Locating Women’s Labor in New Orleans

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The goal of this project is to make the history of women’s labor in New Orleans visible and accessible to scholars, students, residents, and tourists via a mobile app tour through New Orleans Historical Mobile (neworleanshistorical.org), which will be debuted at the Southern Labor Studies Association conference in the spring. The tour will feature biographies of women laborers from all walks of life who helped to shape New Orleans throughout the years into what is is today, and it is guided by Professors Vicki Mayer and Jana Lipman.

Technology

For this project, neworleanshistorical.org will be used to present the tour to the public.

Working with Vicki Mayer, MediaNOLA (medianola.org) is being used to help organize all of the research and images thus far as narratives are being developed.

Current Stage

Currently, research is still underway. The current lineup of occupations for the tour includes a:
- Coffee Vendor (early 1800s)
- Sex Worker/Gang Leader (mid 1800s)
- Jazz Musician (mid 1930s)
- Domestic Worker (1930s to 1970s)
- Streetcar Conductorette (1943)
- Praline Entrepreneur (1980s to present)

I am currently researching the Hot Rocks service work movement from the late 1990s, as well as industrial workers, doctors, and lawyers to include in the tour.

Challenges

Because of the relative obscurity of some of these women, and due to how long ago many of them operated, I am having some difficulties researching them and fleshing out their narratives as much as I would like. For example, I had a female police officer from the 1950s who I was forced to drop due to a lack of information.

The most difficult aspect is currently finding enough images to make the mobile app tour viable, and dealing with licensing. This is the phase of the project I am transitioning to now as I move away from research and complete my initial drafts of each narrative.