of ideological replication sometimes interfered with the business goals of amusement park operators.

Amusement parks have served as important gathering places since the end of the nineteenth century, and have, over time, brought otherwise diverse groups together by providing a place for groups to encounter one another. Particularly in the early days of the amusement park, when women and especially unmarried women could interact with men only in certain strictly-defined contexts, the amusement park could provide considerable freedom. After World War II, amusement parks sought to realign women's roles as patrons in the context of their new

[1] Douglas W. Seed and Katherine Khalife, *Scenes of America: Canobie Lake Park* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 22-23.
[2] Richard Cook and Deborah Lange, *Glen Echo Park: A Story of Survival* (Glen Echo, MD: Glen Echo Communications Group, 2005), 83.
[3] Amusement parks featuring water parks, naturally, use these scenes more than others. They also seem less intentionally titillating than the scenes of the past, but the fact remains that the advertisements display bodies for publicity.

roles as wives and mothers. More recently, women have exercised agency to exert changes on aspects of the amusement park experience that exclude them from full participation without belittlement. Today's amusement parks remain popular destinations with less of the troubling implications of the past.[4]

Leisure in the Early Industrial Age

Ethics promoting the value of work generally applied as strongly to women as to men at the dawn of the industrial era in the United States around the 1820s. Although the work they performed tended to differ, men and women alike felt increasing pressure to manage growing workloads and still find time to enjoy themselves.[5] The "division in the lives of ordinary people" mentioned earlier continued to separate work from leisure and lead individuals to more purposefully seek opportunities to enjoy themselves.[6] Women felt many of the same pressures of men, but responded to them differently because of their different position within society.[7]

The activities pursued by men and women during their leisure time became increasingly distinct. The French journalist Léon Faucher wrote that "the factory…invaded the family hearth" and broke it into pieces.[8] The industrial system disrupted family life in many ways and the increasing separation of men and women at both work and leisure constituted "perhaps [the]

[4] Some positive changes have resulted from overall changes in society rather than specific changes to amusement parks. For example, many parks still feature "Guess Your Weight" or "Guess Your Age" games, but with fewer of the negative aspects these games took on in less enlightened times.
[5] American women tended to perform housework while American men tended to earn profit, often at home during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries but increasingly elsewhere beginning around the postbellum period after the 1870s. American women also had more opportunities to work outside the home for a profit, albeit only if they fulfilled certain expectations about age and class, beginning during the same time.
[6] Gary Cross, *A Social History of Leisure Since 1600* (State College, PA: Venture Publishing Inc., 1990), 57.
[7] Cross, 59-70.
[8] Ibid., 61. Faucher identified these two pieces in 1844 as "the domestic hearth and society," apparently meaning by the latter not only the profitmaking activities that occurred outside private homes but also activities such as attendance at public events such as holiday celebrations or worship services.

most subtle" consequence.[9] This became increasingly less subtle as industrialism progressed. Generally speaking, during the later years of the nineteenth century, a woman might work outside the home between her childhood and marriage, settling down into housewifery after marriage and adopting attitudes about their work at home not unlike those they had held in the workplace.[10]

In addition to working hard to reduce the time they spent on tasks at home, "women developed innovative approaches to leisure," organizing private events both for their own families and for friends.[11] In addition to these group opportunities for leisure, women established extremely intimate friendships between one another. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg describes these relationships as ranging "from the supportive love of sisters, through the enthusiasms of adolescent girls, to sensual avowals of love by mature women" during the nineteenth century.[12] Some of these women may have engaged in physical expressions of their mutual affection, but the modern understanding of these relationships as possibly lesbian does not apply.[13] Instead, these close female relationships constitute an extended aspect of the supportive network created between women, particularly of the upper classes.[14]

[9] Ibid.
[10] In fact, Cross likens the attitudes of average women toward housewifery more directly to "the traditional artisan" than to the newfangled factory worker. The most obvious distinctions seem to be that artisans produced on smaller scales and enjoyed more control over their output than factory workers. Either way, women with experience working outside the home no doubt did take some lessons home with them when they took up housewifery.
[11] Cross, 63.
[12] Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs* 1 no. 1 (1975), 1-29.
[13] For one thing, a lesbian identity in the modern sense had not fully developed in the period Smith-Rosenberg covers. More importantly, however, these women did not conceive of their relationships as either romantic or sexual.
[14] Ibid.

Public amusements recreated these separate spheres but also provided opportunities to mix.[15] In public parks, for example, men worked consciously to create their own spaces. Oversight bodies wishing to exercise Frederik Law Olmsted's vision of the "distinctly harmonizing and refining influence" upon "the most unfortunate and lawless classes of the city" paid more attention to exercising that influence upon men.[16] Park planners in Worcester, MA likewise kept athletic fields separate from other areas intended for less rowdy pursuits.[17] In many cases, these female spaces focused more on providing a place for women to interact with their children rather than with each other or with men.[18] Wealthy women and working class women alike bemoaned a lack of more varied recreational options geared to them.[19]

Women did sometimes have the opportunity to participate in sporting activities, but they risked public reproach.[20] Newspaper and magazine accounts of women who belonged to different sports leagues or gymnasiums contained more than a hint of criticism.[21] Even various guides to sport and leisure that conceded that women should participate in some activities warned them of particular sports. These sports, according to the guide, put their bodies at risk of

[15] This segregation had different effects in different classes, as upper class women often had more established opportunities to enjoy leisure in high society and working class women had to work harder to create replacement experiences.

[16] These overseers associated mass male leisure with practices like saloon drinking, which they considered highly immoral and a detriment to the public character. Some women certainly drank also, but usually neither as publicly nor, at times, as rowdily as men did, hence the focus on providing men with soothing influences like those found in public parks.

[17] Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 130. The *Spy* article remarks that the nurses "arrayed [themselves] in the usual white cap and apron," emphasizing that the cleanliness of Elm Park allowed the nurses to wear such easily dirtied uniforms.

[18] Women of the upper classes, who could afford to hire nurses, seem to have used these parks more than their neighbors of the lower classes, and a sense that park areas generally intended for women remained neater and calmer than those intended for men likely results from perceptions that members of the upper classes kept themselves cleanr than those of the lower classes. Rosenzweig touches on this idea and remarks that conflict occasionally arose about whether public parks should tend towards the "staid" upper classes or the "rowdy" lower classes.

[19] Rosenzweig, 133.

[20] Unsurprisingly, wealthy women could participate in many sports more easily than poor women, not only because they had more free time but also because they could afford more or better equipment.

[21] Valeria J. Freysinger, Susan M. Shaw, Karla A. Henderson, and M. Deborah Bialeschki, *Leisure, Women, and Gender* (State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc., 2013), 95-107. This criticism often centered around the perceived sexuality of the athletic participants, often seeming to allege lesbianism.

suffering deformation, with the implication that such deformation would affect their desirability to men or reproductive capabilities.[22] The magazine *Outing*, for example, combined such criticism and advice when in 1891 it printed an account of "a woman's first experience in [the] manly sport" of duck shooting. The author, Wenona Gilman, allowed that "now…the relegation of women to the kitchen is looked upon as a past memory," but recounted injuring herself carelessly and needing the assistance of the male guide accompanying her.[23]

Women worried about preserving their respectability, particularly among the lower classes, tended to limit themselves to spectating at male sports, even when they might have had opportunities to participate more actively in athletic events. When women did play, men often could not watch them, "because it was not considered proper for men to see women sweating from vigorous effort."[24] Throughout this era, then, women and men alike continued to reinforce separate spheres for women, and women continued to create their own recreational and leisure spaces. Many women of the middle and elite classes turned to popular education movements.[25] Today's educational system might refer to these programs as "continuing education." The education provided by these movements provided both men and women with opportunities for leisurely cultural enrichment as well as social gathering.[26]

Chautauqua came to exemplify the popular education movement. Founded in 1874 to train Sunday school teachers and later expanded to train those teachers in the arts and other

[22] Horseback riding, for example, placed women at risk of deformed buttocks, according to the book *Exercise for Ladies*. The text offered no advice as to how men could protect their own buttocks against such catastrophe.
[23] Wenona Gilman, "An American Rosalind, or a Woman's First Experience in a Manly Sport," *Outing, an Illustrated Monthly Magazine of Recreation*, April 1891, 65-67.
[24] Ibid., 99.
[25] Naturally, these women tended toward the upper classes, but many popular education movements sought to welcome all people interested, at least in theory. The dense subject matter of many lectures, concerts, and so on seems unlikely to have appealed to those without an education and a corresponding background in those subjects, however.
[26] John C. Scott, "The Chautauqua Movement: Revolution in Higher Education," *The Journal of Higher Education* 70, no. 4 (1999): 389-412.

disciplines, the Chautauqua movement quickly expanded to offer its programs to anyone.[27] Contemporary opinion considered Chautauqua programs, including those in the arts, literature, and languages, enlightened and culturally relevant, but generally accessible to the non-elite.[28] In addition to providing cultural enlightenment, Chautauqua encampments, which usually lasted about a week, provided the chance to enjoy nature. One representative *Washington Post* article about the Chautauqua at Glen Echo, Maryland makes reference to "a breeze that made the flags…flutter and put…life in the foliage," "the sound of the rushing water," and listening to music from individual porches.[29] This article implicitly criticizes the city and its potentially damaging aspects.

Such pleasant conditions certainly interested both women and men, but the Chautauqua held a particular interest for women. Chautauqua sessions offered women representation they could find in few other places at the end of the nineteenth century.[30] Chautauquas not only welcomed women as participants but also addressed issues of importance to them. The Mother Chautauqua at Chautauqua, New York, for instance, took up the question of "dress reform" in 1891. *The Chicago Daily Tribune* remarked upon various past failed movements to reduce the number of clothing articles society expected women to wear, and trumpeted the number of female dress reformers converging upon the Chautauqua as a center of the movement.[31]

[27] This additional training arose from shifts in perception about what sort of education Sunday schools and similar institutions should offer, particularly given the wildly varying amounts and quality of education Americans received in schools at the time.
[28] R. B. Tozier, "A Short Life-History of the Chautauqua," *American Journal of Sociology* 40, no. 1 (1934): 69-73.
[29] "Talmage at Glen Echo: Auspicious Opening of the National Chautauqua Season," *Washington Post*, 17 June 1891, p. 1.
[30] Women do not seem to have outnumbered men as either attendees or presenters, but their presence among both groups remains significant nevertheless.
[31] "Dress-Reform Ahead at Chautauqua: Women Have Got Down to Two Garments Now and Like the Change," *Chicago Daily Tribun*e, 12 August 1891, p. 1.

Chautauquas also hired women for leadership positions.[32] The Glen Echo Chautauqua hired Clara Barton for the presidency of its Women's Executive Committee. To mark the occasion, Barton penned a *Washington Post* editorial linking the success of the movement nationally and the achievements of women in her social circle. Significantly, the Women's Executive Committee had input in all aspects of the Chautauqua, not only those that applied specifically to women. Its leaders therefore enjoyed rare opportunities to take control of fulfilling their needs and wants regarding Chautauqua programs.[33]

Women even served as featured performers, frequently offering recitations or music, and occasionally tutelage in these or other subjects.[34] In fact, the influence of women on the Chautauqua movement became so great that some men decried what they considered its excesses. The author Rudyard Kipling, for instance, deplored his inability to smoke a cigar on Chautauqua grounds and assigned this prohibition to a desire to restrict "activities intrinsic to masculine life." In his opinion, "it would be better…if [Chautauqua women] all got married instead of pumping up interest in a bric-à-brac museum and advertised lectures."[35] Another felt that the Chautauqua he visited lacked "'balance' between male and female influences," indicating that the participation of men and women in the same activities did not lead to a fully blended experience.[36] According to historian Jeanne Halgren Kilde, the mere proximity of

[32] These positions, naturally, remained hierarchically under others, always held by men. Still, the inclusion of women in the first place constituted advancement.
[33] "Glen Echo Chautauqua: Miss Clara Barton Writes Enthusiastically of the Movement," *Washington Post*, 15 February 1891, p. 6. The Baltzley brothers, who founded the Chautauqua, wanted Barton there less for her formidable intellectual and leadership qualities and more because the public saw her presence to constitute a celebrity endorsement of sorts, but she nevertheless held real responsibilities in the role the Baltzleys gave her. . In addition to participation in the Chautauqua, pper-class women took advantage of other similar opportunities in local civic organizations to exercise leadership and power.
[34] "Up at Chautauqua: Today Will Be Devoted to the Confederate Veterans," *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1899, p. 4. The article, to choose just one of many, recounts that "brilliant exercises [were] offered by two brilliant women," who favored the audience with recitation and lecture.
[35] Jeanne Halgren Kilde, "The 'Predominance of the Feminine' at Chautauqua: Rethinking the Gender-Space Relationship in Victorian America," *Signs* 24, no. 2 (1999): 451.
[36] Ibid., 460.

thousands of men and women in insubstantial temporary dwellings constituted a major, if temporary, challenge to the separate spheres expected by society, because the program's design placed women in roughly the same sphere as men, both physically and intellectually.[37]

Unlike the Chautauquas, the World's Fairs that form the next link to modern amusement parks generally maintained the gender segregation that Kipling would seem to have preferred. Women could present exhibits in limited fields only, usually arts and crafts. These would appear in "Women's Courts" or similar edifices away from otherwise related exhibits.[38] Women generally lacked the leadership roles they held in Chautauquas, although they did make their voices heard on this issue and occasionally received token appointments. Arguments about the lack of female involvement and leadership presented to the public tended towards the political rather than the ethical: in 1889, for example, a group of New York women told *The Washington Post* that "they feared unless the sex is officially recognized by the organizers that women will take little or no interest in the" upcoming 1892 Chicago World's Fair.[39] An 1893 *New York Times* article purported to cover the "work of world's fair women," who displayed "energy in executing plans for exhibits," but most of the article consists of descriptions of services such as nurseries and philanthropy women at the fair would provide, spaces women carved out for themselves away from men.[40] Overall, women simply could not participate in the collegial atmosphere of learning and entertainment on the same level as men.

"Shrill Screams" in the Early Years

[37] Ibid.
[38] Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 9-104.
[39] "Women and the World's Fair," *Washington Post*, 6 October 1889, p. 14.
[40] "Work of World's Fair Women: Energy Displayed in Executing Plans for Exhibits," *New York Times*, 15 January 1893, p. 10. This commendable work unfortunately did not transcend society's ordinary expectations for women.

Women found still more welcoming environments in early amusement parks like Sea Lion Park and the other amusements on Coney Island.[41] New transportation options made it easier for women to access these attractions. The inexpensiveness of beach resorts generally drew small groups of women to them.[42] The area provided places for women of the upper and working classes alike to enjoy themselves separately, although working class women visited amusement parks more frequently than their wealthier counterparts. The expansion of amusement parks across Coney Island helped bring these women together, since upper class women still enjoyed the area and eventually found less and less to do outside amusement parks.[43]

Similar transformations happened to amusement areas elsewhere. Beach resorts, like Coney Island, attracted visitors from nearby cities thanks to easy public transportation options. The first boardwalk in Atlantic City, New Jersey had opened in 1870 and similar construction increased during the 1880s and 1890s.[44] Various piers along the beach soon housed amusement rides, ballrooms, restaurants, and concession stands. Similar amusement areas shortly opened across New Jersey as local boosters and developers hoped to mimic the success of Atlantic City.[45] One of these, Asbury Park, promised to promote "solitude to counter the grinding sounds

[41] Different historians and parks have assigned the title of "first amusement parks" to many different properties. Some businesses currently operating as amusement parks opened in other forms prior to Sea Lion Park, including Connecticut's Lake Compounce, which opened as a picnic grove in 1846 and only later assumed the form of a modern amusement park but calls itself America's oldest continuously-operating amusement park. The emergence of several other amusement parks in the familiar form around Sea Lion Park after its opening helps suggest that Sea Lion Park deserves the title.

[42] Women generally came in groups rather than individually not only because of society's suspicions about unaccompanied women but also because pursuing mass leisure seemed more fun in a group of friends than alone. To this day, many more people visit amusement parks in groups than as individuals.

[43] Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1986), 115-138.

[44] James Lilliefors, *America's Boardwalks: From Coney Island to California* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 1-21. Longer and longer boardwalks replaced the first boardwalk until a fourth boardwalk opened in 1890. The local population, which supported these boardwalks and other tourist growth, rose from 1,043 to 13,055 in the same period.

[45] Ibid. The "imitators," in addition to Asbury Park, included Wildwood and Ocean City.

of industry" in American cities.[46] The *Asbury Park Journal* remarked that "surely there is rush and noise enough around" a certain place in the city "for those who wish for Coney Island-like crowds," and suggested that the rest of the city remain in solitude.[47] As Asbury Park's popularity increased in the 1890s, local developers added several amusement rides and the large indoor Palace amusement park, the popularity of which did not sit well with moral reformers.[48] Women came initially for the solitude but kept coming for the amusement rides.

Amusement parks soon became the subject of moral outrage, particularly in major cities. In 1911, for example, Pastor Boynton of Chicago called the city's amusement parks "evil influences," "full of filth," and "the sum of all villainy." Having "made a personal investigation," Boynton assured his flock that various activities that took place in amusement parks "would make Sodom blush," lured "scores of young girls to ruin and death," and filled "minds and hearts with the muck and slime of perdition."[49] Boynton warned: "Any man who takes wife…or lady friend to one of these places is lacking in due respect for womanhood," and "any woman who will go to these open parks" herself "shows that she is no longer prizing the high and holy influence that women may exercise over mankind and has but herself to blame if men lessen their esteem for her."[50] This ignored the fact that many working women used their own money to attend amusement parks and strips agency from women.

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[46] This mirrors the rise of the Chautauquas and other adult educational movement, many of which developed into amusement parks just as amusement parks developed at Asbury Park and elsewhere.
[47] Helen-Chantal Pike, *Asbury Park's Glory Days: The Story of an American Resort* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 1-16.
[48] Ibid., 43-84. "Tillie," a huge smiling man painted on the side of the Palace building, took his name from George Tilyou, the founder of Coney Island's Steeplechase Park, one of the first amusement parks to open there after Sea Lion Park.
[49] "Flays Amusement Parks: Pastor Boylston Declares They Are Sum of All Villainy," *Chicago Daily Tribun*e, 15 June 1908, p. 1. These activities, the Pastor said, included dancing, drinking, gambling, and listening to music. He seems to consider both men and women equally susceptible, and adds that children should keep away from amusement parks, lest they grow accustomed to such activities. He directs this plea, however, to fathers rather than to mothers, because society expected the former to possess the strongest moral voice in a household.
[50] Ibid.

Perhaps because they did have their own earnings and used them to pursue leisure, many women ignored such warnings. They also ignored reports of physical danger at amusement parks. Although amusement parks offered many attractions in addition to mechanical rides, and usually kept those rides safe, newspapers printed sensational reports of occasional accidents. In 1911, for instance, *The New York Times* reported "the shrill scream of a woman, followed by frightened cries and the screech of metal against metal and of splintered wood, brought every one within earshot running" to the site of a roller coaster derailment on Coney Island.[51] *The Washington Post* reported on the same accident, noting that it occurred "in [the] presence of thousands" the Sunday before Labor Day.[52] Businessmen in the industry sometimes promised a renewed focus on safety or "legitimacy" in the wake of such accidents and dramatic news reports, and amusement parks remained popular.[53] Theme park attendance did not change as a result of these incidents or the highly gendered reporting about them. It seems that women rejected claims, explicit and implicit, that amusement parks posed particular dangers to them, or indeed posed dangers generally. Because men continued to visit amusement parks as they always had, men and women increasingly enjoyed them together.[54]

"A Chance to Get Hugged"

Men and women enjoyed amusement park rides together. Ballroom dancing constituted another popular activity at many parks, one that provided explicit opportunities for contact

[51] "Two Killed in Air on Roller Coaster: Coney Island Crowd Sees Bodies of Women Hanging from Upset Car on Giant Race Track," *New York Times*, 4 September 1911, p. 1.
[52] "Roller Coaster Kills Two: Women Crushed When Car Leaps Track Eighty Feet in Air," *Washington Post*, 4 September 1911, p. 2.
[53] In 1925, for example, the National Association of Amusement Parks announced at its convention that it sought to renew focus on the public safety, in terms not only of bodily safety on amusement rides but safety from fraudulent games and so on. These pronouncements did not always occur as the result of a specific accident or accidents.
[54] Often the groups arrived separately according to gender and met members of the other gender at the parks.

between the sexes. Early twentieth century visitors to Luna Park in Arlington, Virginia looked forward to "a great salon ballroom, with its smooth floor and its danceable music, [which] bids the terpsichorean devotees a welcome not to be declined." Anyone injured could expect "a fully equipped hospital prepared to care for all cases of injury or sickness."[55] Although few women or men did suffer injuries while dancing in any ballroom, moralists continued to fret about damage to the souls of those who visited ballrooms.

These moralists accurately perceived some aspects of public dance halls. Historian Mark Knowles writes that "these venues fostered an atmosphere of permissiveness where unchaperoned strangers met and danced together." Dance halls or adjacent establishments often served beer and other alcoholic drinks.[56] Reports that men searched dance halls to find women to sell into "white slavery" have no basis in fact.[57] Claims that men literally carried away large numbers of women for nefarious purposes after engaging them in such dance moves as the "bunny hug" or the "grizzly bear" also appear unsubstantiated.[58]

Women continued to enjoy dance halls, ignoring moralistic criticisms of the institutions they enjoyed. Women from lower classes who felt they had less to lose in terms of social standing had more freedom to do this than did their counterparts in the upper classes. In fact, some upper-class women actively supported and organized against efforts to close or restrict dance halls.[59] These women believed they had to reform dance halls in as many cities as they

[55] "Luna Park Dazzles: Its Myriad of Wonders Delight Many Thousands," *Washington Post*, 30 May 1906, p. 9.
[56] Mark Knowles, *The Wicked Waltz and Other Scandalous Dances: Outrage at Couple Dancing in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2009), 12-13.
[57] Ibid., 1-15. Even the august Jane Addams entered the discussion on dance halls, calling them a "canker" that deserved eradication, but not going so far as to make the same comments about "white slavery" that some of her colleagues did.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Women like Jane Addams had long taken roles in moral crusades, and men including preachers certainly continued to speak out about dance halls. Because many crusaders seemed to believe that the dangers inherent in dance halls threatened only women, however, women's work against or in favor of dance halls seems a noteworthy

could, and often toured cities they had not yet reached to relate stories about past successes. The activist Maria Lambin, for example, spoke about her experiences cleaning up dance halls in San Francisco: "For many years public dancing has been a target of abuse from the churches and the press…[but] in many cities they are now welcomed if their growth is coupled with some plan for regulation."[60] Lambin reported that her efforts focused in large part on improving conditions for the women employed to dance with men in some dance halls but intended to touch upon all dance halls.[61]

The article concluded simply: "women did it."[62] Despite these women's efforts to regulate or police dance halls, however, many women simply ignored attempts to restrict their enjoyment there, even when those attempts came from governmental authority figures. A *Chicago Daily Tribune* article from 1906 notes that, despite extensive patrolling, "nothing that the police could do stopped the mixing of immoral women and girls" from entering dance halls.[63] Women enjoyed patronizing ballrooms and dance halls, in amusement parks and elsewhere, in

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exercise of agency. Women involved in other reform movements, particularly those seeking to advance temperance, also reflect women's agency in the face of what they perceived as threats to the wellbeing of all women.

[60] "Dance Hall Evils Minimized in West: Miss Maria Lambin Tells How the Barbary Coast in San Francisco was Cleaned Up," *New York Times*, 2 March 1924, sec. E, p. 5.

[61] This article deals with long-term reforms on the Barbary Coast and, although *The New York Times* published it later than the turn-of-the-century, its attitude and the events it describes situate the article firmly in the same tradition as the other dancing reforms discussed. The effects of Prohibition, one of the most significant differences between the first and third decades of the century regarding dance halls, muddy Lambin's recollections only slightly, since they did not generally deal with alcohol.

[62] Ibid. The dance halls thought to be most in need of reform, with which Lambin worked, allowed men to pay, often a dime, per dance with women hired by the establishment. These sorts of dance halls differed from those typically placed in amusement parks, in which social dancing occurred between non-paying partners according to the whims of both men and women. Many members of the public seem not to have drawn meaningful distinctions between the two kinds of dance halls, however, condemning both, perhaps without realizing the distinctions. Society considered many dance steps so outrageous that dancers would probably have faced condemnation regardless of whether they paid to perform those steps.

[63] "Dance Hall Rule Made Huge Farce: Police Unable to Exclude Boys and Girls Under Eighteen from the Vicious Public Halls," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 February 1906, p. 1. The glee with which this article recounts its story suggests either the sensationalized reporting once common in newspapers or some level of agreement with the "immoral women" it describes, or perhaps both.

large part because of the greater freedom they enjoyed to interact with men there.[64] Elsewhere in amusement parks, certain rides offered the even rarer opportunity for women to engage with men physically away from prying eyes.[65] One man recalled that the Ferris wheel at Steeplechase Park on Coney Island provided such chances if a kind operator "would play cupid and send [a couple] up alone" so that the fortunate lovers could enjoy "a kiss and snuggle" along with a romantic "overview of…the lights…at the park and the rest of Coney Island."[66] Another Coney Island ride, which propelled riders through a chute onto a slide, advertised itself with the slogan: "Will she throw her arms around your neck and yell? Well, I guess, yes."[67] Dark rides, which took riders by car or boat through dark and winding passages with various types of scenery, offered more prolonged opportunities for physical intimacy. The manager of one such ride remarked that "the men like it because it gives them a chance to hug the girls, the girls like it because it gives them a chance to get hugged." Another remarked that amusement parks needed to continue to attract women in order to remain viable because men so enjoyed these rides with them.[68]

Such interactions between men and women happened away from other patrons in separate ride vehicles, but the more communal experience of carousel riding offered another

[64] This applies strictly to social dance halls, those most likely to exist at amusement parks, and not to those at which men paid for the privilege of dancing. Establishments at which women paid to dance with men did not exist during the time period in discussion.
[65] Society seems willing to have ignored these sorts of transgressions, or at least to avoid speaking about them publicly in the same way some spoke out against dance halls and other "ills" associated with amusement parks, although perhaps public knowledge that these activities occurred contributed to the continuing greater accessibility to amusement parks of lower class women than to their upper class peers. Importantly, many of the sexual interactions that took place on amusement rides occurred in the semi-private spaces of ride vehicles, rather than in public on a dance floor.
[66] Norman D. Anderson, *Ferris Wheels: An Illustrated History* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1992), 158.
[67] Peiss, 133.
[68] Ibid., 133-134. Society unsurprisingly considered it the man's domain to instigate such contact, but women still exercised agency by engaging in it, because society outside the walls of dark rides considered that contact inappropriate.

opportunity for gender performances insofar as these interactions took place in public.[69] The vast majority of amusement parks included carousels, and the vast majority of carousels offered the opportunity to try to "catch the brass ring" for a free ride.[70] Operators fed small metal rings into a dispenser extended over the platform while the carousel turned, and riders on the outer row tried to grab these. One brass ring placed in the dispenser during each ride gave the rider who grabbed it a free ride, but riders also had the opportunity to try to remove as many of the other rings, made of steel, from the dispenser as possible. This practice derives from military training exercises conducted on the European forerunners of carousels, and American men enjoyed the opportunity to show off for girlfriends by successfully grabbing for rings in the tradition of those training exercises.[71]

The Arts in Amusement Parks

Amusement parks tended to place carousels either at their entrances or at their geographic centers, because the rides had broad appeal and the band organs that usually accompanied them played loud music conducive to a festive atmosphere across the park.[72] Besides the per formative nature of the brass ring game, the artistic elements of carousels speak, in sound and sight, to contemporary American women's experiences, echoing the same ideologies evident

[69] This also allowed for immediate feedback from members of the crowd on individuals' behavior, therefore reinforcing the behaviors considered both acceptable and desirable by society at large.
[70] Peter J. Malia, *Flying Horses: The Golden Age of American Carousel Arts, 1870-1930* (Monroe, CT: The Connecticut Press, 2010), 4.
[71] Adams, 9-12.
[72] This occurred by design. In traveling installations, the band organs helped attract customers, but in permanent amusement parks, managers tried less to attract customers with this music than to entertain them with it. Band organs played almost all music at quick tempos, so even songs with otherwise sad lyric and melodic content seemed uplifting and cheerful.

elsewhere in society.[73] Although manufacturers mass-produced most other amusement rides, specialized companies carved carousels of wood and painted them by hand, allowing them to be visually unique but following patterns and conventions that conformed to changing aesthetic expectations.[74] Band organs played music issued regularly on paper rolls according to standard scales and selected from the most popular tunes across the nation.[75] Because ballroom orchestras played the same songs, the experience of the carousel and the dance hall share another link.[76]

American popular music during the twentieth century focused largely on romantic love. Not surprisingly, so did the music played on band organs and in ballrooms. Crowds assembled at carousels often sung along to the band organ.[77] In the early 1940s, music played on carousels shifted to reflect wartime patriotism. Popular music celebrated the role of many women on the home front, who contributed to the war effort in many ways but retained their "womanly" qualities. "For the Flag, For the Home, For the Family," "The Boys Will See Us Thru," "First Class Private Mary Brown," and other songs appearing on music rolls issued during the war include lyrics that celebrate women's roles in the war insist that women hold these roles "for the

[73] Because of the volume of band organs and the central location of carousels in most amusement parks, these elements of the carousel pervaded entire parks, particularly small ones.

[74] William Manns, Peggy Shank, and Marianne Stevens, *Painted Ponies: American Carousel Art* (Santa Fe, NM: Zon International Publishing, 1986), 9-25. The Great Depression ultimately drove most carousel manufacturers out of business, and the survivors changed to mass-produced models that still allowed customized painting.

[75] The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company of North Tonawanda, New York and its successors enjoyed the largest market share, but other smaller companies, most based in New York, also issued music rolls for some scales.

[76] Most American band organ scales can play only certain songs, because their manufacturers left some accidentals out in order to save room within the organ case and decrease production costs. Some songs proved more difficult to alter to fit the needed specifications, so Wurlitzer and its competitors did not arrange them. Orchestras playing in ballrooms had no such limitations.

[77] Music rolls intended for home use in player pianos often featured lyrics printed on the roll so people could sing along. Band organs did not include these features, but group singing remained popular during the 1940s and large crowds occasionally engaged in group singing along with publicly displayed instrument like band organs. The focus placed by group singing on the lyric content of popular songs increased during the Great Depression, when the cash-strapped Wurlitzer company, the largest distributor of band organ music rolls, switched from ten tunes per 25-minute roll to six tunes, each with little more than a verse and chorus repeated until it filled one-sixth the length of the previous ten-tune rolls. Group singing of songs arranged this way could take on a quality like a mantra.

duration" only.[78] Even many songs that did not deal explicitly with the war dealt implicitly with women's roles. Ronald L. Davis writes that "romantic love, with its inevitable losses and frustrations, continued at the heart of popular music during the war, and songs in this vein also appeared on band organ rolls.[79] Elaine May concurs: "Americans were receptive to emotional appeals to home and hearth," and "affirmed the primacy of domesticity for women" even as these appeals in popular culture validate the role of women in wartime.[80] After World War II, the focus of popular music played at dance pavilions and carousels remained on romantic love.[81]

Visually, carousels also prominently featured women in sexualized and romantic contexts, as well as in a nationalist context.[82] Amusement parks also subjected female figures to the male gaze in so-called dark rides, which brought visitors in cars or boats past scenery in otherwise darkened buildings. These attractions offered unmarried women the chance to physically engage with unmarried men, but the scenery often disempowered these women by showing women, and only very rarely men, in positions of distress in dungeons and other sexualized situations. Deborah Philips notes that theatrical productions prominently featured "the production of horror" the introduction of the gothic genre into dark rides, but the fact that

[78] Matthew O. Caulfield, *A Catalog of Music Rolls for Wurlitzer Military Band Organs Playing the Style 150 Roll*, revised 18 January 2015. This excellent source, compiled from lists issued by Wurlitzer, empirical observations from surviving rolls not documented by Wurlitzer, and knowledge of Wurlitzer's issuing practices, constitutes one of the most complete rollographies yet issued.
[79] Ronald L. Davis, *A History of Music in American Life, Volume III: The Modern Era, 1920-Present* (Malabar, FL: Robert Krieger Publishing Company, 1981), 325-351. These songs include "In My Arms," "My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time, and "The Love I Long For."
[80] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1998), 58-62.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Mann, Shank, and Stevens, 72-99. Many carousels depicted women as "Columbia" figures, and more featured paintings of women on elements meant to conceal mechanics from view. These paintings depicted women in romantic proximity to men or displaying themselves aesthetically.

women alone appeared in sexualized positions of distress in the gothic tradition continued to disempower women.[83] These kinds of images exist in haunted houses to the present day.

A Shifting Postwar World

Even as amusement park art changed little, the postwar period saw a number of changes that significantly affected how women enjoyed leisure. The centrality of amusement parks as gathering places during the war had increased the accessibility of amusement parks for women of all classes.[84] Maureen Honey writes that the societal conception of "the stoic…heroine whose only hope for salvation lay in subordinating self to a greater good," as exemplified by Rosie the Riveter, helped women identify opportunities in the job market, but ultimately resulted in "feelings of solidarity" with men fighting overseas rather than in a feeling of equality with those men, who returned at the war's conclusion.[85] Because amusement parks often displayed propaganda from the War Department, like images of Rosie, and from other sources, the ideologies typified in this propaganda became replicated in the parks.

The postwar baby boom then reframed women's role at amusement parks in terms of their new roles as mothers. Children had long attended amusement parks, with or without their parents, but amusement parks capitalized on the baby boom by building "Kiddielands,"

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[83] Deborah Philips, *Fairground Attractions: A Genealogy of the Pleasure Ground* (London, UK: A & C Black, 2012), 109.

[84] Certain large resorts, like Coney Island, maintained the somewhat seedy reputation of earlier years, but society appears to have considered the bulk of urban and particularly suburban amusement parks more reputable after the war had brought society together in many ways. This same shift applied to other means of mass leisure as well. By adding features like Glen Echo Park's "throw a baseball at Hitler through a toilet seat" game at a time in which the war preoccupied Americans and continuing to feature popular music in ballrooms and on band organs, amusement parks increased their relevance still further.

[85] Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II*, (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 183-209. Honey notes that this applies considerably less to upper class women, many of whom did not work during the war.

collections of attractions designed for children to ride, usually with spaces for their parents to join them or watch nearby.[86] A *Chicago Daily Tribune* report about that city's "kiddie parks" remarks that "it takes a steel-spined parent to resist the call of the calliope and carrousel at those modern, miniature carnivals."[87] The *Tribune* suggested that mothers attended these parks with their children not only for the children's enjoyment but for their own, quoting one mother: "we had to bring [the children] here to get them quiet and to find a little peace for ourselves."[88] In other words, women could enjoy leisure while still fulfilling their motherly obligations.

The rise of the airplane helped enable tourism to more distant locations.[89] Walt Disney took advantage of this shift in leisure patterns when he opened Disneyland in 1955. LeRoy Ashby writes that Disney "consciously aligned himself with suburban America and against disorderly city influences" and that "visitors could…enjoy a clean, predictable, orderly environment."[90] According to a plaque read by Disney on opening day, "Disneyland is dedicated to the ideals…and hard facts that have created America."[91] Although visitors of all classes felt more comfortable in amusement parks after World War II because of the intensified shared experiences of the war and its consequences, like the baby boom, those of the upper classes remained interested in alternatives, because they remained interested in a sense of exclusivity. Women, with or without families, could feel more comfortable than they ever had at an amusement park, confident of their safety and enjoyment at the slick-imaged Disneyland. If they

[86] Inviting parents to join their children at Kiddielands meant that they would also enter the park and buy food, drinks, and souvenirs in addition to those their children might have bought with their own money.
[87] "Chicago's Kiddie Parks Doing a Lively Business in Dishing Out Happiness," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 5 August 1953, sec. A, p. 1.
[88] Ibid. The mother uses "we" presumably because her husband also attended the park with her and the children.
[89] The upper classes had easier access to this newly popular mode of transportation, because of their fiscal means, and the lower class enjoyed slowly increasing access as the technology involved became less innovative and more affordable.
[90] LeRoy Ashby, With Amusement for All: A History of American Popular Culture since 1830 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 263-301.
[91] Karal Ann Marling, "Disneyland, 1955: Just Take the Santa Ana Freeway to the American Dream," *American Art* 5, no. 1 (1991): 168-207.

did choose to attend Disneyland, women did not worry about the criticism lobbed at women who had enjoyed Coney Island dance halls, because society considered the carefully structured and exclusive Disneyland experience more reputable and desirable.[92]

Traditional local amusement parks continued to lose ground over the twentieth century as these parks and large parks like Disneyland alike worked to make the amusement park an experience relevant to the individual or to the whole family.[93] Empowered by the success of feminist ideas in many quarters of society, some women at the end of the twentieth century came to criticize elements of amusement parks that they perceived as sexist or otherwise unsuitable for them or their families. In 1994, after a series of complaints by patrons including mothers, the Snow White's Adventures ride at Walt Disney World in Florida closed for renovations. When the ride reopened, the park had replaced or reworked several elements allegedly too frightening for young children.[94] The company's experience with complaints about the ride, renamed "Snow White's Scary Adventures," helped lead the company to "launch[ing] an aggressive campaign" to publicize the safety and suitability of its rides for all ages, quelling the complaints of parents who worried about their roles as protectors of children.[95]

Disneyland's Pirates of the Caribbean received more explicitly feminist critiques a few years later.[96] *The Washington Post* reported that the park would replace scenes in the ride of pirates "chasing buxom women around a tavern" with pirates "chasing…platters of food the

[92] Ibid.
[93] Naturally, some amusement parks had slightly more specific focuses than others, but the majority have, since World War II, attempted to pitch themselves as attractions suitable to all people.
[94] "As Disney World closes scary Snow White ride, kids lose more than memories," *Tampa Bay Times*, 18 May 2012. Interestingly, complaints about the ride had nothing directly to do with the "princess myth."
[95] "Fine Line on Wild Rides: Disney Balances Family Image With a Need for More Thrills," *Wall Street Journal*, 1 July 2005, sec. B, p. 1.
[96] Essentially the same ride exists at Walt Disney World also, and Disney made similar changes there too, but these did not achieve the same publicity across the nation, particularly since non-local news media tends to conflate or confuse the Disney parks on opposite coasts.

women will be carrying."[97] *The Bangor Daily News* reported that the park would also change "a scene in which an auctioneer takes pirates' bids on the town's women," and concludes that "longtime fans of the rowdy pirates may not welcome the change, but feminists were pleased."[98] *The Los Angeles Times* printed several letters from the editor, most of which took a dim view of the changes.[99] One, however, reacted positively to a change away from "romanticized and trivialized" assault on women."[100]

These larger cultural shifts affected other kinds of tourist attractions too. The theme park Cypress Gardens, opened in 1936 outside Winter Haven, Florida, had long focused on botanical displays, but long relied on its "Southern Belles," beautiful young women dressed in antebellum styles arrayed among the flowers. During the park's first season, its owner, Dick Pope, crowned a "Gardenia Queen" and bestowed similar titles on thousands of other women in later years.[101] "Model-hostesses…greet[ed] the visitors [and were] able to pose for them" beginning in the park's earliest years, and later additions like waterskiing shows placed emphasis on female beauty.[102] "We're expected to be pretty all the time, to have our toes pointed and be nice and grateful and little," remarked one performer.[103]

The "model-hostesses" of the 1930s became "Southern Belles" after a terrible winter froze many of the Gardens' flowers, and the owner's wife thought to dress beautiful women in the bright colors of different flowers and seat them in front of the worst of the blight to distract

[97] "A Pirate's Priorities," *Washington Post*, 9 January 1997, sec. A, p. 20.
[98] "Disneyland giving Pirates of the Caribbean a politically correct makeover," *Bangor Daily News*, 9 January 1997, sec. C, p. 2.
[99] In fact, most ostensibly neutral reports also express an impression that the changes constitute "political correctness run amok."
[100] "Change planed for Pirates of the Caribbean," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 January 1997. This letter, submitted by Sue Gannon, stands alone in support of the changes among those printed by the newspaper.
[101] Lu Vickers, *Cypress Gardens, America's Tropical Wonderland: How Dick Pope Invented Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010), 58-60. Pope planted gardenias and other flowers around the cypress groves in order to make the attraction more photogenic. He had intended the property as something of a nature sanctuary until he considered the potential of the property's aesthetics to attract publicity.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., 313.

from it with pleasant, flirtatious conversation.[104] One of the last "Belles" recounted some of the rules she followed in the late 2000s: "Don't run in the dress; be polite to visitors; be gracious when they ask you for your picture; smile."[105] Cypress Gardens struggled after the opening of Walt Disney World in nearby Orlando in 1971 and changed ownership several times during the 2000s before closing in 2009.[106]

Most newspaper reports referred fairly neutrally to "sagging attendance" and "traditional" attractions that lacked viability.[107] Accounts in local news sources and in books focused on Florida tourism discuss the park's closure far less impartially. One book celebrating the park's legacy, printed when some hoped the park might still reopen, asked "whether…embracing the Cypress Gardens mythology can save the Gardens" and printed quotations from locals who wished for the attraction to "go back to" its roots in quaint entertainment.[108] "If only we could undo what has happened to all of Florida," cried the book's author, calling for the return of "station wagons…follow[ing] that sign to Cypress Gardens, where [their occupants] would be awed by…a bevy of waving belles."[109] The mainstream media seems not to have published this conclusion, but the days of "waving belles" in nice outfits speaking just enough to amuse guests seems to have gone the way of Disneyland's more rapacious pirates.[110] The addition of African-

[104] Earlier iterations of the costume for these "Southern Belles" purposefully emulated *Gone with the Wind*, while later versions maintained a more generic antebellum Southern aesthetic.
[105] Ibid., 313-317.
[106] Merlin Entertainments, which operates several Legoland amusement parks around the world, purchased the property and opened Legoland Florida on its site in 2011. The new park maintained significant portion of the botanical gardens and some aspects of the older attraction's entertainment, including waterskiing, but significantly modernized them and reduced them to account for only a small portion of the property.
[107] "Florida's Cypress Gardens theme park closes, hopes to find buyer," *USA Today*, 24 September 2009.
[108] Vickers, 317-318.
[109] Ibid., 318-319. In fairness to Vickers, she intended her interesting book as a paean to the attraction, not as a balanced look at its sociocultural aspects. Her quotation here, and others she printed, well express the opinions of a portion of local citizens, and news media in the area also included both these opinions and their opposition.
[110] The decline of attractions like Cypress Gardens which relied extensively on old-fashioned notions of female sexuality perhaps merits further study, associated with the study of events like the Miss America pageants. At any rate, the attraction's closure did not result solely from changing public thought on this subject, since as Vickers mentioned, tourism changed in many ways in the United States and particularly in Florida in the years leading up to

American “belles” to Cypress Gardens in its last years suggested cultural changes in thinking about race as well as about gender.

the Gardens’ closure. To name one such factor that Vickers alludes to, few families today visit an area intending to travel around and “see the sights” generally. Instead, they come from relatively great distances to see particular attractions and pay little attention to those on the way to their intended destination.

III: Making All Races Welcome

"Glen Echo's beautiful pool is open every day from 11am to 8pm," announced a 1957 advertisement for Glen Echo Park. "Take advantage of the Memorial Day Holiday this Thursday. See the final judging in the Miss Glen Echo contest at 8:30. Make plans now to bring the family and spend Memorial Day at Glen Echo, Washington's wonderland of fun, rides, and amusements." Glen Echo advertised extensively on television and radio, often with a catchy slogan: "Fun is where you find it. Where can you find it? Glen Echo Amusement Park!" These advertisements did not mention that the park's owners excluded African American patrons. In 1960, a group demonstrating for desegregation "asked the Federal Trade Commission…to take action against" the park's advertising, asserting "the advertisements were 'false and misleading' in that they failed to note the park refuses to admit Negroes." The group labeled "advertisements...broadcast on programs at which both white and Negro children are participants" particularly "offensive and misleading."[1]

Amusement parks became more inclusive places for Americans of different classes and genders over the course of the twentieth century. Similar change occurred with respect to Americans of different races, but this change took longer to occur and required direct intentional action to effect. Previously excluded groups sometimes found it difficult to feel welcome in amusement parks because of societal restrictions on their behavior, but governments did not codify the exclusion of these groups.[2] The law did, however, recognize and even require the

[1] "Amusement Park Ads are Assailed in Complaint to FTC," *Washington Post*, 14 August 1960, sec. B, p. 2.
[2] Perhaps some laws, including local curfews, curtailed the ability of members of certain groups other than racial groups to attend amusement parks and other similar public facilities. However, no law ever specifically restricted people of the lower classes or women from attendance.

exclusion of African Americans from amusement parks in the South.[3] *De facto* segregation in the North and both *de facto* and *de jure* segregation in the South often made it difficult for African Americans to feel welcome or safe for many years when attending amusement parks, even after specific and concerted efforts to resolve this problem.

The long-term ramifications of ideological replication, since African Americans have been both purposefully excluded and thoughtlessly insulted by the amusement park since the emergence of the form in the late nineteenth century, mean that relics of outmoded ideology still exist in circumstances that might seem innocent when not carefully considered. The changes toward greater inclusion in amusement parks across racial lines, some of which continue today, often align with changes in local demographics and with similar forms of leisure.

Before Amusement Parks

Before the nineteenth century and particularly in the South, African Americans found their leisure opportunities severely limited. The landed white elite, around whom communities tended to base their leisure traditions, often held African American slaves, who experienced leisure far more often in positions of service than as members of communities entitled to participate. African American communities therefore organized their own leisure events, but could not connect with wider communities, either in terms of other black communities separated by distance or in terms of mainstream white communities. As larger urban communities emerged and leisure practices within communities shifted, African Americans struggled to find places in newly emerging leisure traditions.

[3] State and other local laws generally segregated certain classes of public places and business establishments, not amusement parks in particular.

As the public parks that predated amusement parks opened in the late nineteenth century, whites made many leisure spaces explicitly and deliberately white spaces. Many park supporters argued that athletic activities would keep young men from wasting their energies on sexual vice and other morally undesirable activities.[4] Because this rhetoric rested on beliefs about "develop[ing]…bodies…[and] even souls symmetrically" to avoid "race decline" and allow for the continuance of "the traditional stock," African Americans obviously did not exist as part of this vision.[5] In fact, as some throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries "predicted the decline and final ruin of the United States" and a return to very primitive "forms of animal life" as opposed to "elaborate, cultivated economic ones," many thinkers considered it important to keep non-white Americans separate, lest they risk "the fate of man."[6] African Americans therefore often had to organize their own athletic leagues or have none at all, and often had to conduct these lagues .[7]

Even when African Americans owned or otherwise controlled modes of leisure, they sometimes found it difficult to welcome other African Americans. The African American businessman Lewis Jefferson, when he assumed ownership of a resort on the Potomac River near Washington, DC, sought to repair its reputation for danger as quickly as possible. Jefferson often excluded African American families as he struggled to appease critics who included both African American moral reformers as white racists. At the same time, Jefferson promoted his

[4] Society considered masturbation the most frequent and dangerous of these vices, because it literally wasted opportunities for procreation. Although outrage related to sexual vice took on moral components, many found the practical aspects of sexual vice far more worrying.

[5] The quotations offered by one historian from a number of sources never mention race explicitly, but their words clearly demonstrate their intentions.

[6] Donald J. Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality, 1880-1910* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 28-66. This nebulous "fate" seems linked to the specter of blackness perceived by whites who feared the decline of society based on racial mixing.

[7] This introduced the problem of funding within African-American communities, which tended to experience poverty at even greater rates than whites. As the tradition of mutual aid increased within African-American communities during the Progressive era, these communities increased spending on community activities like sports, but funding spent to offer these kinds of opportunities could not go towards other causes often perceived as more important.

business as an example of African American enterprise, angering blacks who felt excluded by his attempts to improve perception of the property.[8]

Eventually, Jefferson's business practices drove away a variety of customers and contributed to the emergence of new segregated public places of entertainment along the Potomac.[9] His exclusion of poorer African American customers reflects the perception by wealthier and upwardly mobile African Americans that "poor blacks and their lifestyles posed [threats] to their own social mobility and autonomy."[10] Although African American communities tended towards collegiality and enjoying leisure together, their increasing involvement in urban societies like the one in Washington exposed class conflict.[11] Some wealthy African Americans, already separated from whites due to their race, separated themselves from poorer African Americans as well.[12]

Even the wealthiest African Americans experienced rude treatment and exclusion when they traveled, but they still desired to enjoy leisure and recreation. Specific companies targeted wealthy and middle-class African Americans, offering leisure opportunities overseas, but many preferred to stay at home.[13] Booker T. Washington once embarked on a trip to Europe, paid for by his admirers, but admitted that he had struggled to accept their generosity. "It seemed mean and selfish in me," he said, "to be taking a vacation while others were at work, and while there

[8] African-American businessmen who served both African-American and white customers risked alienating both groups constantly and had to carefully consider actions which customers might perceive as in favor of one group or the other.
[9] Andrew J. Kahrl, "'The Slightest Semblance of Unruliness': Steamboat Excursions, Pleasure Resorts, and the Emergence of Segregation Culture on the Potomac River," *The Journal of American History* 94 no. 4 (2008), 1108-1136.
[10] "Racial uplift" theory suggested that African-Americans held the responsibility for improving their lives by contributing in positive ways to society, and African-Americans who subscribed to this theory deeply resented anyone they felt did not contribute in similarly positive ways.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Mark S. Foster, "In the Face of 'Jim Crow': Prosperous Blacks and Vacations, Travel, and Outdoor Leisure," *The Journal of Negro History* 84 no. 2 (1999), 130-149.
[13] Many countries in addition to the United States did not offer environments conducive to inclusion for African-Americans, but these companies took great pains to select itineraries that would prevent traveling African-Americans from subjection to the same indignities they experienced at home.

was so much that needed to be done." Most affluent African Americans did not have the opportunity to receive such lavish gifts, but their leisure choices often reflect similar thoughts about their responsibility to their communities.[14] In some ways, particularly for wealthy African Americans whose behaviors fit society's expectations, enjoying leisure constituted a public political performance.[15] Especially when African Americans visited leisure sites with historical significance, like Harper's Ferry, "throngs of fashionably dressed and urbane [African American] excursionists and vacationers" constituted a strike back at the racism related to those site's histories and a reclaiming of some of those elements of the past.[16]

At the World's Fairs

African Americans also found little welcome at the World's Fairs. White society, which controlled these events, did not consider African Americans sources of potential further developments or even welcome to take advantage of developments created by whites and therefore saw no reason to include African Americans.[17] The American exceptionalism celebrated at World's Fairs rarely considered America's non-white population.[18] The organizers of the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876, the first World's Fair in the United States, set the stage for future treatment of non-whites in World's Fairs by arranging foreign exhibits "on a

[14] Even as African-American communities grew less cohesive, the company of other African-Americans often seemed far superior to the company of whites, because of the risk of encountering negative attitudes and possibly even violence.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Andrew W. Kahrl, "The Political Work of Leisure, Class, Recreation, and African American Commemoration at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, 1881-1931," *Journal of Social History* 42 no. 1 (2008), 57-77. The event commemorated at Harpers Ferry, the abolitionist revolt led by John Brown in 1859, did not succeed, but many sympathetic to its cause considered the revolt a powerful strike against slavery in the years before the Civil War.
[17] African-Americans also had little access to the sorts of technologies displayed at fairs, so the fairs did not have the same aspirational aspect for them that they did for other Americans.
[18] Naturally, even when African-Americans could *de jure* enter a Fair's grounds, they might feel *de facto* that they could not or should not. The same applied to many other public places. African-Americans did experience both *de jure* and *de facto* segregation at the few fairs that took place within the South.

racial basis, with the more Anglo-Saxon nations awarded more central locations," as an expression of their belief that "future growth and progress of the United States…would come about only under the guidance of the superior Anglo-Saxon race."[19]

This ideology, combined with the separation of all other nations' exhibits from American exhibits, made clear the organizers' faith that the United States alone could help bring the same "growth and progress" enjoyed here to all other nations.[20] Particular exhibits at many fairs reproduced the narrative of progress through European conquest by playing up alleged differences among various races and identifying why they believed these distinctions made white Europeans superior. A group of American eugenicists, for example, offered a symposium at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915 in San Francisco. The eugenics display there welcomed over ten thousand visitors and, according to its organizers, led to "a growing interest on the part of the public in the subject of race betterment."[21] Emboldened, many of the same eugenicists held an International Congress of Eugenics in 1921, at which they argued that "humanity is composed of many races differing widely in physical, mental, and moral qualities." These exhibits, then, argue their position as self-contained displays and in the wider context of the fairs.[22]

The desire to communicate this impression also led to negative depictions of Native Americans. Native Americans appeared in person at these exhibits, but did not have control over

[19] Although not radical in its time, an ideology like this had the additional advantage, in the context of a Fair, of empowering the majority of the Fair's visitors by suggesting their indispensability as a racial group to a better world for tomorrow, as opposed to merely pointing out their participation in an improving world.
[20] Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 14-25.
[21] Many of these visitors intended a "Race Betterment Conference," which included visual depictions of white superiority, held over five days in addition to the other activities at the exposition.
[22] Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 38-58.

how they appeared.[23] Occasionally Native Americans sought to appear of their own volition at fairs, as they did during the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. *The Washington Post* condescendingly reported that "the fact that Indians are asking to be represented at the World's Fair is surprising" and "an indication of advancement which was hardly to be looked for," but noted that "it would be the duty of the World's Fair management to secure large Indian representation."[24] Eventually the organizers did secure such representation, but had a brief scare shortly before the fair's opening when a contingent of "Bolivian Indians" disappeared on their way into Chicago.[25] The white woman placed in charge of the visitors feared "they have strayed or been stolen," reported *The New York Times*, after they received an uninterested reception in Philadelphia.[26] Eventually these and other "Indians" appeared successfully at the Exposition as intended.

By the time of the 1933 Century of Progress International Exposition in Chicago and the 1939 Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco, Native Americans appeared in person in slightly different exhibits, still designed by whites and still intended to depict them as "living pages from history." These exhibits investing them with more agency, but only superficially.[27] Robert W. Rydell describes these exhibits, commissioned by the federal government, as "len[ding] artistic and anthropological legitimacy to hierarchical modes of thought that had been a mainstay

[23] No matter how convivial negotiations between presenters seeking to display Native Americans at World's Fairs seemed, the historic undermining of Native American power, ability to move freely, and opportunities for negotiation means that such arrangements started out with a disproportionate amount of power accorded to whites and little opportunity for Native Americans to disagree.
[24] "Indians at the World's Fair," *Washington Post*, 19 June 1891, p. 4.
[25] Organizers sometimes perceived few distinctions between groups of native peoples and thus displayed them in large groups.
[26] "Bolivian Indians Missing: Miss Sickels Fears They Have Strayed or Been Stolen," *New York Times*, 7 May 1893, p. 11.
[27] The suggestion that Native American culture, and Native Americans themselves, had an immutable and even ethereal aspect helped make white Americans feel absolved, consciously or not, for the massacre of Native Americans and theft of their lands. If the timelessly quaint Native Americans ensconced at fairs could still prepare crafts in the same way, the argument held, the atrocities visited on them by white people could not have affected them so badly.

of…expansionism."[28] In other words, their replication of the same empire-based ideologies displayed in earlier years had become more intentional and pointed. These Native Americans had the opportunity to display their skills as artisans and producers, but only within the strictly regulated context of these exhibits.[29] Particularly so soon before the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which provided to Native Americans a very limited set of new rights, these exhibits constituted attempts to justify more liberal but still oppressive policy.[30]

On the other hand, fair organizers did not give African Americans even the opportunity to display their skills and talents. The Cotton States and International Exposition, held in Atlanta in 1895, saw the noted African American inventor Booker T. Washington lobby for African American opportunities with an aim "to persuade blacks to aspire to 'industry, thrift, intelligence, and prosperity,'" the same aspiration fair organizers invited their white patrons to share with one another. After much consternation over specific exhibits, the fair's organizers invited Washington to speak to a crowd of both races, seated separately, at its opening. In his speech, Washington assured the white crowd that, although "no race has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized," African Americans "understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly."[31] Historians have come to call this speech the "Atlanta Compromise" speech and consider it a turning point despite its apparent complacency.[32]

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[28] The federal government delegated many aspects of its World's Fair presentations to the Smithsonian Institution, which seemed to lend an air of credence to the sociological and anthropological claims made about Native Americans and those of other groups. The government also involved private individuals in preparing these exhibits.
[29] *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions*, 82-91.
[30] Paul Stuart, "United States Indian Policy: From the Dawes Act to the American Indian Policy Review Commission," *Social Service Review* 51 no. 3 (1977), 451-463.
[31] Robert W. Rydell, *All The World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 72-104.
[32] David N. Plank and Marcia Turner, "Changing Patterns in Black School Politics: Atlanta, 1872-1973," *American Journal of Education* 95 no. 4 (1987), 584-608.

Prominent African Americans immediately opposed these remarks and challenged segregation at the fair and a paucity of exhibit space for African Americans. A prominent African American newspaper warned that "the Fair is a big fake…for Negroes have not even a dog's show inside the Exposition gate unless it is in the Negro Building. Many people have written, asking whether the exposition is worth coming to see…if they want to be humiliated and have their man and womanhood crushed out, then come." Supporters of the fair like Washington dismissed these critics as rabble-rousers but could not point to enough examples of African American involvement to answer their detractors.[33]

Even outside the South, fairs did not represent African Americans positively. The Columbian Exposition separated exhibits touching on African Americans from others, placing them alongside the entertainments in the Midway Plaisance rather than in the same location as more serious exhibitions about technology and culture.[34] The organizers intended for this approach to earn them more money by highlighting "commercialized exoticism," creating a heightened sense of other both in terms of the physical location of these exhibits and of their content. Some of the exhibits touching on African Americans shared similarities, including physical proximity and similar verbal and visual languages, with exhibits touching on "primitive" and "savage" races of Africa, explicitly intended to make the white visitor feel superior. Because the organizers did not permit African American representatives to sit on any of the fair's most important commissions, African Americans had little say in the fair's schedule. When commissioners granted one day to highlight black artists and musicians and allow them to compete, some African American leaders urged a boycott of the fair "to protest…tokenism.."[35]

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[33] *All The World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions*, 72-104.
[34] The idyllic and appropriately named "White City," for example, did not contain exhibits designed by or about African-Americans, but did contain many of the technological marvels displayed at the fair.
[35] Rydell, *Fair America*, 34-41.

A Place in the Growing Mass Culture

At the turn of the century, while African Americans struggled to maintain community ties with one another while enjoying leisure as they saw fit, African American culture increasingly became a part of mass popular culture. African Americans and whites, however, did not usually enjoy this culture together. Musicologists agree that ragtime, the most popular genre of music in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, drew significantly from musical traditions brought to the United States by enslaved African peoples and from the further development of those traditions in the United States as gospel music.[36] The genre became popular among whites because African American musicians often performed music at white social functions.[37] Although members of the white upper classes spurned the ragtime music that resulted from these mixed traditions, the majority of Americans took to it quickly, dancing cakewalks and other syncopated dances in groups strictly divided by race in separate spaces.[38]

Ragtime gradually fell out of favor, but most of the popular music styles that followed built on ragtime roots. "Ragtime has exerted a great influence upon the lovers of popular music," wrote *The Washington Post* in 1900, although "coon songs [are] not as popular as they

[36] Floyd and Reisser write: "According to this ["syncretism"] theory, when acculturation occurs between two peoples, the cultural elements that are shared between the two cultures or have similar forms are those elements of the minority culture that will survive and influence the culture as a whole." They refer to the intersections in musical tradition between African peoples brought into slavery, Latin American ports through which they past, and the nations that became their homes. This theory has not escaped controversy but remains the least provocative to explain ragtime's development.

[37] It seems that many whites chose simply to overlook the race of many popular composers and styles. Advertisements for dances and musical performances, for example, generally did not mention the race of the composers, although after the turn of the twentieth century they occasionally made sensational references linking the musical forms to supposed exotic modes of African living, in which the white listener could ostensibly participate from a safe distance by partaking of music.

[38] Samuel A. Floyd, Jr. and Marsha J. Reisser, "The Sources and Resources of Classic Ragtime Music," *Black Music Research Journal* 4 (1984), 22-59.

once were."[39] The casually used slur "coon" the newspaper uses exemplifies the casual racism underlying white enjoyment of this music.[40] In 1909, *The New York Times* pronounced "ragtime dead in this town" and declared that the public had more of a taste for the music of the "March King" John Philip Sousa and operettist Victor Herbert in addition to newer genres of popular music.[41] This article deals specifically with certain high society spots in New York City, but across the nation less sophisticated music continued its dominance. A 1925 article stated unequivocally that popular music on the radio had "killed the ragtime queen."[42]

Music with African American roots thus featured significantly in amusement parks throughout the United States.[43] However, society often did not permit African Americans themselves to attain much physical representation in this or other forms of public mass leisure. For example, African Americans rarely featured in films. *Moving Picture World* concluded in 1907 "that moving pictures do not appeal to the masses of negroes, admitting that "of course, a moving picture show exclusively for negroes has not yet been tried." *Moving Picture World* continues: "the persons in the pictures are white" and "when a negro goes to a show it pleases him most to see black faces in the performance. But no pictures are made with Senegambian faces." He also believed that "the average negro wants to see a show with an abundance of noise, something like a plantation minstrel, with lots of singing and dancing and horseplay,"

[39] "Ragtime Is Dying Out: Coon Songs Not So Popular As They Once Were," *Washington Post*, 18 February 1900, p. 17.
[40] This particular slur also continues the tendency of some whites to link African Americans to non-human animals.
[41] "Ragtime Music Dead in this Town: John Philip Sousa Says the People Have Had a Surfeit and Are Sick of It," *New York Times*, 16 March 1909, p. 8. Interestingly, this article also notes that Sousa "has the credit of being the originator of" ragtime, which no doubt would have come as a surprise to its true originators. This exemplifies the way in which the media neatly sidestepped ragtime's African-American origins.
[42] "The Ragtime Queen Has Abdicated," *New York Times*, 24 May 1925, p. 21.
[43] Popular music, featured in dance halls and on carousel organs at amusement, followed the same trends as popular music performed in other contexts.

rather than a subtler moving picture.[44] These remarks indicate deeply internalized racism, continue to link non-whites to animals and lower levels of intelligences.

In the 1910s and 1920s, films did occasionally feature African American performers, but more often featured white performers in blackface, which hardly appealed to African American audiences. African Americans who did go to movie theaters experienced houses segregated by law in the South and segregated by custom in larger Northern cities. On the rare occasions white theaters in the South attempted to reach out to African American customers, they usually did so as a last resort, since film distributors tended to set rates according to the total population of an area, not merely the population of one race or another.[45] Despite these exclusions, by the late 1920s, movies became the only form of white-controlled mass leisure available to Southern African Americans. They mostly watched mainstream films from Hollywood, and the movie theatres sometimes presented African American musical entertainers as side attractions.[46]

Whites continued to separate themselves from African Americans in mass leisure spaces like amusement parks in ways beyond legal segregation. When Coney Island became more welcoming of African American visitors in the early twentieth century, upper class whites deserted the resort area.[47] In the South, African Americans grew tired of exclusion from white amusement parks and built their own.[48] In the nation's capital, for example, several important men within the African American community banded together to build, own and lead programs

[44] Gregory A. Waller, *Main Street Amusements: Movies and Commercial Entertainment in a Southern City, 1896-1930* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 161-179.
[45] This becomes important considering the relative access of members of different races to attendance at the movies. White Southern theatre owners argued that distributors should charge them according to the number of white residents only, since they sought to market their cinemas only to whites.
[46] Kathryn H. Fuller, *At the Picture Show: Small-Town Audiences and the Creation of Movie Fan Culture* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 28-34.
[47] Gary S. Cross and John K. Walton, *The Playful Crowd: Pleasure Places in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2005), 54-55. The departure of upper class whites resulted from the presence of increasing numbers of lower class whites as much as that of African Americans.
[48] Often, the African-American amusement parks did not have or could not afford the same level of services as their white peers, but they existed nonetheless.

like swimming lessons at the Suburban Gardens amusement park in the heart of the city.[49] Other businesses sought to emulate the amusement park experience on a smaller scale, but Suburban Gardens' owners spared little expense to make their park comparable to the white amusement parks in the city.[50]

Suburban Gardens' opening in 1921 gave Washingtonian African Americans the opportunity to enjoy experiences reasonably comparable to those of the area's more established amusement parks, which excluded African Americans. The use of spaces like Suburban Gardens, which provided well-appointed leisure opportunities to African Americans, also became opportunities to demonstrate to the white public that African Americans enjoyed the same leisure practices in the same ways as they did, particularly in the face of violence against African Americans. When a white policeman shot a black man outside Suburban Gardens in 1926, for instance, one of its African American owners wrote a letter to the editor of *The Washington Post*, identifying his business as "a high-class amusement park for colored citizens," remarking that the park hired its own security forces who "have hitherto been successful in preserving a proper decorum," and inverting white expectations of the behavior of his patrons by accusing "some white officers" of the police department of "accustomed loose behavior…among colored citizens."[51] At the same time, the park's management allowed the park's use for major events within the African American community, like historical pageants for schoolchildren.[52]

[49] Deanwood, in which Suburban Gardens' developers located their new business, had long served as a center for the African-American community in the city, but its location made it accessible to anyone.
[50] "Remembering Suburban Gardens, D.C.'s only amusement park," *Washington Post*, 26 October 2013, sec. C, p. 6.
[51] "Treatment of Negro in Vicinity of Suburban Gardens Is Held by Writer to Be Out of Accord with Official Warning of Maj. Hesse Against 'Infliction of Cruel and Unnecessary Punishment,' in Arrests," *Washington Post*, 27 June 1926, sec. S, p. 2.
[52] "Historical Pageant by Colored School Lesson to Children: 1,000 See 'Story of American Independence' Depicted at Commencement," *Washington Post*, 27 June 1926, sec. M, p. 10.

Growing Tensions

Despite the opportunities to create their own spaces, African Americans grew increasingly tired of the separation from their white neighbors. After World War II particularly, both *de facto* and *de jure* segregation seemed increasingly unacceptable to African Americans.[53] Los Angeles saw the arrival of a new mode of leisure for the urban working and middle classes: the Brooklyn Dodgers became the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1958. From its founding in 1884, the Brooklyn team had a distinctly urban flavor. After World War II, however, its owners saw white flight from New York City; found aging Ebbets Field poorly suited both to television broadcasting and accommodating suburban spectators in a way they would consider safe, or not racially mixed; and ultimately gave up on the franchise after attempts with strategies including raising prices to keep out customers considered undesirable and encourage more desirable replacements.[54] As negotiations to bring the team to Los Angeles neared an end, the move's advocates "argued that Dodger Stadium would 'join Disneyland' among the ranks of Southern California's new attractions" and "marketed a 'wholesome' brand of entertainment that catered to an ideal of the white middle-class nuclear family."[55] Ultimately, the presence of African Americans at many Dodgers games served to drive some whites away but also provided rare opportunities for members of both races to enjoy leisure together.[56]

Similar transformations took place during the late 1950s in Buffalo, New York. In Buffalo, as in much of the country outside the South, patterns of segregation had continued to

[53] *De facto* segregation on the West Coast took a different form than on the East Coast, since slavery had a far less salient historical presence in the former location.
[54] The "Dodgers" name famously came from the need to dodge streetcars in the busy neighborhood.
[55] *Forbes* made this comparison to Disneyland, in slightly less explicit racial terms than those to which historians have connected these and related remarks.
[56] Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 145-184. The "Dodgers" name famously came from the need to dodge streetcars in the busy neighborhood.

hold even without the threat of legal sanction. Although members of both races could attend Crystal Beach Amusement Park, the racial makeup of neighborhoods surrounding the amusement park changed constantly, and occasional violence at the amusement park played a key role in the political performance of designating racial spaces.[57] Although its owners had never established policies of segregation, few African Americans visited Crystal Beach until after World War II.[58] Concerned whites believed that these new residents brought with them dangerous behaviors, lowered property values, and other ills, and found their presence in places of public leisure like Crystal Beach troubling. Because Crystal Beach and other parks drew largely local crowds, the presence of non-whites in these spaces suggested a reduction in the *de facto* segregation which had insulated white communities.[59]

These tensions exploded at Crystal Beach on May 30, 1956, Memorial Day. Reports circulating among whites suggested that two black gangs planned a confrontation with one another at the park, so young men both white and black armed themselves, dressed to indicating gang memberships.[60] The first physical confrontation occurred before the privately-owned ferry *Canadiana* reached the park, when several white men taunted some African Americans with racial epithets and one responded by pushing his taunter off the *Canadiana* into Lake Erie.[61]

[57] As Kahrl noted that African-Americans tended to designate certain spaces in areas with prevalent *de jure* segregation as their own for leisure, although whites could freely enter those places also, African-Americans sought to designate their own places even in localities without *de jure* segregation.
[58] *De jure* segregation also frustrated these African-Americans, and the presence of *de facto* segregation in their new homes frustrated them immensely.
[59] Victoria W. Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle over Segregated Recreation in America* (Philadelphia, PA: University Press of Pennsylvania, 2012), 134-168.
[60] Wolcott does not make clear whether young men regularly carried the switchblades, knives, and firecrackers she says they did on this day or whether their preparation constituted a specific response to the rumored fights.
[61] The white man's friends quickly recovered him, but the insult seemed worse than the injury.

News of this incident spread quickly throughout the park and became conflated with incidents unrelated to race, including the closure for the day of the Old Mill ride.[62]

Later in the evening, African-American teenagers in the park heard that a group of white men had sexually harassed a young African-American woman and came to her aid only to find adult men rather than the teenagers they had expected. As more and more men of both races entered the fight, injuries mounted, and local police forces also turned out in increasing numbers to help quell the violence.[63] When the park closed and the remaining patrons returned on the *Canadiana*, additional violence broke out among women as well as men. White locals remarked on the number of African Americans aboard the steamer even before the additional violence began. In other words, they allowed themselves to conceive of the violence at Crystal Beach as a manifestation of the increasing number of African Americans in their community. The various incidents of May 30, 1956 helped inaugurate a new era of race relations in Buffalo, since the explicit confrontation that day eliminated quiet uncomfortableness.[64]

Historians see another quietly uncomfortable aspect of racism in amusement park art. Depictions of African Americans in this context did not occur often and did sometimes take overtly racist forms when they did appear, but they more often helped to create a distinct impression of African Americans as "other."[65] At Disneyland, for example, architects designed the entrance area, Main Street U.S.A., to emulate white Midwestern small towns, and placed depictions of African and other non-white men and women in a separate themed land,

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[62] Ibid. Since a major aspect of the Old Mill ride facilitated the shared experience of sexuality between genders, this incident and its conflation with the incident aboard the *Canadiana* suggested a combination of white moralizer's worst fears, African-American men engaging in inappropriate sexuality. In fact, the Old Mill's closure that day came after rowdy, probably white, teenagers stopped boats throughout the ride by clinging to the ride building's walls. It had nothing to do with the racial tensions evident that day.

[63] These officers, who arrested men of both races and found them all carrying various weapons, blamed the escalation of the violence at this stage on white men trying to attack any African-American in sight.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Representations of African-Americans did occasionally appear in dark rides, usually in overtly racist forms like "witch doctors."

Adventureland.[66] Adventureland took visitors not only to different and exotic lands but to a different time, further increasing the distance Disneyland's mostly-white patrons felt from African Americans.[67] One of the only other places to see African American faces inside Disneyland, the ride "It's a Small World," also helped place distance between white patrons and those of other races, despite its message of international an interracial brotherhood.[68] In fact, this attraction and those in Adventureland served a similar purpose to some fair exhibits of years past, purporting to represent a non-white group without their consent or input.

Desegregating Amusement Parks

By the dawn of the Civil Rights era, African Americans had grown still more tired of their exclusion from American amusement parks, particularly in the South. Mounting legal successes increased discussion on the issue of segregated places of leisure.[69] In 1958, for example, the NAACP met to discuss "the effect upon our public relations of the widespread attempt to identify Negroes with criminality, particularly in view of the current wave of misbehavior."[70] Aware that juvenile delinquency did pose a problem within the African American community, the NAACP gingerly shifted the conversation to perceptions of this delinquency, to the fact that juvenile delinquency affected both African American and white

[66] The design for Main Street, U.S.A. derived in large part from Walt Disney's hometown of Marceline, Missouri, an overwhelmingly white small town.
[67] Attractions like those in Adventureland proliferated at amusement parks throughout America, which opened "exotic" dark rides with names like Congo Cruise and Bermuda Triangle.
[68] Stephen M. Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves: Walt Disney World and America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), 224-229.
[69] These activist successes included judicial triumphs like the result in *Brown v. Board*. Outlawed segregation in places of education, to name one major category, led to increased calls for outlawed segregation in other public places.
[70] This meeting convened partially in response to actions like the "riots" at Crystal Beach, after which whites cast increasingly negative perceptions on their African-American neighbors. Even the use of the term "riot," suggesting widespread senseless disorder, seems stacked against the African-Americans.

communities, and away from any notion that increasing integration bore any responsibility for rising rates of juvenile delinquency. These attempts to engage white communities in positive dialogue often proved fruitless, but African Americans nonetheless found themselves emboldened by other successes.[71]

In 1960, for instance, the fight began to integrate Glen Echo Park, one of the first major such fights in the United States.[72] Protest there, *The Washington Post* reported, "has been developing along different lines from…recent…sitdowns," as African American and white people alike protested in person in front of the park's gates, asking potential visitors to take their business elsewhere until the park's managers reconsidered their policies.[73] Wealthy organizers provided protestors with professionally-printed placards and organized protests carefully to ensure all parties' safety and highlight their message. National organizations took note of the protests and offered both monetary support and additional publicity.[74] Glen Echo's owners refused to negotiate with picketers after they sued to dismantle the park's segregationist policies, citing legislation that had desegregated similar public places of amusement more than ten years earlier and therefore building directly on the movement's recent successes.[75] These protestors ultimately won desegregation and a Supreme Court case overturning the convictions for trespassing of almost three dozen protestors.[76]

[71] *Brown v. Board*, decided in 1955, constituted one of the first major legal successes of the Civil Rights era,
[72] The ideology inspiring these protests, and many of the tactics used, had originated in lunch counter sit-ins and similar protests. The demonstrations at Glen Echo, however, took place further north than most earlier sit-ins, and included a broad mix of protestors beyond students.
[73] "Whites Join Negroes in Protests Against Glen Echo Park Segregation," *Washington Post*, 3 July 1960, sec. A, p. 11.
[74] "Glen Echo Pickets Win Support: NAACP Officials Request Negroes to Back Action," *Washington Post*, 5 July 1960, sec. A, p. 1.
[75] "Glen Echo Owners Turn Down Pickets' Offer of Negotiation," *Washington Post*, 10 July 1960, sec. B, p. 2.
[76] "31 Sit-In Convictions Upset by High Court," *Washington Post*, 21 May 1963. This legal case also involved those arrested in other related pickets at segregated places of business.

Another slightly later attempt to desegregate a large amusement park in the South began in 1962 at Gwynn Oak Amusement Park outside Baltimore, organized in large part by the still-growing student movement.[77] On September 3 of that year, the Congress of Racial Equality marched inside Gwynn Oak to protest the park's segregationist policies on a day when its management hosted an event to promote international fraternity, All Nations Day. As a result of the park's policies, several diplomatic groups had already withdrawn from the festival, and the protests and counter-protests from another group drew additional attention to the integrationists' cause.[78] The neutral tone of a *Washington Post* article reporting on these protests changed slightly in its last line, when the author remarked that "forty Baltimore County police were on duty," a response to worries that the otherwise peaceful protests could turn violent.[79]

Savvy integrationists realized the importance of coalition-building based on past successes, and began to explicitly target other organizations to join their cause. *The Washington Post* reported that the Civic Interest Group, an integrationist group involved in many protests, had asked the Knights of Columbus to relocate a major event they had planned to host at Gwynn Oak, just days after CORE's protest there. "As a religious fraternal organization, the Knights of Columbus has a responsibility to keep its activities within the periphery of the generally accepted standard of morality and Christian ethics," wrote the CIG's public relations chairman. "By displaying an attitude of indifference to racial discrimination, the Knights of Columbus is knowingly participating in an immoral and un-Christian act."[80] When the Knights of Columbus failed to respond to these requests, the same groups picketing the park itself picketed the Knights of Columbus' event there, and the superintendent of Catholic schools in Baltimore announced

[77] SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, constituted the most important organization in this movement, and many other groups, formal and informal, adopted its tactics.
[78] These groups included the Pan American Union and six area embassies.
[79] "Pickets Picketed at Gwynn Oak," *Washington Post*, 4 September 1962, sec. B, p. 2.
[80] "K. of C. Gets Racial Plea on Park Use," *Washington Post*, 6 September 1962, sec. B, p. 7.

later in the week that those schools would no longer use Gwynn Oak for gatherings.[81] In addition to this political pressure, additional protests at the park led to Gwynn Oak's desegregation at the end of the following season in 1963.[82]

Moving Forward

Integration of some amusement parks came with an unfortunate epilogue when some closed after whites deserted them along with urban areas more broadly. A "riot" much like the one at Crystal Beach occurred on Easter Monday, April 11, 1966 at the recently integrated Glen Echo Park, in the aftermath of which local transportation officials stopped service to the park.[83] Referring to "vandalism at the park and in residential areas" nearby, a lengthy report on the "riots" placed blame on all parties, including the African American youths involved in the unrest, the park's management, and the community's attitudes.[84] Instead of changing attitudes, however, increasing numbers of patrons stayed away from the park altogether, and it closed after the 1968 season.[85] Blaming the decline of amusement parks like Glen Echo featured prominently in the playbooks of urban operators who closed amusement parks, but the failure of Glen Echo and other amusement parks resulted from many other complicated factors.[86] Narratives that place blame for the failure of these amusement parks on African Americans share a deeply ahistorical perspective with those that also blame African Americans for the decline of

[81] "Segregated Park Barred by Catholics," *Washington Post*, 11 September 1962, sec. B, p. 2.
[82] "Gwynn Oak Integrates Smoothly," *Washington Post*, 29 August 1963, sec. D, p. 15. The integration of Gwynn Oak inspired the film *Hairspray*.
[83] "D.C. Buses Pulled Off During Riot: Transit Aide Says He Acted to Protect Drivers, Vehicles," *Washington Post*, 19 April 1966, sec. A, p. 1.
[84] "All Share Glen Echo Blame, Study Sys: Plan Urged to Prevent Outbreaks," *Washington Post*, 5 May 1966, sec. A, p. 1.
[85] "Laughter Dies at Glen Echo," *Washington Post*, 2 April 1969, sec. C, p. 1. Some historians consider this sort of white flight a passive form of white resistance, while others perceive it as more active.
[86] Wolcott, 236-243.

urban areas more broadly. Violence sometimes emerges in today's integrated parks, but the news media no longer treats these instances as somehow the result of integration or urbanization.[87] Instead, as amusement parks became gathering places inclusive of class and gender, they also eventually and at great cost welcomed African Americans, and continue to do so today.

[87] Public comments on articles presented in the news media do sometimes reveal isolated racism, which responses soon indicate most Americans no longer find acceptable.

Epilogue

The amusement park industry continues to evolve, generally becoming more inclusive. The diverse mix of parks operating throughout the United States provides Americans with ample opportunities to enjoy a day out for leisure, although corporate-owned parks like Disneyland continue to cost more than surviving local parks, and more opportunities to visit amusement parks exist in areas with denser populations. The latest opportunity for American amusement parks to become more inclusive seems to revolve around opportunities to include more global perspectives. Depictions of non-Americans, and occasionally non-Americans themselves, have long featured in American amusement parks, but these depictions often took on carelessly insulting forms like past depictions of women and African Americans.

Amusement parks with zoo components, which offer significant educational components, have led the way in progressive inclusion of international perspectives. SeaWorld, for example, seeks to "reduce…the distances of time and geography to bring its customers 'up close and personal'" to marine life from around the world.[1] The three SeaWorld parks in the United States feature layouts organized according to international geography, creating "another world" which enables "mass viewing" of global cultures in California, Florida, and Texas. The parks' attempts to provide a "museum-style synopsis of a whole wide world," while admirable, have "popularize[d non-native animals] as mascots of whimsy for late twentieth-century first world

[1] Susan G. Davis, *Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 94-110.

consumers" at great expense and strongly suggest the imperialism reflected as early as the World's Fairs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[2]

SeaWorld's problems stem partly from the fact that its product results from distinctly American attempts to encapsulate foreign experiences.[3] Some other educational amusement parks have originated directly from the countries they represent, with varying degrees of success. The Chinese government opened Splendid China, an amusement park featuring Chinese history and culture, in 1993 outside Orlando, but the park failed in large part due to a lack of American input.[4] Perhaps the greatest potential for growth in international perspectives, then exists in mainstream American amusement parks.

Epcot at Walt Disney World, for example, features the World Showcase, which presents rides, shows, concerts, and restaurants created in cooperation with businesses and governmental agencies from the countries represented. The eleventh pavilion added to the World Showcase, Norway, opened in 1988 with financial and creative contributions from the Norwegian parliament and a consortium of Norwegian businesses, leading to a blend of authentic Norwegian influence and the Disney company's awareness of American visitors' tastes. When Disney announced that the ride Maelstrom, which invited visitors to "seek the spirit of Norway" through the country's landscapes and history, would close for replacement by a ride based on the successful Disney film *Frozen*, some visitors expressed outrage at a loss of authentic culture.[5]

Despite the change in Norway, other countries' pavilions in the World Showcase continue to operate authentic cultural displays. In the long term, accurate depictions and inclusion of international perspectives in American amusement parks will require continued

[2] Ibid.
[3] Activists have also criticized SeaWorld for inhumane treatment of its animals, particularly whales.
[4] Wenxian Zhang, "A Splendid Idea in China Turned Sour in Florida: The Rise and Fall of the Florida Splendid China," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 84
[5] "After the Storm: The Maelstrom We Once Knew Has Passed," *Orlando Sentinel*, 5 October 2014.

financial cooperation between American and international interests. If amusement parks achieve this kind of cooperation, they will continue the tradition of inclusion built over the twentieth century.

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