Race, Sexuality, and Radicalism in the Piney Woods: The Industrial Workers of the World and The Brotherhood of Timber Workers, 1910-1916

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APPROVAL PAGE

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ABSTRACT

The Wobblies Meet Jim Crow: The Brotherhood of Timber Workers, 1910-1916

The Brotherhood of Timber Workers (BTW) was an interracial labor organization in the Jim Crow Deep South 1910-1916. The BTW had a complex racial and gender dynamic; its members were black, white, Mexican, Italian, Native American, male, and female. The timber companies of the area banded together creating a virtual military occupation of the area and waged a bitter struggle against the BTW utilizing violence, Jim Crow, and collusion with the state.

Missing from much of the analysis of the Brotherhood is a discussion of why it affiliated with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1912. This article demonstrates that contrary to the historiography of both unions, the BTW should be viewed as an IWW organizing campaign. The Brotherhood was associated with the IWW from its inception and its affiliation represented a legitimate effort on the part of the IWW to confront racial segregation and organize the workers of the Deep South in direct opposition to Jim Crow. When viewed as an IWW campaign the BTW sheds new light on the IWW's little discussed attempts to organize in the Jim Crow Deep South.

ABSTRACT

Race, Sexuality, and Class in the Piney Woods: Timber Barons and the Brotherhood of Timber Workers, 1910-1916

The Brotherhood of Timber Workers (BTW) was an interracial labor organization in the Jim Crow South during the years 1910-1916. Southern timber companies banded together to create a virtual military occupation of the area and waged a bitter struggle against the BTW utilizing violence, Jim Crow, and collusion with the state.

Over one hundred years have passed since the BTW was organized in the piney woods of western Louisiana and eastern Texas, and the racial politics of the union are still poorly understood. This article calls into question whether segregation was uniformly employed by the union and its locals before affiliating with IWW in 1912 and demonstrates that the BTW's racial policies and actions changed over time to become more inclusive. Furthermore, this work will show that gender and sexuality were components of the same hierarchical power structure that drove the engine of Jim Crow. The racial components of this campaign cannot be comprehended outside of an understanding of how gender and sexual relations of power or hierarchies operated in the subjugation of the workforce. In addition to secondary analyses, this essay utilizes primary documents from multiple archives, newspapers, and court records.

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I wish to express my appreciation to Professors Hahamovitch, Meyer, and Aubert under whose guidance this investigation was conducted, for their patience, guidance and criticism throughout the investigation.

Chapter 1

Upon entering the graduate program in the Lyon G. Tyler Department of History at the College of William and Mary in the Fall of 2015 I believed that I had very clear ideas for research projects. As an undergraduate I focused my research on the Brotherhood of Timber Workers, an interracial union in the Jim Crow Deep South which existed from 1910-1916. It was my desire to continue exploring this topic in the hopes of drawing out larger issues of significance.

Before entering the program, I authored a paper as an independent scholar, "'An insurrection of all the people': The Brotherhood of Timber Workers and the IWW in the Deep South." I presented this paper at the DC Working Class History Seminar which is co-chaired by Cindy Hahamovitch and Eric Arnesen. The paper was well received and I was able to obtain much needed feedback. I presented another version of the article in March of 2015 at the Southern Labor Studies Association. This previous work was transformed into, “The Wobblies Meet Jim Crow: The Brotherhood of Timber Workers, 1910-1916.” The critique and advice I received from this effort will be used to make some revisions and I will then submit it for publication.

When the Spring 2016 semester began I believed that I would once again focus on the Brotherhood, for hopefully the last time. After several weeks of class and discussions with Professor Myer, it became clear that I needed to focus on the intersection of class, race, gender, and sexuality within the context of the Brotherhood’s organizing campaign. This paper has undergone many changes on its way to becoming, “Race, Sexuality, and Class in the Piney Woods: Timber Barons and the Brotherhood of Timber Workers,

1910-1916." After receiving final comments from Drs. Myer and Hahamovitch I will revise the paper, and with their approval, submit it for publication.

My other activities this semester have included fulfilling my internship requirements in Special Collections at Swem Library. My experience in Special Collections has been valuable and provided me the opportunity to learn some archival techniques. Additionally, I have taken on a position as Editorial Assistant for the journal *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*. This position coincides directly with my research interests and puts me into contact and conversation with the leading scholars in my field, I could not have asked for a more appropriate job. Finally, I have used the research money allocated in the Zable Fellowship to travel to the National Archives in Kansas City for research that I hope to utilize in my dissertation.

Chapter 2
The Wobblies Meet Jim Crow: The Brotherhood of Timber Workers, 1910-1916

When Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) organizer Covington Hall first met Arthur L. Emerson and Jay Smith, co-founders of the newly formed Brotherhood of Timber Workers (BTW) in the Spring of 1912 he exclaimed, "This isn't a labor union you all have on your hands – it is an insurrection of all the people of Louisiana and East Texas against the Lumber Trust."[1] Hall's assertion proved to be more accurate than previous scholarship has claimed. BTW activity represented a determined rebellion against the segregation-fueled capitalism and entrenched authority of lumber companies that operated in the forests along the coastal plains of Texas and Louisiana.

Missing from much of the analysis of the Brotherhood is a discussion of why it affiliated with the IWW in 1912. This article will demonstrate that contrary to the historiography of both unions, the BTW should be viewed as an IWW organizing campaign. The Brotherhood was associated with the IWW from its inception and its affiliation represented a legitimate effort on the part of the IWW to confront racial segregation and organize the workers of the Deep South in direct opposition to Jim Crow. When viewed as an IWW campaign the BTW sheds new light on the IWW's little discussed attempts to organize in the Jim Crow Deep South. Moreover, much of the historiography on the Southern workforce during Jim Crow focuses on sharecroppers and the textile industry, while the timber industry often receives little attention. This is a

[1] Covington Hall, *Labor Struggles in the Deep South and Other Writings*, ed. David R. Roediger (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1999), 120.

curious oversight since timber was one of the pillars of the southern economy at the dawn of the twentieth century, employing more workers than any other southern industry from 1870 to 1910.[2]

The Brotherhood's relationship with the IWW (whose members were known as Wobblies) is one of the most important and paradoxically least understood aspects of the union's development. Scholars generally assert that no ideological connection between the members of the BTW and the IWW existed. Moreover, any connections that developed are considered to have taken place after affiliation in 1912 and were the result of desperation on the part of the Brotherhood. Why? Most historians of the BTW base this assertion on either a lack of evidence that links the Wobblies to the region or on some supposedly latent aversion among the southern sawmill workers to the radical politics of the IWW. Historians of the IWW also either deny any "real" connection or simply do not engage the possibility of a previous working relationship.[3] The Brotherhood does not fit the construct that has been created of the IWW. Instead the BTW was centered in the Deep South and the majority of its membership was generally split between a home-guard of white workers and black migrant workers. This article

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[2] William P. Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 1; Anna C. Burns, "The Gulf Lumber Company, Fullerton: A View of Lumbering during Louisiana's Golden Era," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, vol. 20, no. 2, (Spring 1979) 197. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4231890 (Accessed on April 7, 2013).

[3] For a historiographical discussion of the connections between the unions see: Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: a History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (New York: Quadrangle, 1969), 220; Fred Thompson, *The I.W.W.: Its First Fifty Years (1905 - 1955)* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1955), 67; Philip S. Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the Word 1905-1917*, 2nd ed. (New York: International Publishers, 1997), 236-242; Morgan, 61; John Reed Tarver, "The Clan of Toil: Piney Woods Labor Relations in the Trans-Mississippi South, 1880-1920" (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 1991), 18; Ruth A. Allen, East Texas Lumber Workers: An Economic and Social Picture, 1870-1950 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 183.

provides new documents and analysis which disprove the assertion that the leadership of the BTW and the sawmill workers of the south had no connections to the IWW before affiliation.

The BTW was an interracial industrial labor union whose heart and soul were located in western Louisiana and eastern Texas from 1910-1916. The Brotherhood and its timber company adversaries claimed the union was also active in Georgia, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Oklahoma.[4] However, locals could only be documented in Arkansas and Mississippi, which had seven (possibly eight), and one lodges respectively.[5] Definitive tabulation of BTW membership is difficult due to a lack of available records, the secrecy under which organizing was conducted, and the fact that both the union and its adversaries could have potentially benefitted from overestimations. The Brotherhood had somewhere between 20,000 and 35,000 members.[6] Membership was roughly divided equally between black and white members, with estimates of black membership reaching as high as 15,000.[7] At least one lodge in Sulphur, Louisiana was

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[4] M.L. Alexander to C.E. Slagle, September 20, 1911 Western Historical Manuscript Collection, The University of Missouri at Columbia, The Louisiana Central Lumber Company Records (LCLC), no. 3660 folder 696, (hereafter cited as LCLC).; M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, September 22, 1911, LCLC, folder 696; Geoffrey Ferrell "The Brotherhood of Timber Workers and the Southern Lumber Trust" (PhD diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1982), 99.; Kirby to R.L. Weathersby, January 13, 1912, John Henry Kirby Papers, 1884-1944, Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries (hereafter cited as the Kirby Papers), box 92 folder 7;Hall, 126.

[5] List of Local Lodges, September 7, 1911, LCLC, folder 693; M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, October 14, 1911, LCLC, folder 701; M.L Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, November 11, 1911, LCLC, folder 707.

[6] William D. Haywood, "Timber Workers and Timber Wolves," *International Socialist Review*, August 1912, 108, http://archive.org/stream/InternationalSocialistReview1900Vol13/ISR-volume13#page/n117/mode/2up/search/%22timber+workers+and+timber+wolves%22, (Accessed May 3, 2013); Bernard A. Cook, "Covington Hall and Radical Rural Unionization in Louisiana", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 228, http://0www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/pdfplus/4231678.pdf?acceptTC=true, (Accessed September 5, 2013); Steven A. Reich, "The Making of a Southern Sawmill World: Race, Class, and Rural Transformation in the Piney Woods of East Texas, 1830-1930" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1998), 279; Dubofsky, 211; Allen, 182.

[7] Reich, 324.

comprised entirely of Mexican workers, and Italian timber workers were also found among the union's membership.[8]

The notion that the timber workers, and populace of the region in general, had a latent opposition to the radical anti-capitalist ideology of the IWW ignores a rich history of regional opposition to capitalism as well as episodes of interracial cooperation. The BTW's ideological roots and organizational structure reflected the influence of the Knights of Labor, which was active in the 1880s and '90s among the region's timber and sugar workers.[9] The most noteworthy instance of large-scale interracial unionism in the region was the 1886-1887 sugar workers' strike. Roughly ten thousand members of the Knights of Labor working in the sugar industry went on strike in 1886. The strike which was interracial, but overwhelmingly black, was brutally suppressed through a declaration of martial law and the use of violence. Many strikers fled to New Orleans but due to the migratory nature of many of the region's industrial and agricultural workers, some of the former strikers may have eventually found work in the rapidly growing timber industry.[10] This migration of labor between the cane and cotton fields, sawmills, and later the oilfields, continued throughout the existence of the BTW.[11] It is not a stretch to suggest

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[8] *State of Louisiana v. L.F. Johnson et als*, Fifteenth Judicial District Court of Louisiana, Case no. 6021, 1912, Minutes of the Second Annual Convention of the Brotherhood of Timber Workers, May 6-9, 1912, 9-12, (hereafter cited as Minutes); Reich, 262.

[9] James R. Green, "The Brotherhood of Timber Workers 1910-1913", *Past and Present* 60 (August 1973): 165-176; Allen, 173; Hall, 49-52.

[10] Green, Past and Present, 165; Richard J Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2005), 234-236, http://books.google.com/books/about/The_Sugar_Masters.html?id=ul9xsFMcsmoC, (Accessed February 13, 2014).

[11] A. Herndon to C.P. Myer, September 23, 1911, The Kirby Lumber Collection (KLC), East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, box 197 folder 7, (hereafter cited as KLC); The Brotherhood of Timber Workers Grand Lodge, September 6, 1911, KLC, box 197 folder 7; "Lake Charles Letter," *St. Louis Lumberman*, September 15, 1911.

that workers who had been active in the Knights of Labor would still be part of the workforce during the time of the BTW, or that at the very least, the memory of the Knights informed the BTW's activities and ideals.[12]

Labor unrest in the timber industry was continuous long before the formation of the BTW, which means the Brotherhood united a workforce well acquainted with industrial disputes. In 1893 there was a three-month long strike for the ten-hour day involving all of the mills in Orange, Texas and an unknown number in Beaumont, Texas, suggesting a high level of coordination and unity. These strikers unsuccessfully attempted to spread the strike throughout the region.[13] All of the mills in Orange were shut down again in 1893 and later in 1894.[14]

According to a US Commissioner of Labor report there were only two recorded strikes, affecting thirteen mills, in the Louisiana timber industry from 1891 to 1900. Texas had one recorded strike, affecting three mills.[15] However the Commission failed to note the three Orange, Texas strikes, which suggests that strike activity was more widespread than Labor officials documented. Nonetheless, a similar report noted a significant increase in strike activity in the Louisiana and Texas timber industry from

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[12] For instance, Jones documents workers in the industry in 1919 who were born in the pre-Civil War South; Jones, 15.

[13] Allen, 166; "All Quiet at Orange," *Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, December 13, 1890, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86064205/1890-12-13/ed-1/seq-1/ (Accessed February 20, 2014); "A Horrible Murder," *The Austin Weekly Statesman*, December 18, 1890, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86088296/1890-12-18/ed-1/seq-7/ (Accessed February 20, 2014).

[14] Allen, 166-167.

[15] United States Department of Labor, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1901). 296. http://books.google.com/books?id=azVGAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA7&lpg=PA7&dq=sixteenth+annual+report+US+Commissioner+of+Labor+strikes+and+lockouts&source=bl&ots=eaUxMPxCvd&sig=lVAa6G2WPGXi1hLlTES2Si4Aei4&hl=en&sa=X&ei=-njmUv3fC-6_sQTRjII4&ved=0CEAQ6AEwBQ#v=onepage&q=sixteenth%20annual%20report%20US%20Commissioner%20of%20Labor%20strikes%20and%20lockouts&f=false (Accessed January 27, 2014).

1901 to 1905. Louisiana had nine documented strikes during this period, four of them the result of union organizing, although it is unclear what labor organization was associated with these strikes. Texas had four strikes, with no reported ties to unions.[16] In 1903 there was a well-documented strike, not noted in the report, which shut down the mill in Groveton, Texas involving a white and a black local of the Federal Trade Union.[17] At a meeting of the Texas State Federation of Labor the first black delegate ever seated by the Federation, P. Abner, likened working conditions in the timber industry to chattel slavery. Abner further stated that black workers were loyal union men when given the opportunity to organize.[18]

Although overlooked by some previous historians, the earliest association that can be made to IWW activity in the region is the existence of the IWW's pre-cursor, the American Labor Union (ALU).[19] The ALU was a radical offshoot of the Western Federation of Miners, founded with the help of Eugene Debs and organized on an industrial basis as a direct challenge to the conventional structure of the American Federation of Labor.[20] Although the ALU's existence in the region was short-lived, it was one of the founding unions of the IWW, and its presence suggests that ideology similar to

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[16]United States Bureau of Labor, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1907). http://books.google.com/books?id=fXzRAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA7&lpg=PA7&dq=twenty+first+annual+report+US+Commissioner+of+Labor+strikes+and+lockouts&source=bl&ots=Y_UhZxCPC_&sig=Rrc9qLYiFc2FgHNCk17iOt_qrDo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=T33mUufhEYzjsASym4K4AQ&ved=0CDUQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=louisiana&f=false, (Accessed January 27, 2014).

[17] Reich, 182; Allen, 168; Texas State Federation of Labor, Proceedings of Annual Convention, 1904, Briscoe Center Library, University of Texas at Austin, 23, (hereafter cited as Texas State Federation of Labor).

[18] Texas State Federation of Labor, 10-32. Green, Past & Present, 174.

[19] Allen, 168-171; Mark Fannin, *Labor's Promised Land: Radical Visions of Gender, Race, and Religion in the South* (Knoxville, TN: University Tennessee Press, 2003), 23.

[20] Foner, 13.

the IWW's found previous success among the sawmill workers. The ALU established eleven locals in the region in 1905, the same year that it became a part of the IWW.[21] This would make the ALU the most successful national labor union among the region's timber workers until the advent of the BTW, and indicates that the ALU helped pave the way for the Brotherhood. Moreover, even though the ALU presence was brief, individuals may have retained membership and become IWW members, creating a possible radical nucleus for future agitation. Historian Ruth Allen offered no specifics, but claimed that the IWW was active and somewhat successful in the region prior to the BTW.[22]

In 1906-1907, just a few short years after the disappearance of the ALU locals, came a series of strikes with direct IWW involvement. Melvyn Dubofsky overlooked these strikes and the IWW's claim of involvement, stating that "between 1904 and 1910 neither industrial conflict nor labor agitator's (sic) disturbed the region's labor scene."[23] In 1906 over 1600 workers from multiple sawmills went on strike for eight weeks in the Lake Charles area and won a ten-hour day with weekly pay.[24] Philip Foner claimed that these strikes involved all of the lumber workers of east Texas and western Louisiana, closing hundreds of mills.[25] Previously uncited material provides evidence of one and possibly two active IWW locals in Lake Charles in 1907, suggesting that the IWW was

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[21] Tarver, 169; Allen, 168-170.
[22] Allen, 173.
[23] Dubofsky, 211.
[24] "Around the State," The Donaldson Chief (Donaldson, La), November 3, 1906, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034248/1906-11-03/ed-1/seq-1/ (Accessed February 5, 2014).
[25] Foner, 236.

active in the 1906 strike.[26] A 1922 IWW publication claimed that "IWW influence had already begun to make itself felt" during these strikes, and historian John Earl Haynes stated that the IWW had organizers in the region at the time.[27] There is no evidence linking BTW co-founder Arthur Emerson to these strikes, but he was working in the Kirby mills and arrested for assault during this period.[28]

Although the history of strikes leading up to the formation of the BTW indicates that a significant number of the region's timber workers had experience with labor organizations and confrontations with capital, it would be a mistake to view the origins of the BTW solely through a history of strikes and labor agitation. Strikes could not possibly tell the whole story. In addition to on-the-job actions some of the workers pursued political alternatives to the capitalist system, specifically socialism and the Socialist Party (SP).[29]

Despite the fact that there was a lot of overlap between the IWW and the Socialist Party up until 1913, many historians have overlooked the entanglement between the Socialist Party, the BTW and the IWW. Party leaders Eugene Debs and Daniel DeLeon were co-founders of the IWW. IWW firebrand and co-founder "Big Bill" Haywood was on the Executive Committee of the Party. A letter written by socialist and BTW organizer

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[26] James Gregory and Connor Casey, "Mapping Social Movements," IWW History Project: Industrial Workers of the World 1905 - 1935, http://depts.washington.edu/iww/locals.shtml (Accessed November 16, 2015); Wm. E. Trautman, "Statement of Receipts and Expenditures at General Headquarters," *Industrial Union Bulletin (Chicago)*, August 31, 1907, https://archive.org/details/v1n27-aug-31-1907-iub (Accessed November 16, 2015).

[27] Industrial Workers of the World, *The Lumber Industry and Its Workers* (Chicago : Industrial Workers of the World, 1922), http://archive.org/details/lumberindustryit00indurich. (Accessed January 27, 2014), 76; Haynes, 51.

[28] Cain to Kirby, August 7, 1911, Kirby Papers, box 92 folder 7.

[29] For an excellent discussion of socialism in the southwest during this time period see James Green's *Grass-Roots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895-1943*.

Phineas Eastman and others claimed that the majority of socialists in the timber region of Louisiana were IWW.[30] Furthermore, IWW organizer Covington Hall stipulated that the SP was not only "strong and militant" in Louisiana, but that "it had locals in nearly all of the mill towns."[31]

The efforts of the Socialist Party in the region often coincided with those of organized labor and provide further evidence of a continuous anti-capitalist stance within the region. A study of the 1912 popular election documented SP success "in almost exactly" the same parishes of Populist strength in the 1890s.[32] Furthermore these parishes coincided with the strongholds of the BTW. For instance, Alexandria, site of the BTW's headquarters, held the state's first convention of the People's Party in October of 1891.[33] Links between the geographic strength of the SP and labor unrest can be traced back until at least to 1902. In that year there was a successful strike by 600 sawmill workers in Lutcher, Louisiana, the same town with the only documented black local of the SP in Louisiana.[34]

In addition to locals of the SP, the region had a significant socialist press demonstrating that some of the populace was becoming increasingly familiar with Marxist critiques and analyses of capitalism. The presence and proliferation of socialist

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[30] "Questions for the Rip-Saw", *The Industrial Worker*, May 22 1913, http://www.marxists.org/history/usa/pubs/industrialworker/iw/v5n09-w217-may-22-1913-IW.pdf, (Accessed February 15, 2014).
[31] Hall, 120.
[32] Grady McWhiney, "Louisiana Socialists in the Early Twentieth Century: A Study of Rustic Radicalism", *The Journal of Southern History* 20, no. 3 (August 1954): 315-36, http://0-www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/2955153 (Accessed March 3, 2013). 317.
[33] Fannin, 22.
[34] Eraste Vidrine, "Negro Locals", *International Socialist Review*, v5 pp 389-392, http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101076886223;view=1up;seq=397, (Accessed January 27, 2014); Green, Past & Present, 174.

newspapers in the region challenges the notion that the BTW and its members were not aware of or connected to movements outside of the region. One of these newspapers, *The Toiler*, published by Leesville, Louisiana resident Pat O'Neill, provides another link to the IWW. Green referred to O'Neill as one of the founders of the IWW, though this has been difficult to confirm.[35] Regardless of O'Neill's participation in the founding of the IWW, *The Toiler* has been described as a "recruiting organ" for the IWW.[36] Leesville reflected the interests of O'Neill and became a "hot-bed" of BTW unionism.[37] Hall claimed that O'Neill organized "two or three IWW Lumber Workers' Unions" with the assistance of Emerson *prior* to the founding of the BTW, and that these disbanded when the BTW was formed.[38] Hall's statement coupled with the assertions of Allen, Thompson, Haynes, and IWW publications indicate a clear, direct IWW presence in the region before the formation of the BTW.

There were at least fifteen other socialist newspapers published in the region.[39] The proliferation of these papers did not go unnoticed in the mainstream press which reported that socialist publications were circulated "extensively."[40] Ferrell claimed that one of the most prominent supporters of the BTW was *The Rebel*, the official weekly of the Texas Socialist Party. He further noted that the publication's growth in circulation from 2,340 in July of 1911 to 23,443 in September of 1913 directly coincided with the

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[35] Green, Past & Present, 175.
[36] David G. Anderson et al., *Archaeology, History, and Predictive Modeling: Research at Fort Polk, 1972-2002* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2003), 474.
[37] M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, September 18, 1911, LCLC, folder 695.
[38] Hall, Labor Struggles, 120.
[39] Ferrell, 313-315.
[40] "The Grabow Riot," *Caucasion* (Shreveport, La.), August 6, 1912, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064469/1912-08-06/ed-1/seq-1/ (Accessed November 17, 2013).

BTW's campaign for recognition. *The Rebel* also published a "special timber workers edition," 15,000 of which were circulated in the BTW heartland.[41] Other socialist papers also provided strong support for the BTW campaign. H.C. Creel, editor of the *National Rip-Saw*, survived an assassination attempt while in the region stumping for the BTW.[42] Fred W. Warren, editor of *Appeal to Reason*, spoke to an audience of hundreds at the Shreveport Opera House.[43]

One out every fourteen voters in Jim Crow Louisiana cast their ballot for the Socialist Party in the 1912 general election. Furthermore, the official SP candidate for governor in 1912 was a member of the IWW.[44] In the 1912 election cycle E.F. Presley was elected mayor of DeRidder, La., in the heart of BTW territory, on a BTW-Socialist ticket.[45] In addition to stumping for Debs with Haywood, Emerson was known to make speeches under the auspices of the Socialist Party during the BTW's campaign.[46] From this entangled perspective, the support the Socialist Party received shows that the politics of the IWW were not as detested by the local populace as some historians have intimated.

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[41] Ferrell, 311-312.
[42] "Creel Says He Was Fired Upon," *Lake Charles Daily American Press* (Lake Charles, La.), July 8, 1912, http://digital.olivesoftware.com/Repository/LAP/1912/07/08/058-LAP-1912-07-08-001-SINGLE-ORIGNAME_00182_9SPLIT.PDF#OLV0_Page_0001 (Accessed August 11, 2013); "In 'Free' America," *Scott County Kicker* (Benton, Mo.), July 13, 1912, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89066234/1912-07-13/ed-1/seq-4/ (Accessed November 23, 2013); "Four Killed in Saw Mill Riot," *Era Leader* (Franklinton, La.), July 11, 1912, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064305/1912-07-11/ed-1/seq-1/ (Accessed April 29, 2013).
[43] "Fred W. Warren" The Caucasian (Shreveport, La) April 29, 1913, http://books.google.com/books?id=6ugxAQAAMAAJ&q=socialist#v=snippet&q=socialist&f=false (Accessed February 7, 2014).
[44] McWhiney, 315-36.
[45] Hall, Southern Timber Workers, 807.
[46] "Emerson to Make Socialist Speeches," *The Lumber Trade Journal*, May 1, 1913, http://books.google.com/books?id=6ugxAQAAMAAJ&q=socialist#v=snippet&q=socialist&f=false (Accessed February 7, 2014); "A.L. Emerson" The Caucasian (Shreveport, La), April 27, 1913, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064469/1913-04-27/ed-1/seq-1/ (Accessed February 7, 2014).

The BTW's fight for recognition was a brief and often violent struggle which left the region a militarized zone with thousands of armed company men in control of the labor force. The union began with Arthur L. Emerson organizing around Fullerton, Louisiana in June of 1910.[47] Emerson had worked as a millwright in the mills of Texas and Louisiana before traveling to work in Montana where he has been associated with union activity.[48] Although the exact timeframe is unclear, Jay Smith quickly began to assist Emerson in organizing the fast-growing union. Texas lumber baron John H. Kirby described both Emerson and Smith as socialists, and stated that Smith worked as a sawyer in the South and the Pacific Coast for 20 years.[49] If Smith was a socialist and worked in the lumber industry of the Pacific Coast he would very likely have had previous contact with the IWW.

To avoid lumber company detection, the BTW originated as a "semi-secret organization" with passwords and secret handshakes.[50] Emerson, Smith, and other organizers worked the mills and camps disguised as book agents, insurance salesman, evangelists, and card sharks.[51] This shroud of secrecy enabled the union to grow and gather strength before it caught the lumber companies' attention. Once the union became public, Emerson shed his cover and became the BTW's most effective organizer and public speaker. At the May 1912 convention Emerson claimed that since January of 1911 he had made 257 speeches, 37 of which were "broken up by the companies and their

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[47] Ferrell, 95.
[48] "Timber Workers' Organize Here," press clipping, date unknown, KLC, box 197, folder 7; Haywood, 108.
[49] Kirby to E.P. Ripley, August 8, 1911, Kirby Papers, box 92, folder 4.
[50] Hall, 122.
[51] Foner, 236-237.

pimps."[52] One of the initial places where BTW organizers focused their efforts was DeRidder, Louisiana, an area of significant previous strike activity. A few of the workers enlisted in DeRidder were already IWW and "most" of the others were at least sympathetic to it.[53] In December of 1910 the BTW publicly announced the formation of a local in Carson, Louisiana.

The BTW's principal adversary, the Southern Lumber Operator's Association (SLOA), formed when the region's lumber companies banded together to combat the 1906 IWW assisted strikes.[54] The SLOA was comprised of 80-150 members and controlled upwards of 300 mills.[55] All SLOA mills were assessed a tax relative to production to fund the anti-union campaign and provide income for closed mills. The Association was authorized to close any member's mill if it believed there was significant BTW presence.[56] Mill closures deprived the union of income and created enmity among non-members through the use of collective punishment.

In their attempt to eliminate the union, the SLOA and its member companies engaged in espionage, hiring detectives from multiple agencies, whom they referred to as operatives. Both white and black operatives thoroughly infiltrated the union, fighting the BTW "infection."[57] Operative L.T. Mabry organized at least a dozen BTW locals and

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[52] Minutes, 2.
[53] Foner 236.
[54] C.D. Johnson to mill owners, October 4, 1906, LCLC, folder 266. The date for the formation of the SLOA has been erroneously recorded as 1907 in many earlier works on the topic.
[55] Connie E. Berry, "The Brotherhood of Timber Workers and the Grabow Incident in Southwest Louisiana," (master's thesis, McNeese State University, 1976) Pamphlet 325 B Grabow, 19; Ferrell, 99; Fannin, 28.
[56] Minutes of the Meeting of the SLOA, May 24, 1911, LCLC, folder 669.
[57] General Manager to M.L. Fleishel, November 23, 1911, LCLC, folder 711.

gained access to high-level members and information.[58] M.L. Alexander was appointed by the SLOA to establish an information clearinghouse on the BTW at Alexandria, Louisiana, where he routinely received updated membership lists and lodge locations from operatives within the BTW. Many of these records have survived and currently provide the basis for much of the scholarship on the Brotherhood. Some informants and detectives were also actively engaged in a disinformation campaign utilizing BTW double agents.[59] Within nine months the office was receiving three to five hundred names daily and boasted a blacklist of approximately 40,000 names, with expectations that it would grow to 50,000.[60] By October of 1913 the office was receiving 200 reports on the BTW daily.[61] All companies were asked to forward complete lists of their present and past employees, and individuals appearing on the blacklist were fired.[62]

The union drive was certainly aided by the miserable conditions the timber workers toiled under, which contributed to a rebellious attitude. The work itself was extremely dangerous and serious injuries were a regular occurrence.[63] Common injuries and deaths included employees with "amputated fingers," "fractured skull," "crushed hips," and being "crushed to death."[64] Paydays were irregular and employees were often paid in scrip; the BTW demanded an end to both of these practices.[65] Workers were

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[58] Allen, 178.
[59] Tarver, 359.
[60] M.L. Alexander to C.D. Johnson, June 4, 1912, Kirby Papers, box 92 folder 6.
[61] M.L. Alexander to C.D. Johnson, October 20, 1913, LCLC folder 971.
[62] SLOA to Slagle, September 4, 1911, LCLC, folder 692.
[63] Ferrell, 170-193.
[64] "Ernest Nelson Crushed to Death by Moving Log Carriage," *Lake Charles Daily American Press*, June 30, 1911; Ferrell, 170-193.
[65] Morgan, 195; Haywood, 106; "Timber Workers' Organize Here," press clipping, date unknown, KLC, box 197, folder 7.

generally forced to purchase their goods at the company store, where the prices could be 50 percent higher than at independent stores. Scrip could be used at independent stores, but was devalued up to 25 percent.[66] One of the union's demands was the right of employees to purchase goods in the free market.[67]

Lumber companies exerted economic control over their workers. Due to sparse population, towns were quickly constructed around sawmills and designed to last as only as long as the timber supply. Company houses ranged from shacks, of which IWW organizer E.F. Doree poetically noted that "you can study astronomy at night through the roof," to dilapidated boxcars.[68] Not to be outdone by Doree's description, union organizer Ed Lehman stipulated that some shacks had cracks in them, "big enough to throw a dog through."[69] Sanitation in many towns was non-existent and sewage was dumped into open ditches.[70] These conditions bred discontent as well as disease and malnutrition.

The majority of the timber workers lived under the watchful eye of their employers under conditions that seriously question the nature of freedom in the company towns. Mill towns were built by the lumber companies on private land; the companies owned the houses, all of the buildings (including the ones in which businesses operated), and in some cases the businesses themselves. Armed guards were a constant presence in company towns, providing a means of intimidation and control of the workforce. "Whole towns are fenced in and day and night they are watched, driven and brow-beaten by an

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[66] Haywood, 105-106.
[67] "Timber Workers' Organize Here," press clipping, date unknown, KLC, box 197, folder 7.
[68] United States v. William D. Haywood, et al., 1918, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, University Archives, Wayne State University, Testimony of E.F. Doree, 5908 (Hereafter cited as Doree Testimony).; Haywood, 117.
[69] Ed Lehman, "Conditions at Bayou Blue Lumber Company," *The Voice of the People*, May 1, 1914.
[70] Louisiana State Board of Health to Slagle, December 15, 1910, LCLC, folder 638; Haywood, 118.

army of gunmen"[71] Some of the towns even had armed guards at the entrance controlling access to the town.[72] Tarver noted that a deputized sheriff was often employed to euphemistically "keep the peace" in the segregated black and Italian quarters.[73] In some cases work was mandatory, not optional, for those living in the segregated quarters as sheriffs literally forced the men out of bed and to work if there was a labor shortage.[74] Doree described the mill towns as a "little empire," noting that in some mill towns workers were not permitted to take anything out of town, or bring anything in."[75] This not only implied complete economic control of the workers, it also gave companies the ability to censor union and socialist propaganda. Some mill towns were incorporated into legal municipalities with the predictable result of company officials being elected to mayor and other positions of power.[76]

In much of the region the law and will of the timber companies trumped those of civil society. Doree testified that local law enforcement generally had no authority in mill towns and workers in the good graces of the company could find "protection" from civilian law enforcement within the fortified towns. In addition, mill towns exerted authority over "free towns," those not owned by the mill, when they were in proximity. Company gunmen had free reign. They would enter a free town "en masse and what is

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[71] Covington Hall, "The Grabow Riot," *The Rebel* (Hallettsville, Texas), July 20, 1912.
[72] Haynes, 37
[73] Tarver, 253.
[74] Green, 207.
[75] Doree Testimony, 5907-5911.
[76] John Earl Haynes "Unrest in the Piney Woods: Southern Lumber and the Brotherhood of Timber Workers in the Early Twentieth Century" (master's thesis, Florida State University, 1966), 37, http://digitool.fcla.edu/R/KT3QC11EEV37CJYQ2VA75YK8S9SLM2295F6FM2NEGSN5XKAYBN-02049?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=158597&local_base=GEN01&pds_handle=GUEST (Accessed April 6, 2013).

known as law normally, ceases to exist entirely in the face of increased power," Doree recalled.[77] He estimated that there were only half a dozen free towns in the region, leaving many workers in sort of a feudal society where the lumber boss was king.[78] Doree testified there were some 2000 company gunmen in Calcasieu Parish, alone.[79] If his testimony is anywhere close to accurate it could reasonably be assumed that other Louisiana parishes and Texas counties had similar numbers, indicating the presence of thousands of gunmen.

The BTW was publicly linked to the IWW and "socialistic tenets" before BTW's inaugural Convention in 1911.[80] The BTW's attempts to solicit the IWW did not go unnoticed. In the fall of 1911 Kirby informed a reporter that workers would oppose the union because "our boys" know that it is "socialistic in character" and "it proposes to affiliate as soon as it is strong enough with the Industrial Workers of the World."[81] The *St. Louis Globe Democrat* quoted a timber company document in which mill owners asserted the BTW was affiliated with the IWW.[82] These early press accounts linking the BTW to the IWW and socialism are not slander or confusion on the part of the press; they reflect the information that timber companies were receiving from their operatives within the union.

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[77] Doree Testimony, 5907-5911.
[78] Doree Testimony, 5919.
[79] Doree Testimony, 5921.
[80] "Lumbermen Plan to Fight Against Union," *Colfax Chronicle* (Colfax, La.), June 10, 1911, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064176/1911-06-10/ed-1/seq-1/ (Accessed November 1, 2013); "Lumber Mills Close Down," *Jefferson jimplecute* (Jefferson, Texas), August 25, 1911, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86089978/1911-08-25/ed-1/seq-2/ (Accessed November 18, 2013); "Mill Owners Will Fight Brotherhood," *Colfax Chronicle* (Colfax, La.), July 22, 1911, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064176/1911-07-22/ed-1/seq-4/ (Accessed November 17, 2013).
[81] Kirby Papers, date unknown, box 114, folder 26.
[82] Vanlandingham to Exchange Salesmen, LCLC, folder 683, July 26, 1911.

SLOA documents show that BTW members subscribed to the IWW newspaper and circulated it from person to person.[83] A fired mill hand unwittingly told an operative that 65 percent of the sawmill men in Standard, Louisiana were IWW and that the trainmen and engineers were "all IWW." During his conversation with the operative he was recognized as a union man and forced to leave town at gunpoint.[84] Although the numbers may be an exaggeration, they further demonstrate IWW influence in the area before the first BTW Convention.

The conciliatory nature of the BTW Constitution has been used as evidence of the lack of a radical ideology among the members.[85] Certainly, the constitution tamely stated the "employer is entitled to, and we promise him, an absolutely square deal…" and further denounced violence and vowed to respect property rights.[86] However, an earlier pre-constitution document, circulated before the first BTW Convention, "Resolutions of the Brotherhood of Timber Workers" was much less conciliatory. In language reflecting the anarchosyndicalist sentiments of the IWW, the circular referred to the employers as the "oppressive hand of capital." The BTW promised to deliver workers from "the yoke of capitalist bondage" and "move in a solid body against the CAPITALISTS…" The document further stated that, "At present we are no more than their slaves."[87] The rhetoric of this document was noticeably toned down in the constitution adopted by the BTW in 1911. "Capitalists" became "employers" who were promised "a square deal."[88]

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[83] J.W. Lewis to C.P. Myer September 25, 1911, KLC, box 197 folder 7.
[84] Operative #11 report, June 11, 1911, LCLC, folder 672.
[85] Allen, 173; Morgan, 195.
[86] *State of Louisiana v. L.F. Johnson et als*, Fifteenth Judicial District Court of Louisiana, Case no. 6021, 1912, Constitution and By-Laws of the Brotherhood of Timber Workers (hereafter cited as Constitution), 1.
[87] Resolutions of the Brotherhood of Timber Workers, date unknown, LCLC, folder 668.
[88] Constitution, 1-3.

Unfortunately, there is no record of the internal debate that led to the toned-down rhetoric of the constitution. The "Resolutions" also identified the BTW's early proclamations regarding race. They stated that non-white members would be accepted, but the union would be segregated and black lodges were required to elect white delegates to the convention, ensuring control of the black voice.[89] These policies were noticeably racist and not in line with the IWW.

Emerson was discussing strategy with Vincent St. John, General Secretary of the IWW, for over a year before they affiliated, and before the drafting of the constitution.[90] The timing of these reported discussions with St. John correspond to the drafting of the Resolutions document. As a southern born labor leader St. John may have had a special understanding of the difficulties the BTW faced organizing in the face of Jim Crow and he and Emerson may have decided that a slower, pragmatic approach was more likely to ultimately achieve the desired result of affiliation with the anti-segregationist IWW. Shortly before the first BTW Convention, IWW organizer Fred Lund was spotted by an operative at an area hotel with two other IWW affiliated men, one named Kesterson the other was believed to be C.H. Axelson, who was a member of the IWW's General Executive Board. Although the operative did not see them meet with anyone during their stay, their presence in the region immediately before the first BTW Convention, at which they discussed affiliation with the IWW is worth noting.[91]

BTW support was strong in the early fall of 1911, at which point the union had

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[89] Resolutions of the Brotherhood of Timber Workers, date unknown, LCLC, folder 668.
[90] Industrial Lumber Company, copy of informant report sent to Slagle, May 1, 1911, LCLC, folder 664.
[91] SLOA to members, LCLC, folder 671, June 2, 1911.

over 10,000 members with 143 locals.[92] By this time the SLOA had amassed significant information from its operatives and had begun to take action. Following a series of firings and mass walkouts the SLOA ordered the closure of twenty-three plants.[93] It was an inauspicious time to strike as the price of lumber was low in 1911 and the mills had plenty of stock to ride out a lockout or strike with little financial loss.[94] Before the first BTW Convention, The *St. Louis Lumberman* quoted one owner as stating, "If the movement should become widespread, I do not believe it could come at a better time." The industry, he predicted, "could stand a suspension of work better now than at any period for a long time past."[95] Due to these market conditions there was no need to import strikebreakers, a chief source of conflict.

It was during these lockouts that affiliation with the IWW began to take on increased importance for the Brotherhood. Affiliation with the IWW was officially discussed "from every angle" at the June 1911 convention. That consolidation of the unions was seriously considered at the inaugural meeting lends weight to the possibility that affiliation with the IWW was part of the original plan conceived of by key BTW figures, and possibly many of the rank and file. The delegates at the 1911 convention did not approve amalgamation, though it is unclear if it was brought to a vote.[96] Despite the apparent lack of a mandate to consolidate, BTW officers Emerson, Smith, and W.A.

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[92] M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, September 7, 1911, LCLC, folder 693.
[93] Minutes of General Meeting of the SLOA, August 16, 1911, LCLC, folder 688.
[94] "Shreveport Letter," *St. Louis Lumberman*, September 15, 1911.
[95] "Lake Charles Letter," *St. Louis Lumberman*, April 27, 1911.
[96] The office of the Grand President of the BTW, August 14, 1911, KLC, box 197 folder 7.

Fussell attended the IWW convention in Chicago as fraternal delegates.[97] Operative reports stated that they intended to solicit financial and organizing assistance from the IWW, knowing that affiliation would be a possible precondition.[98] Although this delegation has been acknowledged by previous scholars there has been little, if any, discussion or analysis of the delegation's intent. The importance of their delegation is suggested by the fact that three of the top BTW officers attended the convention during a tense lockout manufactured by the SLOA to break the union they had been instrumental in creating. A document previously unutilized in BTW scholarship clarifies Brotherhood's actions at the convention. The BTW delegation was given the floor "for a couple of hours" and "entertained the convention with the story of struggles to form their union." The BTW delegation also "expressed the heartiest feelings of sympathy for the I.W.W. and held out the hope that there would be a speedy affiliation between the two organizations if they could bring it about."[99] Ceding the floor to the BTW delegates for a significant amount of time during important proceedings shows the seriousness with which the IWW was engaging their proposal.

Due to the IWW's opposition to segregation, an obvious sticking point would have been the BTW's segregationist policies. The official recorded response of the IWW

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[97] M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, September 7, 1911, LCLC, folder 693; M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, September 20, 1911, LCLC, folder 696; Alexander to Fleishel, September 16, 1911, LCLC, folder 695.

[98] M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, September 16, 1911, LCLC, folder 695; M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, September 18, 1911 folder 695.

[99] United States Congress House Committee on Rules et al., *Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer on Charges Made against Department of Justice by Louis F. Post and Others* (Govt. print. off., 1920), 281, W.Z. Foster, "Sixth I.W.W. Convention," *Solidarity*, September 30, 1911, https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=fuMtAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&authuser=0&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA281, (Accessed February 27, 2014), (hereafter cited as Palmer).

at the convention was carefully worded, acknowledging the BTW's struggle with the "capitalist class" and that they had "succeeded to *some extent* in teaching the spirit of revolt to *some of* the workers of the South" (emphasis added).[100] They stopped short of mentioning affiliation and resolved to give the BTW "all of the moral aid possible."[101]

The consolidation of the Brotherhood into the IWW in the summer or 1911 would have been a major coup for the IWW. Several campaigns had just ended and the union was in a rare moment transition. The IWW had approximately 11,000 members in good standing in the fall of 1911, though the actual membership was likely higher as members tended to pay dues periodically as itinerant nature of their work allowed.[102] The influx of thousands of dues paying members and the opening of a large, organized campaign in the Deep South was a major proposition. The *Industrial Worker*, an IWW paper, ran multiple articles introducing the Brotherhood to Wobblies. An in depth front page article which detailed the Brotherhood's fight and heavily insinuated IWW influence, in the last issue before the convention primed membership for the BTW delegation.[103] Denial of the BTW's request for amalgamation over the issue segregation demonstrates the steadfastness of the IWW's opposition to segregation.

Upon returning to Louisiana Emerson publicly spun the failed affiliation as a choice on the part of the BTW. However, the evidence suggests that this was merely a face-saving tactic. A serious discussion of a merger with the IWW at the first BTW

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[100] Palmer, 285.
[101] Palmer, 285.
[102] Dubofsky, 220.
[103] "Gompers to Aid Southern Saw-Mill Owners," *The Industrial Worker* (Spokane), September 7, 1911, https://archive.org/details/v3n24-w128-sep-07-1911-IW (Accessed December 1, 2015).

Convention, the subsequent journey to Chicago, and the delegation's offer of affiliation reveal significant interest for official collaboration. Emerson's official statement to the membership declared that while the BTW respected the IWW and did not wish to alienate them, it was not interested in affiliation because that would mean being "swallowed" by the IWW. Emerson did not make any statements to the effect that he was ideologically opposed to the merger, or that the IWW objected to the BTW's segregationist policies. Further statements in the circular strongly suggest that the segregationist policies of the BTW were indeed the sticking point. The circular clarified the BTW's position: "It is not our purpose to make an attempt to reconstruct the social fabric. We must do one thing at a time…We cannot succeed by alienating the sympathy of the great body of society." Furthermore, "We see neither reason or justice in sending our funds away to an organization with headquarters in the North, the head of which cannot know our peculiar needs…."[104]

The failed consolidation did not mean that the unions ceased support for one another, rather it clearly identified the policy changes necessary for affiliation. Smith quickly returned to the IWW's Chicago headquarters after the failed affiliation.[105] Emerson also later returned to Chicago to discuss the potential merger again in early 1912.[106] By February of 1912 the timber workers of the IWW were openly soliciting the BTW.[107] Two additional pieces of evidence serve to not only reinforce the argument that

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[104] From the office of the Grand President of the BTW, August 14, 1911, KLC, box 197 folder 7.
[105] M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, November 7, 1911, LCLC, folder 707.
[106] M.L. Alexander to C.D. Johnson, February 26, 1912, LCLC, folder 733.
[107] "Report of Lumber Worker's Convention," *Industrial Worker* (Spokane), February 29, 1912, https://archive.org/details/industrialworker?sort=-date&and[]=Volume%203%20Issue%2049 (Accessed November 24, 2015).

segregation was the issue standing between the two unions, but that the BTW was actively moving to desegregate.

First, is a pamphlet authored by BTW Secretary Jay Smith, which was reported in the IWW's newspaper, the *Industrial Worker* just a few short weeks before the 1912 BTW Convention. The article noted that the South was in a "backward state of development" due to its failure to address racial prejudice. Smith's pamphlet addressed the "race question" by affirming that the BTW's aim was to organize all workers regardless of race into "One Big Union." The IWW was referred to as the One Big Union by its members and the significance of this phrase would not have been lost on members of either union. However, one should not conflate anti-segregationism with anti-racism, Smith did not steer clear of racism. He argued that "either the whites organize with the negroes, or the bosses will organize the negroes against the whites…" in which case "it is hardly up to the whites to damn the niggers." Pandering to timber workers who may have objected to an integrated union can be seen as an indication that the BTW had no interest in advancing segregation or the cause of racial equality outside of a direct benefit to themselves, just as it can also be seen as a pragmatic approach to get white workers to "buy in" to joining a desegregated union in the hope that their racism would be undone through experiences of solidarity. The pamphlet emphasized that both races belonged to the same class and that through "standing by each other in all things, and at all times, and everywhere" they might achieve their goals of industrial democracy and a hope to "rehumanize the human race."[108] Through affiliation with the IWW the BTW was openly

[108] "Don't be a Peon – Be a Man," *Industrial Worker* (Spokane), April 25, 1912, https://archive.org/details/v4n05-w161-apr-25-1912-IW (Accessed November 23, 2015).

challenging Jim Crow and potentially inviting increased legal and social persecution, this tension is palpable in their rhetoric. However, this does not ignore the use of race-baiting as an organizing tactic.

Another incident that points toward an ongoing dialogue centered on segregation is that IWW firebrand "Big" Bill Haywood and New Orleans IWW organizer Covington Hall were invited to address the 1912 Convention. These men would not have been invited to advocate affiliation between the unions if the Brotherhood leadership was not willing to advance the IWW's anti-segregation policies. Indeed, Haywood successfully addressed the issue as soon as he took the stage.

Upon arrival at the convention Haywood noticed that although this was an interracial union he only saw white faces in the crowd and he asked the reason for this anomaly. He was told that integrated meetings were illegal in the Jim Crow South. Haywood asked if they desired him to speak to all of the workers and they replied that they did. He then exhorted the white delegates, "Why, you work in the mills together, don't you? You are working out here in the forest together, you are on the job all the time together. You have met here in this convention to determine the conditions that are going to prevail in these mills. Go out and get those black men and bring them in here and nevermind the law. This is one law that we have got to break now while we have an understanding about what we are going to do with this convention." The union agreed and the black delegates entered the room, which Haywood surmised was without

precedent in state of Louisiana.[109] The willingness of the delegates to listen to Haywood's argument and permanently alter their racist, law-abiding, custom is evidence of the ground work laid by union leaders and some of the rank-and-file.

The BTW's 1912 Convention provides multiple examples of membership support for the IWW and a more radical agenda. The most obvious point of support for the IWW occurred when BTW members voted 71 ½- 26 ½ to affiliate with the IWW.[110] This affiliation was later unanimously ratified by the locals, further establishing widespread support for the IWW.[111] Six out of the seven black delegates voted to affiliate with the IWW. The black delegate who voted no, W.M. Henry, represented Merryville. The votes of the black locals were counted equally to the votes of the white locals.[112] The numbers of lodges and members represented at the 1912 Convention cannot be viewed as necessarily representative of the entirety of the Brotherhood. Traveling to, and attending the convention was tantamount to publicly declaring oneself a BTW member. A public declaration of support for the BTW not only meant the loss of a job, but also eviction, if one lived in a company town. Public opposition to the lumber trust was more dangerous for BTW members of color than their white union brothers. In addition to no longer being internally segregated once the BTW joined the IWW, the union also accepted female

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[109] Fannin, 200; Green, 210; United States v. William D. Haywood, et al., 1918, "Evidence and Cross Examination of William. D. Haywood in the case of U.S.A. vs. Wm. D. Haywood et al.," https://archive.org/details/evidencecrossexa00hayw (accessed December 17, 2005).
[110] Minutes, 13; Hall noted in his memoir that half of the votes cast by the Merryville local were cast by an operative in opposition to affiliation. These votes in addition to the three other "No" ballots Hall claims were cast by operatives indicates that there might have been even more support for affiliation than presented by the vote. It could have been closer to 82 -16 in favor of affiliation. Hall, 130.
[111] Southern Lumber Operator's Association Confidential Report, August 9, 1912, Kirby Papers, box 92, folder 7;Tarver, 543.
[112] Minutes, 12-13.

members after affiliation.[113]

In a document previously unutilized in BTW research, IWW organizer E.F. Doree poignantly described the plight of the black timber worker in the Jim Crow Deep South. "There is a policy in the South to keep the Negro in debt. No matter how you do it, keep them in debt." At times this was done through the extension of "credit." The black worker was unable to dispute how much he owed his employer because, "If he argues too much, well they have got a funeral, that's all, and he knows it. It costs $7 to kill a Negro in Louisiana. So he doesn't argue very long with anybody…He is always in debt. There is no chance to get out of debt if the company wants to keep him there." This debt allowed companies to exert control over the movement of black workers, rendering them unable to leave to find better wages. If a black worker went to another town that was offering higher wages without the consent of his past employer he was returned to his previous position, forcibly if necessary. Doree commented, "I don't know what the law of it is…but whether it is the law or not, they go over there and they send a couple of their deputies over and they bring the Negro back and put him to work." In a twist eerily reminiscent of chattel slavery, companies would allow other companies to assume the black worker's debt, essentially buying the worker, and in this way "allow" them to change employers. If a company did not want a particular worker "they peddle their debt and send the negro along with it. That is very prevalent."[114]

The confrontation between the Brotherhood and the SLOA came to a head shortly after the 1912 convention and affiliation with the IWW. Union members were engaged in

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[113] Green, 210.
[114] Doree Testimony, 5913-5915.

perhaps the South's original "flying squadrons," going from mill to mill making speeches in an attempt to coax strikebreakers into joining the union.[115] They made an unplanned detour, hoping to avoid an increased number of armed company men, to a small mill owned by the Galloway family in Grabow, Louisiana.[116] Unbeknownst to the BTW, John Galloway had planned an ambush, arming several employees and ensured that they had copious amounts of alcohol.[117] The ambush ultimately left three BTW men and a company gunman dead. At least thirty-seven of the estimated forty wounded were union men. Despite evidence that John Galloway fired the first shot, and shot a man in the back while he was fleeing, he was held briefly but not charged.[118] Fifty-eight union men, including Emerson and other key organizers, were ultimately arrested and faced with the prospect of capital punishment.[119] Another union member, "Leather Britches" Smith, was later killed, allegedly while resisting arrest.[120]

The trial was a Pyrrhic victory for the union. They succeeded in saving the lives of the fifty-eight men on trial, but the process left them over six thousand dollars in debt, almost twice as much money as they had raised the previous year.[121] This debt left the

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[115] Flying squadrons were a much publicized aspect of mill strikes in 1929 and 1934. Although those strikers used automobiles, the concept was the same. They gathered a mass of union supporters and went to mills utilizing non-union labor and attempted to shut the mill down. For further information see Jacquelyn Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill Word* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987) 329-342.
[116] Charles Rudolph McCord, "A Brief History of the Brotherhood of Timber Workers" (Master's thesis, University of Texas, 1959), 57.
[117] McCord, 85.
[118] Coroner's Inquest of Rier Martin, Number 105, State of Louisiana, Parish of Calcasieu, Testimony of Charles Gibson and C.C. Holley, July 8, 1912. Clerk of Court, Calcasieu Parish.
[119] For in depth analysis of Grabow shooting and trial see McCord 57-91; Tarver, 578-611.
[120] "Grabow Rioters Are Acquitted," *Tulsa Daily World* (Tulsa Ok.), November 3, 1912, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042344/1912-11-03/ed-1/seq-1/ (Accessed November 18, 2013).
[121] Tarver, 617.

union even more unable to combat the significant financial advantage of the SLOA, which had amassed a $175,000 war chest to fight the BTW by November of 1911.[122] In addition, members of the BTW had been put on notice that they could be shot and killed with impunity, and that survivors were subject to incarceration and possible execution at the hands of the state. Five men lay dead and no one was held accountable. In case this point was missed by BTW organizers, it was made clearer when a circular was posted offering a $1,000 reward, dead or alive, for Jay Smith, Covington Hall, C.H. Fallino, and E.F. Doree.[123] It was this shell-shocked and financially destitute BTW that officially became a part of the IWW.

Shortly after the trial, with the union reeling financially and suffering the absence of their best field organizers, a strike was called at Merryville in response to the firing of workers who testified at the Grabow trial. In mid-February the "Good Citizen's League," a vigilante organization comprised of some local businessmen and company gunmen, (who were drunk, according to Covington Hall) unleashed a wave of violence on the strikers over the course of several days and brought the strike to a decisive end. The Good Citizens raided the union hall and "deported" all of the union men. Organizers were beaten to the edge of town and threatened with death if they returned. Hall stated that women continued the picket in the absence of the men.[124] A local paper stated that there

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[122] C.D. Johnson to Keith, November 14, 1911, LCLC, folder 708.
[123] Doree Testimony, 5925.
[124] Covington Hall, "With the Southern Timber Workers," *International Socialist Review* 13 (May 1913): 806-7, https://archive.org/stream/InternationalSocialistReview1900Vol13/ISR-volume13#page/n827/mode/2up/search/covington+hall (Accessed November 3, 2013); S.S. 44, "Vivid Account of the Merryville Highbinders of 'Law and Order'," *Lumberjack* (Alexandria, La.), February 27, 1913, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064459/1913-02-27/ed-1/seq-1/ (Accessed November 15, 2013).

was no riot, though "fistfights were plentiful" and the "undesirables" were forced to leave.[125] This was another unmistakable message that union members would not be provided with constitutional protections. Regardless of whether they were the BTW or the IWW, the vision they represented would not be tolerated. The lumber companies, the courts, and the press would act in collusion to prevent their success.

Unfortunately for the BTW, the IWW, and the future prospects of unions in the South, the BTW was crushed into a state of utter ineffectiveness and virtual dissolution within a few short months after their official merger through the concerted effort of the SLOA. However, the spirit of radical unionism displayed by the timber workers lived on among many of the participants. Ex-BTW organizers and members were later found organizing in the Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma oil fields.[126] Another BTW leader, Charles Cline, was arrested following a shoot-out with sheriffs as he attempted to smuggle arms into Mexico in support of the Mexican revolution.[127] In 1919 black BTW member I. Gaines continued to agitate among the timber workers of the South, possibly in Bogaloosa, Louisiana.[128]

The evidence of a history of workers' discontent and direct action against capitalism and the power structure of the region by workers is compelling. The interracial nature of the Knights of Labor organizing demonstrated both a challenge to entrenched

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[125] "Report of Clash of Union and Non-Union Men at Merryville Denied," *Colfax Chronicle* (Colfax, La.), February 2, 1913, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064176/1913-02-22/ed-1/seq-8/ (Accessed November 3, 2013).
[126] Hallowell to Bright, August 2, 1911, Kirby Papers, Box 92, folder 10; Hall, 162.
[127] Hall, "An Un-Crimed Crime," *The Voice of the People*, February 12, 1914, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064458/1914-02-12/ed-1/seq-1/, (Accessed February 22, 2014).
[128] Ellen Doree Rosen, *A Wobbly Life: IWW Organizer E.F. Doree* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 52.

notions of segregation as well as to the economic control of the workforce by a small number of wealthy elite. To be clear, the racial politics of the Knights of Labor campaign were flawed and did not promote racial equality, but it did require racial cooperation. The continued strikes among the timber workers before the formation of the BTW reveal a persistent attempt by the workers to improve their conditions. The presence and relative success of the ALU demonstrated an acceptance of radical opposition to capitalism and conventional unions. The support the populace showed for the Socialist Party and the socialist press provides evidence that workers were engaged in a more comprehensive struggle than a simple attempt to improve wages and conditions for the short-term amelioration of poverty.

The evidence of IWW involvement and influence among the region's workforce before the advent of the BTW is overwhelming. From the IWW's inception it had links to the region's workers through the ALU. The *Toiler* and the Lake Charles IWW locals indicate that the IWW maintained a regional presence that transcended the ALU. Internal documents of the IWW are scarce for the early twentieth century in part because in 1917 the federal government raided IWW offices country-wide and confiscated all of the organization's records and correspondence. This material was subsequently burned by the government in 1923.[129] It has been previously assumed that neither Emerson nor Smith were IWW members before the unions affiliated, despite a lack of evidence denying their previous membership in the IWW. There is some evidence indicating that Emerson was organizing for the IWW before he established the BTW. Moreover, there is significant

[129] Dubofsky, 531.

documentation of continuous contact with the IWW by BTW leadership and a drive to affiliate with the IWW origination from the IWW leadership and/or membership. In light of this evidence it can be stated that there was a consistent effort on the part of the IWW to organize the southern timber workers into the One Big Union. Therefor it is appropriate to view the activity of the BTW as an IWW organizing campaign. Records have been lost, and in some cases purposefully destroyed, making it difficult to state with absolute certainty the names of rank and file workers who although they did achieve "leadership" positions still managed to influence many of their fellow workers. Without these workers the message of Emerson and others would have fallen on deaf ears, and the evidence shows that it clearly did not.

The radical and anti-capitalist ideology expressed by the BTW and its membership provides an alternate picture of the southern worker than the common narrative. And suggests that workers were ready to attempt to overcome racial boundaries in an effort to create a more egalitarian economic system, but that these efforts were brutally suppressed by the capital and business interests who benefitted from the economic functions of racism. The success the socialist BTW and the anarchosyndicalist IWW had in rallying people in the Deep South to their message further demonstrates that the perceived conservatism of the region is in part a product subjugation and the absence of the very freedoms this conservatism purports to defend. Finally, this article demonstrates the IWW took a clear stand in opposing Jim Crow, even though it meant losing the prospect of significant expansion into a region that that could have provided crucial support for the union. Ultimately, the BTW conceded to the IWW and desegregated, however the short life span of the union after consolidation did not allow

for further expansion at the time.

Chapter 3

Race, Sexuality and Class in the Piney Woods: Timber Barons and the Brotherhood of Timber Workers, 1910-1916

Brotherhood of Timber Workers (BTW) organizer Ed Lehman was heckled by a scab as he attempted to recruit union members. The scab stated that he would not join the union "because it took in niggers." Lehman replied, "There is not a nigger in this union." The scab protested, "Well, what in the hell is Gaines if he ain't a nigger? He is as black as the ace of spades!" Lehman affirmed that Gaines was black, but denied that he was a "nigger." The scab demanded, "What the devil is he then?" Lehman replied, "He is a man, a union man, an IWW, a man, and he has proven it by his actions, and that is more than you have ever done in all your boss-sucking life. There are white men, Negro men, and Mexican men in this union, but no niggers, greasers, or white trash!"[130]

This exchange between a heckling strikebreaker and a union organizer illuminates many of the complexities surrounding interracial union organizing in the Jim Crow South. The white union organizer deflects the charge of race mixing through an affirmation of manhood, thus substituting gender for race and class in the zero sum game of social inclusion. Lehman turned the heckler's world upside down; not only did he refute the application of a racial slur toward union members, he also contradicted standard Jim Crow application of the pejorative "boy," while simultaneously claiming that Gaines was a better *man* than the white "boss-sucking" heckler. Additionally, we might question what part of the bosses' anatomy the heckler was accused of sucking, and

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[130] Covington Hall, *Labor Struggles in the Deep South and Other Writings*, ed. David R. Roediger (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1999), 166.

perhaps infer that the organizer was casting the heckler out of the protection of heteronormativity and the patriarchal power position of white manhood.

Over one hundred years have passed since the BTW was organized in the piney woods of western Louisiana and eastern Texas, and the racial politics of the union are still poorly understood. Discussions of race surrounding the BTW have often revolved around the BTW's segregationist policies and the interaction of black and white workers. Early scholarship praised the interracial make-up of the BTW in the Jim Crow South without fully examining the union's segregationist policies.[131] More recent scholarship has acknowledged the flawed racial policies of the BTW, but has failed to recognize the inclusionary evolution of these policies.[132] As historian Steven Reich noted, the scholarship has not explained why, if the union treated its non-white members poorly, thousands of black men joined the union at great personal risk.[133]

Few historians have included attention to gender and sexuality in their analyses of the region's timber workers and the struggle of the BTW in particular.[134] Additionally,

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[131] James R. Green, "The Brotherhood of Timber Workers 1910-1913", *Past and Present* 60 (August, 1973); Ruth A. Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers: An Economic and Social Picture*, 1870-1950 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961; John Earl Haynes "Unrest in the Piney Woods: Southern Lumber and the Brotherhood of Timber Workers in the Early Twentieth Century" (master's thesis, Florida State University, 1966), 56; Sterling Denhard Spero and Abram Lincoln Harris, *The Black Worker: The Negro and the Labor Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press), 1931.

[132] Steven A. Reich, "The Making of a Southern Sawmill World: Race, Class, and Rural Transformation in the Piney Woods of East Texas, 1830-1930" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1998); John Reed Tarver "The Clan of Toil: Piney Woods Labor Relations in the Trans-Mississippi South, 1880-1920" (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 1991); Geoffrey Ferrell "The Brotherhood of Timber Workers and the Southern Lumber Trust" (PhD diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1982); Merl E. Reed, "Lumberjacks and Longshoremen: The IWW in Louisiana," *Labor History*, Winter72, Vol. 13 Issue 1, 58; David Roediger, *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness* (New York: Verso, 1994).

[133] Reich, 265.

[134] Kevin Connor Brown, "'The Great Nomad': Work, Environment, and Space in the Lumber Industry of Minnesota and Louisiana from the 1870s to the 1930s" (PhD diss., Carnegie Mellon University. 2012); While Roediger, Reich, Ferrell all discuss gender and/or masculinity to varying degrees all have a present, but limited analysis of sexuality.

some of the insights and theory developed by historians of other regions and industries can be applied to the similar circumstances of timber production in the Jim Crow Deep South.[135] From those accounts we can intuit that attempts to create a clear color line and a clear definition of sexual normativity are not simply parallel lines of social control, they are mutually constitutive and therefor "intersectional." This intersection makes it impossible to extricate one from the other.[136] Heteronormativity, outlines how society and its institutions define and police which sexual practices are acceptable, presumes heterosexuality and a male/female gender binary. Heteronormativity was a device employed by both the timber companies and the BTW.[137]

One of the difficulties scholars have faced in offering an intersectional analysis of the BTW is a lack of primary sources authored by workers of color or female BTW members and supporters of any color. However, a re-examination of previous scholarship and newly discovered documents allows for a more substantive understanding of the BTW. This article calls into question whether segregation was uniformly employed by the union and its locals before affiliating with IWW in 1912 and demonstrates that the BTW's racial policies and actions changed over time to become more inclusive, although

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[135] Jaqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).
[136] Siobhan B. Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).
[137] Victoria Pruin DeFrancesco, Catherine Helen Palczewski, and Danielle Dick McGeough, *Gender in Communication: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Sage Publications, 2014), 16.; Celia Kitzinger, "Heteronormativity in Action: Reproducing the Heterosexual Nuclear Family in After-hours Medical Calls," *Social Problems*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (November 2005), pp. 477-498 http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sp.2005.52.4.477 (accessed April 14, 2016); Jillian Todd Weiss, "The Gender Caste System: Identity, Privacy, and Heteronormativity," *Law & Sexuality*, vol. 10 (2001) p. 123 http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic/?shr=t&csi=166525&sr=TITLE%28%22The%20gender%20caste%20system%20identity,%20privacy,%20and%20heteronormativity%22%29%20and%20date%20is%202001 (accessed April 14, 2016).

the degree to which equality was achieved is uncertain. Furthermore, this work will show that gender and sexuality were components of the same hierarchical power structure that drove the engine of Jim Crow. The racial components of this campaign cannot be comprehended outside of an understanding of how gender and sexual relations of power or hierarchies operated in the subjugation of the workforce.

Although the BTW had ties to the anti-segregationist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) from its inception and affiliated with the IWW in 1912, the BTW was organized as an independent industrial union in Louisiana in 1910. Although the union's heart and soul were located in western Louisiana and eastern Texas, both the BTW and its timber company adversaries claimed the union was active across the Jim Crow South.[138] The timber industry was one of the pillars of the post-Reconstruction southern economy; as such, awareness of how it shaped the lives of the people who participated in it creates a more comprehensive understanding of the development of the New South. In the years leading up to the formation of the BTW, lumber was the South's fastest growing industry, employing more workers than any other from 1870 to 1910. By 1914 Louisiana led the country in lumber production.[139]

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[138] The union's presence in Louisiana and Texas is well documented, however despite claims of activity in Georgia, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Oklahoma, only Arkansas and Mississippi had documented locals. M.L. Alexander to C.E. Slagle, September 20, 1911 Western Historical Manuscript Collection, The University of Missouri at Columbia, The Louisiana Central Lumber Company Records (LCLC), no. 3660 folder 696, (hereafter cited as LCLC).; M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, September 22, 1911, LCLC, folder 696; Ferrell, 99.; Kirby to R.L. Weathersby, January 13, 1912, John Henry Kirby Papers, 1884-1944, Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries (hereafter cited as the Kirby Papers), box 92 folder 7; Hall, 126; List of Local Lodges, September 7, 1911, LCLC, folder 693; M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, October 14, 1911, LCLC, folder 701; M.L Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, November 11, 1911, LCLC, folder 707.

[139] William P. Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 1; Anna C. Burns, "The Gulf Lumber Company, Fullerton: A View of Lumbering during Louisiana's Golden Era," *Louisiana History: The*

Estimates of the total number of people who joined the Brotherhood vary, however most suggest the membership was composed of 20,000-35,000 people.[140] Approximations regarding the racial makeup of this workforce vary too, but many scholars put the number of black workers at fifty percent.[141] Mexican and Italian workers totaled less than ten percent, including at least one lodge comprised of Mexican workers, in Sulphur, Louisiana. Additionally, company officials referred to many members as Redbones (a Native American, black, and white tri-racial isolate).[142] Although workers of color made up a majority of the BTW membership, the workforce was not integrated and workers of color were disproportionately confined to subordinate positions.[143]

The workers of the timber industry were overwhelmingly male, and references to women in the industry are scarce. However, as we will see, women were present in both the company towns and the so-called free towns of the region. These women played important roles in their communities, and like various members of the paid workforce,

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Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association, vol. 20, no. 2, (Spring 1979) 197. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4231890 (accessed on April 7, 2013).

[140] Charles Rudolph McCord, "A Brief History of the Brotherhood of Timber Workers" (Master's thesis, University of Texas, 1959) places the membership around 20,000; Bernard A. Cook, "Covington Hall and Radical Rural Unionization in Louisiana", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 228, http://0www.jstor.org.wncln.wncln.org/stable/pdfplus/4231678.pdf?acceptTC=true, (accessed September 5, 2013) approximates between 20-25,000 members; William D. Haywood, "Timber Workers and Timber Wolves," *International Socialist Review*, August 1912, 108, http://archive.org/stream/InternationalSocialistReview1900Vol13/ISR-volume13#page/n117/mode/2up/search/%22timber+workers+and+timber+wolves%22, (accessed May 3, 2013) approximates 30,000; Spero and Harris (331) argue for the highest estimate of 35,000; For the most comprehensive discussion of membership numbers, see Ferrell, 434-439.

[141] Haynes, 9.

[142] Tarver, 253; *State of Louisiana v. L.F. Johnson et als*, Fifteenth Judicial District Court of Louisiana, Case no. 6021, 1912, Minutes of the Second Annual Convention of the Brotherhood of Timber Workers, May 6-9, 1912, 9-12, (hereafter cited as Minutes); Bernice Larson Webb, "Company Town: Louisiana Style", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 9, no. 4 (Autumn 1968): 325-39, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4231031 (accessed October 29, 2013).

[143] Reich, 129-131; Haynes, 9.

advocated for themselves and their families.

The presence of large numbers of black workers in the timber industry was challenged by some of the white workers and farmers as "waves of anti-black violence," including murder, swept through the lumber towns and camps during the first decade of the twentieth century. White workers were sometimes successful in forcing mills to use only white labor.[144] In 1904 white sawmill owners believed that racist Whitecappers, primarily small farmers following in the vein of the Reconstruction era Ku Klux Klan, were attempting to force black workers out of East Texas. Whitecappers circulated threats to the black sawmill workers, many of whom fled to Louisiana, though in at least one case black workers armed themselves and repulsed an attack on their mill.[145]

It was into this racist environment that BTW founders, millwright Arthur L. Emerson and sawyer Jay Smith invited black, white, Mexican, Native American, and Italian men, to work together to create an industrial union.[146] To avoid lumber company detection, the BTW originated as a "semi-secret organization" with passwords and secret handshakes.[147] Emerson, Smith, and other organizers worked the mills and camps under the cover of various disguises posing as book agents, insurance salesmen, evangelists, and card sharks.[148] The shroud of secrecy enabled the union to grow and gather strength before it caught the lumber companies' attention. The Brotherhood's fight for recognition was a brief and often violent struggle that left the region a militarized zone with

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[144] Reich, 203; Brown, 186-188; Tarver, 149
[145] William F. Holmes, "Whitecapping: Agrarian Violence in Mississippi, 1902-1906," *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 35, no. 2 (May 1969) 165-185 http://www.jstor.org.proxy.wm.edu/stable/2205711 (accessed April 13, 2016); Reich, 109.
[146] The gendered reference is intentional as women were not invited to become members until 1912.
[147] Hall, 122.
[148] Foner, 236-237; Reich, 227.

thousands of armed company men in control of the labor force. Much of this conflict occurred in and round the company-owned sawmill towns.

The construction of sawmill towns exemplify how timber companies used the intersection of class, gender, race, and sexuality as a form of social control. Increasing family sizes, tenuous land claims, and rising timber company opposition to squatters combined to force many workers to seek employment in the timber industry.[149] If young men felt the need to leave the family farm due to economic hardship imposed on the family from an extra mouth to feed with no prospect for extra income through farming, then it can reasonably be assumed that young women felt a similar pressure. For an unmarried woman economic opportunities in the region were scarce, and leaving the region and her kinship ties was generally not a socially acceptable option. Marriage was the conventional vehicle to transport a single woman from the farm into town. As the younger generation married, the lack of options for housing forced many into company owned towns and houses. Since these towns had few employment opportunities for women, patriarchal structures were reinforced through near universal reliance on male breadwinners.

From the companies' perspective, women's presence in these towns was directly related to their performance of activities that served the interest of male workers and enabled the workers to provide increased profit. Housing was reserved for male workers, and while women were encouraged to live in these houses as long as they were fulfilling their roles as wives, their presence was discouraged if they were widowed and the

[149] Green, 163-185.

company needed room for more workers. Although some widows were allowed to keep their houses, it often depended on vacancy rates and the family's history of company loyalty. In some towns if a husband suffered a debilitating injury at work and the family fell behind on rent, eviction was the company's preferred solution. Black women were much less likely to be permitted to remain in their house if the mill lost the labor of their spouse, whether through injury or death.[150]

The ability to occupy a house with legal standing after the death of a spouse was not the only difference between black and white women in mill towns. During this period young white working-class women might entertain the hope that marriage could provide a positive alternative to wage work, but "few black women could depend on a wedding to end their days of sustained wage earning."[151] The lower wages earned by black men in the mills coupled with the increased instability of their positions, necessitated that black women work at a rate disproportionate to their white female counterparts. Some black women worked as domestic servants, which often meant leaving the town for part of the day since not many people in the town could afford to hire domestic help.[152] And as historian Jaqueline Jones notes, "…the white mistress-black maid relationship preserved the inequities of the slave system."[153]

The majority of the economic opportunities available for both black and white women in mill towns were tied to the informal and/or illegal economy, including taking in borders, sewing, bootlegging, gambling, and prostitution. Prostitution was penalized,

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[150] Reich, 238-249.
[151] Jacqueline Jones, 150.
[152] Reich, 255.
[153] Jacqueline Jones, 150.

encouraged, or supported depending upon the town. Since employees were paid in scrip some managers allowed prostitutes and gamblers to redeem scrip for cash, with a service charge that went directly to the manager.[154] One can imagine a scenario where prostitutes who did business with union members were not allowed to redeem scrip for cash, thus minimizing the economic opportunity for pro-union prostitutes and the sexual opportunities of union members.

Perhaps the most integral role that women played in the sawmill towns was through the non-wage labor they performed. Women did much of the domestic work, which typically included the washing, cooking, and cleaning that enabled the men to go to work on a daily basis. Women also did much of the gardening and canning, which due to the low wages throughout the industry, regardless of color, were essential to a family's survival. Women were also the primary caregivers for the children of sawmill towns. Some mills regulated this non-wage labor through whistles that informed wives and daughters that the men would be returning from the mill within the hour and there was an expectation that they were to be fed quickly so that they could return to work.[155]

The tyranny of the Company Store was a principal complaint of the timber workers and a focal point of the BTW's campaign. Since part of the unpaid reproductive labor that women performed was keeping the family larder stocked, they arguably had more direct contact with the store than married men. Their reports and complaints could be seen as driving this aspect of the campaign. Additionally, women's attempts to

[154] Reich, 238- 249.
[155] Reich, 218-219.

circumvent the store brought them into direct conflict with the company.[156] In some instances deputy sheriffs forcibly restricted townspeople's movement, preventing them from buying goods from an independent merchant.[157]

Married men were hired preferentially in many mill towns, and forced to live in the confines of the company-run town if they wanted to keep their jobs, thus linking hetero-normativity to employment.[158] Men were viewed as less likely to cause labor problems if their families were dependent on their wages. Not surprisingly Emerson seemed to think that the dependency of families made a worker more likely to join the union and demand higher wages and living standards. In a Kirbyville speech Emerson reminded the workers that he had been to their homes, met their wives and children, and he had seen poverty and want. He further reminded them of the "impossibility" of supporting their children on their current wages.[159] That both sides of the struggle emphasized the role that women played as wives and mothers, as well as that of men as husbands and fathers, is further evidence not only of the reinforcement of heteronormative values, but also of the intersection of gender, class, and sexuality.

Some mill managers and owners were more concerned with heteronormative structures than others. These same managers may have also selectively enforced these ideological codes, leaving "undesirable" or union workers open to dismissal for otherwise commonly accepted practices. In other words such selectivity would allow officials to avoid acknowledgement of the union as a reason for dismissal and put other workers on

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[156] Brown, 206.
[157] Hall, 184; Brown, 199.
[158] Reich, 215-240; Brown, 204-206.
[159] Ferrell, 242.

notice that their private lives could become public at the bosses' whim. It could allow for association of union activity with degeneracy. For instance, some workers were fired for cheating on their wives, and others were fired and evicted because their wives and/or daughters exhibited "'questionable morality.'"[160] However, in addition to the managerial/company collusion with prostitution noted above, at least one former worker recalled that companies routinely provided prostitutes to the workers in the camps.[161] One site of non-work related integration in some of the lumber towns was the honky-tonk. At the turn of the century management used the honky-tonk "as a lure to prospective laborers, a source of additional income, and a place to allow hard-drinking lumber men to gamble, dance, and patronize prostitutes."[162] The IWW recognized the class distinctions in regard to how society viewed women's sexuality, noting that one woman could be shunned for selling/trading her body to survive while another might be considered a lady for selling/trading her body to a man with money and power for inclusion into upper class society.[163]

The company towns are notable for more than just exemplifying the economic functions of heteronormativity and gender and sexual norms, they also served as a site of the intersection of these forces with race and class. Migrant black workers were at risk of violence at the hands of the police as well as the white general public in part because transient black men in were viewed as strangers and "dangerous drifters" who posed a

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[160] Reich, 221.
[161] Reich, 247-250.
[162] Edward L Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 384; Green, 184.
[163] Ferrell, 650.

threat to communities in general, and white women in particular.[164] The constant threat of violence likely encouraged migratory black workers to seek steady employment and a secure living situation, though the hoped for safety of timber work often meant accepting substandard living conditions and a lower wage than the already low wages of their white counterparts for more, or at least equal work. This was not simply a southern phenomenon; northern capital had no qualms enforcing and accepting the economic benefits of Jim Crow.

Most sawmill towns were constructed with segregation, and due to their inseparable connection, sexuality in mind. The vast majority of mill town housing was racially and ethnically segregated by neighborhood. Neighborhoods were not directly adjoining, meaning that there was almost no chance that there would be a white family living next door to a black, Mexican, or Italian family. The placement of workers in certain houses corresponded to the value the company placed on the workers, the higher the worker's value to the company, the closer the worker's house was to the mill and other conveniences.[165]

These towns were not simply mechanisms of social control the town's amenities were responses to the demands of workers, and their wives, who wanted schools, churches, and houses.[166] However, as much as workers' agency led to these amenities, what they got was not always what they wished for. They got churches, but they also got company-appointed ministers who were fired if they deviated from the wishes of the

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[164] Reich, 204-206. Ayers, 157.
[165] Reich, 251.
[166] Reich, 224.

boss. They got schools that taught obedience and reinforced heteronormative behavior. They might have learned to read, but what they were allowed to read was controlled. They got a house, and as long as they did not question their position or wage, or offend the sexual morals of the boss, they could keep it. Furthermore, to view these schools as "free" is to imply that they were not paid for by the labor of the workers. If black workers donated the labor and material to build a school and we factor in the low wages of the industry and then add to that sum to the difference in wages between white and black workers it is difficult to see how the black workers did not pay for their own school.

The companies also maintained control by keeping workings in debt. In a document no BTW research has cited, IWW organizer E.F. Doree poignantly described the plight of the black timber worker in the Jim Crow Deep South: "There is a policy in the South to keep the Negro in debt. No matter how you do it, keep them in debt." At times this was done through the extension of "credit." The black worker was unable to dispute how much he owed his employer because, "If he argues too much, well they have got a funeral, that's all, and he knows it. It costs $7 to kill a Negro in Louisiana. So he doesn't argue very long with anybody…There is no chance to get out of debt if the company wants to keep him there." This debt allowed companies to exert control over the movement of black workers, rendering them unable to leave to find better wages. If a black worker went to another town that was offering higher wages without the consent of his past employer he was returned to his previous position, forcibly if necessary, much like the fugitive slaves of the region's past. Doree commented, "I don't know what the law of it is…but whether it is the law or not, they go over there and they send a couple of their deputies over and they bring the Negro back and put him to work." In a twist eerily

reminiscent of chattel slavery, companies would allow other companies to assume black workers' debt, essentially buying them, and in this way allow them to change employers. If a company did not want a particular worker "they peddle their debt and send the negro along with it. That is very prevalent."[167]

Through regular use of the slogan "Don't be a peon, be a man" BTW newspapers and organizers argued that the pathway out of debt and into manhood was through union activism.[168] Clearly linking masculinity to union membership and arguing that non-union labor, specifically strikebreakers, were not men, but some other category, provides another link the intersection of race (as the majority of those in debt peonage were not white, in contrast to their creditors), class, gender, and sexuality. It's not clear whether in comparing strikebreakers to peons and questioning their manhood, the writers were strikebreakers were "boys," or women, or gay, but they were equating strikebreakers with peons who were mostly black. Peons, like strikebreakers, were not their own "men", and certainly not free men. They did the companies' bidding whether by choice or compulsion. In case the use of "soft power" was not enough, companies made sure that "hard power" was equally visible and available.

Armed guards were a constant presence in company towns, occasionally, controlling access to the town itself.[169] Tarver noted that a deputized sheriff was often employed to euphemistically "keep the peace" in the segregated black and Italian

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[167] Doree, 5913-5915.
[168] For example see: "Woodsmen of the South," The Voice of the People (New Orleans), August 21, 1913 http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064458/1913-08-21/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed April 24, 2016).
[169] Haynes, 37

quarters.[170] IWW organizer E.F. Doree described the mill towns as a "little empire." Mill towns exerted authority over free towns when they were in proximity. Company gunmen had free reign and would enter a free town "en masse," according to Doree. When they did "what is known as law normally" would cease "to exist entirely in the face of increased power."[171] Doree estimated that there were only half a dozen free towns in the region, leaving many workers and their families, regardless of color, in a feudal society where the lumber boss was king.[172] Although the fact that all of the armed guards were men is not surprising for the era, it points to a patriarchal power structure that was enforced through the threat of imminent violence.

Not all of the work of the lumber industry took place in sawmill towns. Many of the men were simply based in the towns but did most of their actual labor outside of these towns in logging camps. Each mill might have more than one logging camp supplying it and the larger mills had several. These camps allowed for less scrutiny from the bosses because the men tended to work without managers present. and an easing of segregation. Logging camps were the site of many of the strikes and job actions undertaken by the union. The men might travel to and from the camps cramped aboard a single rail car, but such proximity ended once the car reached its destination in town, which seemingly intentionally, was where white women were to be found.[173] Interracial sex was outside the bounds of heteronormativity and notably single directional, forbidding sexual

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[170] Tarver, 253.
[171] United States v. William D. Haywood, et al., 1918, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, University Archives, Wayne State University, Testimony of E.F. Doree, 5908 (Hereafter cited as Doree), 5907-5911.
[172] Doree, 5919.
[173] Reich, 250.

encounters between white women and black men while simultaneously turning a blind eye to sexual encounters between white men and black women. A column in the BTW newspaper alleged that the same white men who chastised the BTW for race mixing because it allowed black people into the union, were some of the same people who would "visit some colored lady's house at the wee small hours of the morning."[174]

Women were granted membership to the BTW in 1912.[175] Although many historians refer to "wives" of BTW members being eligible for membership, the constitution makes no such distinction. The BTW constitution does limit access to the strike fund to women employed in the industry.[176] The one woman mentioned in most of the scholarship on the BTW/IWW is Fredonia Stevenson. Although the BTW constitution made it possible for black women to be members, neither the primary sources nor scholarship engages the question of whether there were black female members.

An operative quoted one of Emerson's speeches in which he advocated that women employ a *Lysistrata* type strategy, denying sex to men who failed to join the union. "Girls," he reportedly said, "you can make twenty BTW members where I can make one; do like the girls did at Merryville, La.; do not let a young man come to see you unless he carries a union card; do not wait on him at the table unless he has a card, and do not speak to him on the street unless he has a card. If all of the girls do that then every mill in the state of Texas will organized."[177] Emerson's statement implies that women not

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[174] H.M. Witt, "'Nigger' Lovers," The Voice of the People (New Orleans), August 21, 1913 http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064458/1913-08-21/ed-1/seq-3/ (accessed April 24, 2016); Green, 185.
[175] Minutes, 18.
[176] Minutes, 18-20.
[177] Operative B-18 to Kirby, June 16, 1912, Kirby Papers, box 114, folder 26.

only played an active role in organizing the Merryville local, they were viewed as important members of their communities who could make an independent choice to support the BTW and pressure others to do so as well. According to operative reports Emerson specifically appealed to the "pretty girls" who were both married and single in the audience of a July 4 speech, stating "Don't you know that you can do more with these overgrown boys than I?" He asserted that if the women took the lead and joined/supported the union, the men would follow. The transcript of the speech seems to imply that the women could starve the men to the point that the men would do anything the women asked.[178] While it is possible Emerson was referring to the withholding of food and speaking of a literal starvation, he might have also been referring to the withholding of sex.

Boarding houses, which were also sometimes referred to as hotels, were a semi-public area in which women seem to have been disproportionately in charge and were sometimes able to exercise considerable agency. For example, Fredonia Stevenson owned and operated a boarding house in Merryville, LA that was known to be a friendly place for union members to frequent. Fredonia, whose pen name was "Red Fred," became a member of the BTW/IWW and ultimately held several leadership positions, including secretary of Local 218 and a position on the branch's National Executive Board.[179] Without further evidence it is difficult to ascertain if Fredonia's masculine moniker was indicative of a statement about gender or sexuality. An operative reported that Mrs. Franks ran a hotel and that she believed that a man by the name of La Follette was "one

[178] Ferrell, 301-302.
[179] Ferrell, 454, 470; Reich, 316; Tarver, 655.

of them durn Kirby spies" and that she said she would "scald him" if he returned to the area.[180] Timber companies had their share of hotels that were run by women sympathetic to the companies, such as the Badders Hotel in Kirbyville which was run by Mary Elizabeth Clark Badders at the personal request of timber baron John H. Kirby, but Stevenson's house was a haven for union men.[181]

Historian David Roediger argues that the BTW pragmatically substituted patriarchy and class for racism.[182] Roediger is certainly correct that this was a commonly used tactic. However, there is no shortage of examples of BTW members arguing for the elimination of racism without offering patriarchy as a substitute. In her support for Charles Cline, a BTW/IWW member who was arrested after a deadly shootout with Texas authorities while running guns across the border in support of the Mexican Revolution, Fredonia Stevens attempted to use class as the motivating force of solidarity rather than gender, race, or sexuality. Stevenson asked for members to send her letters, "no matter about their color or sex."[183] Ed Lehman argued that class was the only important category; skin color, ethnicity, and religion were irrelevant.[184] Lehman was specifically referring to men in his statement, but he did not exhort the reader to "be a

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[180] Operative B-18 to Kirby, June 17, 1912, Kirby Papers, box 114, folder 26.
[181] Wanda A. Landry, *Boardin' in the Thicket* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1990), 31.
[182]Roediger's analysis is problematic due to his overwhelming reliance on the work and writings of Covington Hall. Hall was not a consistent figure in the BTW/IWW until the Spring of 1912, which immediately preceded the union's precipitous decline. The BTW newspapers that Hall ran did not start publishing until 1913, when the union suffering severe economic hardship and low membership rolls. Hall was also not a former sawmill worker from the region as were other BTW leaders. In short, while Hall was an important figure in the BTW he was not necessarily emblematic of the union itself.
[183] "'Red Fred' Fights For Cline," *The Voice of the People* (New Orleans), March 12, 1914 http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064458/1914-03-12/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed April 24, 2016); Fannin, 142.
[184] Ed Lehman, "'Just the Same,'" *The Voice of the People* (New Orleans), August 21, 1913 http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064458/1913-08-21/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed April 24, 2016).

man." Additionally, IWW/BTW organizer Phineas Eastman asked members to stop using the racial slurs.[185] Although racism was clearly an issue for black timber workers, other concerns were equally important.

Black timber workers had to consider not only their own safety, but that of their families. Doree testified that black workers often had "considerable families."[186] Black delegates at the 1912 BTW Convention proclaimed that, "Thousands and thousands of huts and cabins of the lumber kings serve as shelter to many little half-clothed colored children, whose support must be accomplished by the Industrial class of Negroes." The black delegates further stated that they would not take any action that would be "detrimental to our interest," or their families' interest. Apparently they viewed the BTW as being aligned with their interests, stating that if the BTW were to go down like the Titanic, they were "willing to go down with her."[187] The black delegates' alignment of their families' best interest with support for the union is in direct conflict with the timber companies' perception that men with families were less likely to support the union. This alignment illuminates the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

If we take the estimates of black membership to be true and combine that with the black delegates' statements regarding the importance of their families, then it is difficult to believe that significant numbers of black women did not actively support the union, even if they were not dues paying members. As previously noted, black women's participation has thus far escaped documentation, but there are occasional references that

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[185] Philip Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1973* (New York: International Publishers, 1974), 109.
[186] Doree, 5916.
[187] Minutes, 17.

indicate their involvement. For instance, the BTW/IWW newspaper, *The Lumberjack*, warns timber companies of economic repercussions if anyone lays "a hand, directly or indirectly" on "Fredonia Stevenson or any of the other brave women at Merryville, white or colored."[188] Naming black women among the "brave" as well as warning against harming them indicates their participation, not merely their support. Black women's limited visibility in the source and secondary material is another example of the intersection of race, class, and gender.

Although the union's proclamations fell short of demanding equality and maintained segregation, thousands of black men joined the union, and black women apparently supported it. Even using low estimates of union membership, black membership would have been approximately 10,000. An operative's conversation with a black worker, Mr. Bishop, offers a rare glimpse, albeit filtered, into how black workers may have viewed the union. The operative illuminated the dangers of black workers' participation, quoting Mr. Bishop as saying: "Union men are straight, but coming to this place or any other mill places them in danger…some people would not hesitate to beat or kill them." Nonetheless, Mr. Bishop supposedly said he "would rather be the slave of a good master than to live as it is."[189] Mr, Bishop was not alone in likening the timber workers' conditions to slavery. At a meeting of the Texas State Federation of Labor a black delegate of the Federal Trade Union compared working conditions in the timber industry to "chattel slavery."[190]

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[188] "Smallpox at Reeves," *The Lumberjack* (Alexandria, Louisiana), April 3, 1913, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064459/1913-04-03/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed April 23, 2016).
[189] Operative #5 Report, May 25, 1911, LCLC, folder 670.
[190] Allen, 168; Tarver, 152.

A diminutive ½ was added as suffix to lodge numbers to denote black lodges. This research has documented additional black lodges bringing the total number of known black lodges to ten.[191] Ten lodges are not enough to account for all of the black members. The vast majority of white lodges had a couple of hundred or less members. The number of votes each delegate had was in direct proportion to its membership. The largest white locals had over 1000 members, and fifteen votes per delegate.[192] All of the black locals at the 1912 Convention had one vote, except for the Atlanta, Louisiana local, which had two.[193] Using these figures, the numbers do not add up. If the racial composition of the union was roughly half and half, and all of the locals were segregated, then black delegates should have had a vote total at least in the neighborhood of their white union brothers. Seven votes out of ninety-eight, roughly 7 percent, is obviously far short of half. Although it is possible that over the course of a couple months or years a local might have a couple of hundred members, but never more than 100 at any given time. More reasonable explanations are that there were black locals that have not yet been discovered by historians and that not all of the locals were racially exclusive. It is also possible that not all locals (white, black, or Mexican) paid the fee required to participate in the Grand Lodge. Additionally, the act of showing up to the Convention was dangerous (more so for the black workers) and almost certain to result in the loss of one's job so it is likely that many locals went unrepresented. Finally, "mixed locals" formed in

[191] They existed in Atlanta, Converse, Fields, Lake Charles, Lena Station, Loring, Merryville, Winnfield and Stay, Louisiana, as well as Newton, Texas. This list was compiled from the following documents: Minutes, 12-13; List of Local Lodges, September 7, 1911, LCLC, folder 693; M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, February 10, 1912, Kirby Papers, box 92, folder 7; Tarver, 388; M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, September 13, 1911, LCLC, folder 695.
[192] Minutes, 11.
[193] Minutes, 12-13.

"many localities" after the BTW affiliated with the IWW demonstrating the shift toward the anti-segregationist policies of the IWW.[194]

The evidence indicates that were there interracial locals, despite the obstacles, and in fact, in some cases black members and white members engaged in power sharing positions. An operative report mentioned "a negro man named Hy. Hurns from Good Pine local 326," however there is no documented black lodge in Good Pine and the diminutive ½ was not used.[195] In October of 1911 the black workers of the Hub City Lumber Company went on strike for a weekly payday, shutting down the plant, yet there is no record of a black BTW local associated with this plant.[196] In June of 1911 the mill superintendent at Carson reported that thirty-five BTW men marched through town, including the black quarters, gaining strength as they went. He stated there was an equal number of black and white members in the procession.[197] A former BTW member who turned informer claimed that there over one hundred black members in Carson.[198] These numbers indicate enough black members in Carson to have qualified for a black local, yet no record of a separate black local in Carson exists. After the march they elected officers, apparently with black and white men voting. Furthermore, he reported that because the newly elected treasurer, Ed Lehman, had been fired for union activity a committee of four members would decide the amount of an assessment to be levied on members to act as a salary for Lehman. The committee was comprised of two black men and two white

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[194] Green, 186.
[195] Unknown Pinkerton Operative Report, October 28, 1911, WHMC folder 704.
[196] "Lake Charles Letter," *St. Louis Lumberman*, October 1, 1911.
[197] Superintendent to I.H. Fetty, LCLC, folder 676, June 26, 1911.
[198] SLOA Confidential Memo, date unknown (estimated to be April of 1911) LCLC, folder 662.

men.[199] This report is a clear indication of not only an integrated meeting, but of a power sharing arrangement in which white and black men were appointed in equal numbers to the same committee. The record also shows at least one incident where black BTW members were jailed for meeting with white members in a manner that violated segregation laws.[200] Finally, there was a large Emancipation Day ceremony Merryville, La. that was widely attended by BTW members, with a significant interracial crowd comprised of both men and women.[201]

Another critical example of how the policies of the BTW were more inclusionary than recent scholarship asserts is its treatment of Mexican and Italian immigrant workers. In its constitution the BTW specifically included members of other nationalities. The lodge comprised of Mexican workers at Sulphur was not given the diminutive ½ suffix that black lodges were given and its delegate was seated with the white delegates.[202] Mexican workers also had a significant presence in Carson and Merryville though there is no record of a separate lodge of Mexican workers in either location, further establishing the presence of interracial lodges.[203] This treatment indicates that there was no official policy of discrimination toward the Mexican membership. By contrast, lumber companies applied Jim Crow policies to Mexican and Italian workers. Tarver also mentioned that the timber companies treated Italians "scarcely better" than black workers.[204]

Incidents of white on black violence that occurred during its campaign have been

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[199] Superintendent to I.H. Fetty, LCLC, folder 676, June 26, 1911.
[200] Ferrell, 561.
[201] Green, 187.
[202] Minutes, 9-12.
[203] Hall, 135; Kirby to Alexander, April 28, 1912, Kirby Papers, box 92, folder 7; Fannin, 50.
[204] Tarver, 253.

highlighted to question the inclusionary nature of the BTW. White on black violence in the lumber industry preceded the Brotherhood and continued to occur during and after its existence. In some cases the racist positions of white workers had no documented connection to the union. In early 1910, before the BTW is believed to have begun organizing, dynamite was detonated under the quarters of the black workers as they slept at the Crowell and Spencer Lumber Company.[205] The *St. Louis Lumberman* recorded "labor trouble" between the Dixie Lumber Company and its white laborers who objected to the importation of black labor.[206] No mention of the BTW is made in this article and the *Lumberman* rarely missed an opportunity to disparage the Brotherhood. Tarver also mentioned a demonstration against the use of "blacks and foreigners" in a Kirby mill, there is no indication that demonstration was related to the BTW.[207]

Several incidents of violence or coercion directed at black workers were attributed to the Brotherhood. The Southern Industrial and Lumber Review (SIALR) reported that "members" (it did not specify of what organization, though the Brotherhood is inferred) were arrested for attacking black strikebreakers at Tioga, Louisiana.[208] The same issue of SIALR reported a more detailed account of what is presumed to be the same incident and made no mention of the union, raising questions as to the involvement of BTW members. Frank Chevallier and Sanco Crooks were arrested and brought to the jail at Alexandria for shooting into the camp of the black workers, wounding one man. No mention is made

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[205] Ferrell, 563.
[206] "Lake Charles Letter," *St. Louis Lumberman*, September 15, 1911.
[207] Tarver, 376.
[208] Ferrell, 99 (Ferrell attributed the reference of members to the BTW though there is no specific mention of the union); "Arresting Men for Attacking Negroes," *Southern Industrial and Lumber Review*, August 20, 1911.

of the BTW or of an ongoing strike, only that the men were presumably attempting to "scare" black labor away from the mill.[209] A similar incident occurred in Zwolle, Louisiana during the same time period.

The SIALR reported that a "well known saw mill man" told the paper that black workers at Louisiana mills "where labor trouble is the hottest" were "'warned to join, leave, or get killed." The article offers no further evidence and does not mention the BTW by name.[210] BTW members allegedly strafed the black quarters in Zwolle with gunfire. By August 15, 1911 six men were arrested by US Marshals and jailed in Shreveport, Louisiana.[211] Robert and Eldon Henderson, Eugene and Bill Allman, Lee Norwood and Rollie Self were given a hearing by US Commissioner Slattery. Although the article makes no claim that the men were affiliated with the Brotherhood, it does state that the men were attempting to run off the black workers and that there was an ongoing effort to unionize the plant.[212] Records of this case have been difficult to obtain and further information is currently unavailable. The arrested men were not accused of being BTW members in any of the articles found. Another incident occurred at Oakdale, Louisiana. The black worker's quarters was again strafed by the gunfire of unknown assailants.[213]

The shootings at Zwolle, Tioga, and Oakdale have the appearance of a

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[209] "Arrested for Shooting in Lumber Camp," *SIALR* (Houston, Texas), August 20, 1911.
[210] "Warns Negroes to Join, Leave, or Get Killed," SIALR, August 8, 1911.
[211] Ferrell, 100; Tarver, 342.
[212] "Louisiana Men in Jail," *SIALR*, August 20, 1911; "Charged with Intimidation," *Le Meschacebe* (Lucy, Louisiana), September 2, 1911, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86079080/1911-09-02/ed-1/seq-7/, (accessed April 3, 2014); "Six White Men From Zwolle Jailed on Warrants of United States," *The Caucasian* (Shreveport, Louisiana), August 17, 1911, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064469/1911-08-17/ed-1/seq-4/, (accessed April 3, 2014).
[213] "Shot Up Negro Quarters at Oakdale," *SIALR*, August 20, 1911.

coordinated effort. They all occurred during a short time span and utilized the same method. If it was proven that the assailants were BTW members it would still need to be determined if these actions were sanctioned by the union. In the absence of reasonable proof these incidents cannot be rightly attributed to the BTW. Possible use of agents provocateur must also be considered. At its 1912 Convention the BTW sent a letter to Governor Hall accusing the lumber companies of perpetrating violence on black workers and sabotaging outdated machinery as a means of justifying the militaristic response to the union.[214]

During the time of these shootings the BTW and the lumber companies were competing for the loyalty of the black workers. There were large BTW meetings like the one held by the Brotherhood in Leesville, Louisiana which was attended by 700-800 "men and women, a good percent being negroes."[215] Kirby attempted to utilize the BTW's segregationist policies against them and instructed A.J. Criner to inform "the men of your race" about them. Kirby warned Criner that the Brotherhood was only using the black workers for their financial contributions, pointing out that they were not entitled to be delegates and essentially had no voice in the union.

The Brotherhood's affiliation with the anti-segregationist IWW, which occurred at the 1912 Convention, was a long process which began before the first BTW Convention in 1911. Affiliation with the IWW was officially discussed "from every angle," but not approved at the June 1911.[216] Despite the apparent lack of a mandate to

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[214] Minutes, 25.
[215] "Brotherhood of Timber Workers has Open-Air Meeting," *SIALR*, August 20, 1911.
[216] The office of the Grand President of the BTW, August 14, 1911, KLC, box 197 folder 7.

consolidate, BTW officials attended the 1911 IWW Convention in Chicago as fraternal delegates.[217] A previously unutilized document explains that the BTW delegation was given the floor and hoped for "a speedy affiliation."[218]

The IWW clearly rejected the BTW's segregationist policies. The official recorded response of the IWW at the convention was carefully worded, acknowledging the BTW's struggle with the "capitalist class" and that they had "succeeded to *some extent* in teaching the spirit of revolt to *some of* the workers of the South" (emphasis added).[219] They stopped short of mentioning affiliation and resolved to give the BTW "all of the moral aid possible."[220]

On returning to Louisiana Emerson publicly spun the failed affiliation as a choice on the part of the BTW. Emerson issued an official statement to BTW members regarding the IWW. The circular strongly suggests that the segregationist policies of the BTW were indeed the sticking point. Emerson clarified the BTW's position: "It is not our purpose to make an attempt to reconstruct the social fabric. We must do one thing at a time…" This language notably does not indicate an aversion to social equality, rather it advocates a pragmatic approach. It continued, "We cannot succeed by alienating the sympathy of the great body of society," furthermore, "We see neither reason or justice in sending our funds away to an organization with headquarters in the North, the head of

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[217] M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, September 7, 1911, LCLC, folder 693; M.L. Alexander to M.L. Fleishel, September 20, 1911, LCLC, folder 696.
[218] United States Congress House Committee on Rules et al., *Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer on Charges Made against Department of Justice by Louis F. Post and Others* (Govt. print. off., 1920), 281, W.Z. Foster, "Sixth I.W.W. Convention," *Solidarity*, September 30, 1911, https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=fuMtAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&authuser=0&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA281, (accessed February 27, 2014). (hereafter cited as Palmer).
[219] Palmer, 285.
[220] Palmer, 285.

which cannot know our peculiar needs…"[221]

The black delegates at the convention produced the only known document articulating their thoughts and positions in their own words, "Minutes of the Colored Convention." In it they described "trying to suppress a feeling of taxation without representation" and asked for black officers to work with white officers, stating that, "no one could better look after our interest than members of our race." They also asked for representation by black delegates to the IWW convention to discuss the merger of the unions.[222] In addition, the constitution was amended to put white and black lodges on equal footing.[223] All of their requests were granted. One of the black delegates, D.R. Gordon, became a delegate to the IWW Convention at which affiliation was discussed. Gordon later became a member of the local BTW/IWW board after the unions affiliated.[224]

The confrontation between the BTW and the companies came to a head shortly after the 1912 convention and affiliation with the IWW. Three BTW members were killed in an ambush, including an Italian member, Phillip Fazeral.[225] Fifty-eight union men, including Emerson and other key organizers, were ultimately arrested, charged with murder and faced with capital punishment.[226] Some of the key witnesses for the defense were female BTW members Christine and Nannie Cooley as well as Dolores Lebleu, who

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[221] From the Office of the Grand President of the BTW, August 14, 1911, KLC, box 197 folder 7.
[222] Minutes, 16.
[223] Minutes, 32.
[224] List of Officers and Delegates, May 19, 1913, Kirby Papers, Box 114, folder 26.
[225] "Phillip Farro (sic), Fourth Grabow Victim Dies at Sanitarium," *The Lake Charles American Press*, September 3, 1912, http://digital.olivesoftware.com/Repository/TAP/1912/09/03/058-TAP-1912-09-03-001-SINGLE.PDF#OLV0_Page_0001, (accessed April 16, 2014).
[226] For in depth analysis of Grabow shooting and trial see McCord 57-91; Tarver, 578-611.

were all present at the ambush.[227] The trial was a Pyrrhic victory for the union. They succeeded in saving the lives of the fifty-eight men on trial, but the process left them over six thousand dollars in debt, almost twice as much money as they had raised the previous year.[228]

Shortly after the trial, with the union reeling financially and suffering the absence of their best field organizers, a strike was called at Merryville, La. The companies had long been aware that Merryville knowingly employed BTW men, providing the union with its only consistent major source of funding. In mid-February the "Good Citizen's League," unleashed a wave of violence on the strikers over the course of several days. The soup kitchen was destroyed and organizers were beaten to the edge of town and threatened with death if they returned. They also raided the union hall, and "deported" all of the union men. For several months women continued the picket, "a task that but few men dare do." With the notable exception of Fredonia Stevenson, who was in charge of the strike fund, the current historical record does not indicate that any other women held official positions of power.[229] *The Lumberjack* reported that 200-300 armed men patrolled the streets beating union men and enforcing a de facto curfew.[230]

Black BTW members played significant roles in the Merryville strike. Robert

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[227] Tarver, 603.
[228] Tarver, 617.
[229] A.L. Emerson, "To the Working Class," *The Lumberjack* (Alexandria, Louisiana), May 15, 1913, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064459/1913-05-15/ed-1/seq-1/, (accessed April 13, 2014).
[230] Covington Hall, "With the Southern Timber Workers," *International Socialist Review* 13 (May 1913): 806-7, https://archive.org/stream/InternationalSocialistReview1900Vol13/ISR-volume13#page/n827/mode/2up/search/covington+hall (accessed November 3, 2013); S.S. 44, "Vivid Account of the Merryville Highbinders of 'Law and Order'," *Lumberjack* (Alexandria, La.), February 27, 1913, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064459/1913-02-27/ed-1/seq-1/ (accessed November 15, 2013).

Allen was described as a "leader" of the strike by Hall.[231] Allen had allegedly been attempting to convince black strikebreakers to quit and join the strike. Allen was arrested at a business meeting of Local 218, and without being informed of the charges driven to neighboring DeRidder before union protests of kidnapping brought him back for trial in Merryville. He was convicted.[232] Just as the Merryville strike was officially ending, Isaac Grimes was accused of setting off dynamite near the stockade which housed black strikebreakers. Hall claims that despite the fact that bloodhounds led to the mill manager's house, Grimes was arrested and jailed in Lake Charles. He denied the charges and refused to turn state's evidence, he was freed after ninety days.[233] After witnessing the League's orgy of violence and its treatment of their white fellow workers, black BTW members "barricaded themselves…got their rifles out, and showed signs of battle…" They were not forced out.[234]

Advocacy of social equality of the races in the Deep South was a potential death sentence to organizations and people during the Jim Crow Era. Union officials were aware that they were engaged in a public relations battle with the timber companies. Black delegates at the 1912 Convention understood that publicly demanding social equality at that moment would likely be the potential death knell of the union, and their

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[231] Hall, 161.
[232] "Kidnapping and Justice in Merryville," *The Lumberjack* (Alexandria, Louisiana), January 16, 1913, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064459/1913-01-16/ed-1/seq-3/, (accessed April 7, 2014).
[233] "Fellow Worker Gaines," *The Voice of the People* (New Orleans), July 17, 1913, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064458/1913-07-17/ed-1/ (accessed April 24, 2016); "Big DeQuincy Meeting: Gaines Free," *The Voice of the People* (New Orleans), September 25, 1913, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064458/1913-09-25/ed-1/seq-4/ , (accessed April 24, 2016); "Seein' Things," *The Lumberjack* (Alexandria, Louisiana), June 19, 1913, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064459/1913-06-19/ed-1/seq-4/, (accessed April 7, 2014); Hall, 165.
[234] Doree, 5923.

hopes of improving their conditions. “We do not seek social equalities, under no condition, and the sounding of such alarm is false and without foundation” intended to “suppress an industrial cooperation between the races.”[235] Barring access to private conversations or diaries of union members and officials, which have not been discovered, it is difficult to determine what their true feelings were regarding racial equality. An examination of the Brotherhood’s actions and inactions can shed some possible light on their position. They clearly chose not to demand social quality and this should be recognized as a strategy that may not have reflected their personal views or end goals.

It is also important to look beyond the rhetoric and examine the union’s actions. Mexican and Italian immigrant members were given the same rights as white members. This policy was in opposition to the treatment these workers received in the company towns and the region. Although early BTW documents publicly demonstrate a racist organizational intention to control the voice of black members, there is no evidence white delegates spoke for black locals at the first convention. Furthermore, within less than one year from its founding convention the BTW the union affiliated with the anti-segregationist IWW with black members included in decision making bodies. The union was brutally crushed in the months following the 1912 Convention and by the 1913 Convention was a shell of its former self, with very little strength left. Due to the external and environmental forces which destroyed the union an evaluation of whether or not the inclusionary practices would have continued is not possible. However, in the final analysis the BTW moved away from segregation toward integration. This is not to imply

[235] Minutes, 16.

that integration is synonymous with equality, it is not. Nor does it imply that the BTW membership was devoid of racists, or excuse any racist actions by the union or its membership. Scholars are correct to criticize the Brotherhood for its use of racist slurs to refer to workers of any color and/or nationality. However, the existence of systemic racism in the Jim Crow Deep South is not a surprising discovery. What is surprising is the amount of support the Brotherhood received from black workers and their families, and how quickly they moved toward the anti-segregation platform of the IWW.

This article has shown that through the enforcement of heteronormative values gender and sexuality were components of the same hierarchical power structure that drove the engine of Jim Crow. Women's labor was exploited alongside that of the men, in essence without the women's unpaid labor the male workforce would have been significantly less productive, and therefore less profitable. The selective hiring of married men, the selective encouragement of prostitution and alternately the selective punishment of prostitution and adultery, as well as the enforcement of the Jim Crow ban on interracial sexual activity provide an understanding of how gender and sexual relations of power or hierarchies operated in the subjugation of the workforce.

The intersectionality of race, class, gender, and sexuality was not the sole domain of the timber companies. The BTW certainly used the entrance into masculinity as a tool for organizing black workers. Many black males were denied acknowledgement of their masculinity during this era, making the BTW's promise that a large body of white men might no longer pejoratively refer to a black worker as a "boy" or a racial slur, but instead as a man or a "fellow worker" appealing. Furthermore, Emerson's attempts to rally women behind the Brotherhood as a means to force the men into joining is another

example of this intersection.

The subjugation of the southern timber workers has national and even international significance. The activities of the BTW can be seen as one of the largest coordinated interracial efforts opposing Jim Crow in the Deep South during its short existence. As mentioned earlier the lumber industry was a key component of the economic revitalization of the south after Reconstruction, thus making the workers and families of the industry key components of this revitalization. Additionally, the piney woods were tied to railroad expansion which was one of the driving forces behind the expansion of industrial capitalism. Not only was some of the land that produced the timber owned by railroad companies and not only did the railroads make significant profits from the transportation of lumber, but the piney woods literally provided the material for railroad construction. The wood for the ties and bridges came from these southern sawmills. These mills also produced lumber for the Mexican railroads. This rapid industrial expansion was made possible in part through the intersections of class, race, gender, and sexuality.