Behind the Glitter

The Impact of Tourism on Rural Women in the Southeast

BY MICHAL SMITH

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Executive Summary

Service sector jobs within the wide-ranging tourism industry have increased proportionately with the public's seemingly unlimited appetitite for travel and leisure time. But, while consumers and service industries alike continue to place higher and higher demands on the "servants" who are the backbone of this industry, those demands are not being met with appropriate rewards. Instead, tourism industry jobs, as well as service sector jobs in general, remain among the lowest on the American wage ladder.

Beyond the small pool of management and short-term, male-dominated construction industry jobs associated with tourism development, the employment "opportunities" which remain in successful development communities are those of food servers, maids, and retail clerks. Traditionally held by women, these jobs routinely offer minimal wages, marginal benefits, and virtually no opportunity for advancement.

In spite of the virtual absence of real economic opportunity for long-term employees in the tourism industry, states and some municipalities are funneling more and more public dollars into expensive advertising campaigns aimed at capturing more tourism dollars. In the rural Southeast, these promotional dollars have helped make tourism the economic mainstay of many communities.

But the consequences of becoming an "attraction" suggest that tourism development, as it is currently practiced, is not a sound economic development strategy. While successful development generates much-needed local and state revenue, it also places costly demands on a community's infrastructure, raises the cost of living, degrades the environment which first attracted tourists, dilutes often fragile local cultures, and generates principally marginal, seasonal jobs.

The apparent irony of public sector investment in promoting private sector businesses that offer only marginal employment to citizens, mainly women, prompted Southeast Women's Employment Coalition to further investigate this phenomenon. With the support of the Ford Foundation and the Rural Economic Policy Program of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies and the United States Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, a closer examination of the real economic impact of living and working in a tourism economy was undertaken.

Through an historical window for which comprehensive social and economic data was available from the U.S. Census Bureau, this study focuses on 84 rural counties in 12 southeastern states. In these non-metropolitan counties where the hotel industry gained an increasing number of employees from 1970 to 1984, quality of life benchmarks demonstrated that economic circumstances for indigenous peoples did not improve dramatically. Instead, they often worsened.

With the successful expansion of tourism as a key industry, these rural communities attracted a growing number of workers and residents, often sacrificing much of their rural character in the process. While the nation's overall population expanded by just 11.5 percent from 1970 to 1980, population grew at an average rate of 17.2 percent in the high-growth tourism counties identified by the study. Additionally, many communities experienced increased urbanization as tourism development spawned the growth of small towns where there literally were none.

But the grassroots economic benefits of this growth industry appear to have been minimal. Prosperity, it seems, simply failed to "trickle down." Instead, the indigenous people of these communities -- particularly women -- experienced worsening economic circumstances. Already the nation's most economically depressed region, people living and working in rural tourism counties in the South not only fared worse than the nation as a whole but worse than their home states in general. Specifically:

- Unemployment continued to rise steadily from 1970 to 1980 to 1984 in virtually every county identified by the study.

- Women continued to experience higher unemployment rates than men in rural tourism communities in spite of the high reliance upon a female work force.

- While overall poverty rates declined for families in general, poor families headed by women increased dramatically.

- Family median incomes, particularly those of female-headed households, lagged far behind those enjoyed by most families in the nation.

- In 61 of the study's 84 counties, women earned less than half what men earned -- in spite of the tourism industry's heavy reliance upon their services.

With the findings of this study, it is hoped that policymakers and citizens alike will begin making more informed decisions about the paths they chart for economic development. Encouragement and aid to private sector development that offers no return to indigenous peoples is a public disservice. Indeed, through the promotion and the proliferation of marginal jobs throughout the Southeast, policymakers may have unwittingly contributed to worsening economic circumstances for millions of women and the children who depend upon them.

Introduction

Tourism: A Flawed Economic Development Strategy

Paralleling the recent decline of the U.S. manufacturing sector has been the rise of what has come to be labeled as the "service industry." The singular purpose of this collection of businesses, small and large, is to minister to the wants and needs of consumers, and other businesses and industries. Among those wants being catered to by a growing number of American workers are those associated with travel and leisure. Increasingly, whether for business or pleasure, ours has become a mobile society for which travel is a way of life, often an integral part of our work lives. In addition, families and individuals from all but the lowest economic brackets have come to regard travel as the only real means of diversion and escape from the day-to-day routine of their lives. By the year 2000, it has been predicted that travel or tourism, the wide-ranging, often ill-defined collection of enterprises that ministers to our seemingly voracious appetite for travel, will become the world's largest industry.[1]

Ironically, those who make the luxury of travel possible for others, the very backbone of the tourism industry, are often the same low-income individuals whose economic circumstances virtually preclude the possibility of travel. Not surprisingly, many of the service sector jobs that fall within the realm of today's tourism industry are held by women who work as maids, waitresses, and retail clerks. It is these women, entrapped by work roles that mirror a long history of female subservience, now institutionalized in the form of undervalued employment, to whom the traveling public looks for services that make freedom from the mundane possible. They perform the same routine, essential, and historically undercompensated tasks that have traditionally fallen to women. In various regions, employment in this same "servant class" has historically included minorities and immigrants, but the various ethnic groups of men have more successfully moved on to different classifications of employment. Today, however, we are witnessing an apparently purposeful lack of evolutionary opportunity within this worker class, which is now dominated by women.

While the level of reward for workers in the servant class has not changed perceptibly from its historically marginal nature, society's expectations of these workers has risen dramatically. The demand for a higher quality of services is actually escalating rapidly, but this demand is not being matched by a higher level of compensation to those workers who actually provide services. Instead, workers are expected to provide a higher "discretionary effort" as direct providers of services. Society places substantial value on services today, but workers who provide those services remain undervalued. Compensation to domestic labor in the tourism industry still translates into economic powerlessness. Outside a narrow, male-dominated tier of managers who are drawn to jobs in the tourism industry, tourism employment is predominantly comprised of low-wage jobs which seldom offer the protection of benefits -- pension plans, health insurance, even regular, presumably guaranteed breaks on the job.[2] In addition, women who hold these jobs seldom find reason to hope for advancement either in terms of wages or position. It is not uncommon to witness very young men managing older women in prominent chain restaurants and retail establishments, women with years of on-the-job experience which is routinely disregarded and discounted.

In spite of the hard economic realities of tourism economies, which are abundantly clear but seldom discussed, government-financed efforts to promote and expand tourism development have intensified in recent years. The competition for tourist dollars has become international in scope as nations vie against one another through slick media campaigns for the attention of the would-be traveler. Oftentimes, the indigenous people of those nations waging expensive, agressive media campaigns, nations such as Mexico, Thailand, and Brazil, are among the poorest in the world. Moreover, tourism development is almost routinely touted as the promise of economic bounty for Third World countries, as well as for the many depressed economies of rural America. But tourism will not likely change the economic status of indigenous peoples in such nations or communities. Instead, it may indeed worsen them, diluting local culture, degrading the environment, and reducing once proud natives to the role of servant in the process. The culture and environment that created the opportunity for tourism development are consumed rapidly, largely because the tourism product is sold so cheaply. Because labor costs are marginal and the level of sophistication in service delivery low, use of the tourism product is accelerated. Those people who have few choices and must take what work "opportunities" are available to them are simply left behind.

"Compensation to tourism workers translates into economic powerlessness."

An Unchallenged Development Strategy

In the United States, the battle of states against states for tourism dollars has intensified in recent years. Increasingly, tourism promotion has become an integral part of every state government hierarchy, achieving cabinet-level status in many. In this arena, it has been argued with apparent, unqualified success that promotion and development cannot be left to an industry for which profits are often too marginal to assume the considerable burden of promotional costs. Furthermore, tourism promotion and development have clearly garnered results. The industry is now one of the top three revenue producers in 46 states and usually ranks among the top three employers.[3] Not surprisingly, it has become an industry for which the overwhelming majority of public servants and would-be officeholders voice unqualified support. The results of untempered, unquestioned promotional strategies are so dramatic in terms of revenue generation that few are willing "to look this gift horse in the mouth." The industry's economic shortcomings, much less the sometimes subtle cultural and physical degradation of those areas which have been successfully transformed into "attractions," are seldom the target of inquiry. As a result, state legislatures virtually rubber stamp ever increasing promotional budgets designed to create more of the same, and developers move quickly, often virtually unchecked, to transform once pristine areas into heavily trafficked, periodically overpopulated, abused refuges for the leisure class.

In a 1985 article detailing the results of a national survey of state tourism offices, Kansas State University political scientist, Linda K. Richter, reported that states had spent an estimated $140 million on tourism in 1982, four times more than a decade earlier, one-third of it on advertising alone.[4] By 1986-87, however, the U.S. Travel Data Center reported overall state budgets totalling more than $234 million, marking a 40 percent increase in just four years. At the same time, states reported spending 42 percent of these expanding state budgets -- $99.2 million in fiscal year 1986-87 alone -- for advertising. Three southeastern states which consistently rank among the most impoverished in this nation ranked among the top 15 states in overall spending for tourism promotion and development.[5]

Richter also learned from her survey of state tourism directors that only 15 states conducted regular impact studies on proposed tourism development and that no states sought or provided the kind of information that might prevent environmental and cultural degradation. Instead, "planning" focused on securing growth in leading indicators of tourist traffic – visitors, retail spending, state and local government revenue. Moreover, Richter found "little evidence that community feedback is sought or monitored" and that officials of state tourism offices viewed tourism promotion in optimistic terms that were seldom tempered by an awareness of the social consequences of successful development.[6]

Instead, marketing, promoting more of the same, remains the principal focus of public sector tourism development efforts as governments continue to funnel more and more tax dollars into an industry that offers only limited returns to indigenous people. These people often suffer the consequences of a terrible irony, paying hard earned tax dollars towards the support and promotion of an industry that has done little or possibly nothing to improve their quality of life.

Though the successful infusion of tourist dollars into a local economy clearly helps spawn small business development and employment, the vast majority of lasting jobs are the antithesis of opportunity. The larger benefits routinely go to those financiers who orchestrate, develop, and ultimately own tourist attractions. Outside of its benefits to the economic elite, some of the highest paying jobs associated with the tourism industry simply do not last. Construction industry jobs are temporary, seasonal, and, almost always dominated by men. What remains as the staple of the industry are underpaid, undervalued, generally demeaning job roles into which women are routinely pushed out of economic necessity. Additionally, the feast and famine nature of most seasonal tourism economies generally leaves indigenous peoples without employment opportunities for months out of each year. Those who must survive in rural, tourism-dependent economies, particularly women who must provide sole support for their families, often find themselves entrapped in marginal, part-time or temporary jobs which provide little more than subsistence-level wages. And, while the infrastructure improvements that come with tourism development generally raise the average cost of living in the area, the influx of tourist dollars is rarely offset by lower taxes.

"Local culture and the environment are consumed rapidly, largely because the tourism product is sold so cheaply."

The Southeast – A Mecca for Tourists

Tourism development throughout the rural Southeast has enjoyed dramatic growth in recent years. In *Making Connections*, researchers Stuart A. Rosenfeld and Edward M. Bergman of the Southern Growth Policies Board recently reported that the fastest growth in the rural South was either occurring in counties adjacent to metropolitan areas or in counties with tourist industries or retirement communities.[7] For many of these rural counties, the legacy of successful tourism development has proven devastating. Along the coastal Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia, for example, enormously successful development has displaced poor black families, many of whom, it has been alleged, were duped out of their land. Severe poverty, in any event, rendered the indigenous poor of this region easy prey for wealthy developers. In some areas which have been transformed into attractions, natives have been denied access to vitally important subsistence coastline fishing and reduced to servitude on land which belonged to their families for generations.

On South Carolina's Hilton Head Island, one of the Southeast's most prestigious tourism developments, black workers are sometimes bussed from their mainland homes onto what continue to be referred to as "plantations," lavish condominium and vacation home developments where blacks work as servants in luxury hotels and restaurants enjoyed almost exclusively by privileged whites. Access to the land which belonged to their families for decades has been cut off, and, in tactics reminiscent of segregationist South Africa, indigenous black people have been prohibited from entering the exclusive domains of the island without a pass. They have been permanently separated from cemeteries, birthplaces, from their very history by tourism development. On an island that was once inhabited only by black people, whites now outnumber blacks eight to one.[8]

Throughout the Sea Islands, the unique Gullah language, as well as the very culture of the island people, is believed to be in jeopardy as a result of tourism development. One of the most distinctive languages in the nation, often incomprehensibile to those who live only miles away, Gullah is a magical blend of English, West African, and Caribbean languages. West African influences run throughout this unique black local culture, but the area is fast becoming a temporary diversion for the rich. On Yonges Island, South Carolina, for example, huge tracts of land have become a newfound haven for rich, white sportsmen who pay to use the privately owned "plantations" for hunting purposes alone. On the edges of these tracts of land, black families, many of them elderly, cling tenuously to a way of life that is being undermined and devalued. On Daufuskie Island, South Carolina, which lies south of Hilton Head, massive development efforts have caused land values to skyrocket, jeopardizing the holdings of an already dwindling indigenous population.[9]

Midway up the South Carolina coast, dependency upon the subsistence economic life of tourism work is increasing among residents of semi-metropolitan Georgetown. There, black community leaders report that women who work in service industry jobs at nearby Myrtle Beach, an extremely successful and longstanding development in the South, often spend hours each week traveling to and from work on buses. This uncompensated time not only expands work days to difficult lengths, it cuts deeply into time spent with family, friends, and among fellow members of the community. Essentially, dependency on tourism industry jobs is robbing these women of a life outside of work, mutiplying the consequences of marginal employment in a community that, for the working poor, has become far too expensive a place to live.

"This feast to famine economy leaves indigenous people without employment opportunities for months out of each year."

In the beautiful mountains of western North Carolina, wealthy retirees and vacationers have made Boone a home away from home. In the process, they have contributed to rising land values and escalating prices for necessities, and expanded the demand for inadequate wage, service sector employment. But even these jobs almost routinely go to young college students, the vast majority of whom are not natives of the area. Ironically, this summer and ski season haven for the wealthy is also home to North Carolina's worst poverty. Watauga County was cited as the hungriest county in the state, the 69th hungriest county in the nation, in a Harvard University Physicians' Task Force on Hunger study released in 1986.[10] In spite of the affluence of its part-time residents, Watauga County has many functionally illiterate residents – 26 percent of the population, a dire shortage of public housing and child care, and few employment opportunities outside of public sector university jobs and the minimum wage tourism industry. These inadequacies in human infrastructure are all found in an essentially rural town of longstanding development success, a town that boasts four 18-hole golf courses and 22 tennis courts.

"There are millions of dollars in the summer that go into country club fees and golf fees, but there's been no benefit to the indigenous population," observed Joan Chater, who serves with Boone's Hunger Coalition.

Hunger Coalition Director Cinda McGuinn added, "It (tourism) just squashes the people on the bottom."

It is the people on the bottom -- those who are without economic options, those who have little real voice in government decisions that nevertheless have a profound effect upon their lives, those who suffer most at the hands of political expediency and indifference – who are the focus of this study. Increasingly in America, those left at the bottom of the economic ladder are women and children. In spite of significant gains in the professions, the overwhelming majority of women continue to be trapped in nearly inescapable job ghettos where their work remains undervalued and underpaid. Dependent children have suffered the consequences as a result. Just as women who head households entered the work force in record numbers, the once honored American tradition of a family wage became a relic of the past. Women's work, though partly liberated from the uncompensated realm of domestic servitude, too often remains synonymous with poverty. And those workers who are the backbone of the tourism industry are women. Many of them likely found their first jobs in the tourism industry, the only economic "opportunity" their communities offered.

Methodology

Specifically, this study of tourism and its impact on low-income women and children focuses on 12 southeastern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. However, it does not embrace the states of Texas and Oklahoma, which are included in the Census Bureau's definition of the South. To closely examine economic indicators where tourism has become a growth industry, a county-level data base was constructed. Individual records within the data base represent each county in the 12 southeastern states. Building on a foundation of data developed by the Southern Growth Policies Board, the information base was expanded to include employment data from two key travel industry employment sectors.

"Ironically, this summer and ski season haven for the wealthy is home to North Carolina's worst poverty."

As a result, 84 counties were identified as subjects for closer investigation. The identification of these 84 rural, "high-growth" tourism industry counties was based upon county- level employment data gleaned from the Bureau of Census's County Business Patterns reports for 1970 and 1984. For each of the targeted 12 states, employment data for two Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes was collected and analyzed; however, only data for SIC code #70, "Hotels and Other Lodging Places," was used as the criterion for determining where significant tourism industry growth actually occurred. Though food industry employment data for SIC code #58, "Eating and Drinking Places," was also collected and analyzed, it was believed that the myriad factors which have contributed to the phenomenal growth of this industry rendered this industrial category an unacceptable guidepost for determining tourism industry growth. Changing lifestyles, for example, have likely contributed far more to the dramatic increases in this employment sector than any other factor. Growth in the hotel industry, on the other hand, is unequivocally an indicator of an expanding travel or tourism industry, whether or not the county in question is an actual destination site for travelers.

Additionally, all counties classified as "metropolitan" by the United States Department of Agriculture were eliminated from the original data base, as well as those non-metropolitan counties classified as manufacturing[11] as this study is aimed at rural counties which do not enjoy the level of economic diversification found in metropolitan areas and are, therefore, likely to be far more dependent upon tourism. Non-metropolitan counties are classified by their proximity to interstate highways or metropolitan areas. Generally, these metropolitan areas have a minimum of 50,000 residents and include those surrounding counties where residents depend on the city for jobs and services. Manufacturing non-metropolitan counties derive 30 percent or more of their employment from manufacturing.

The 84 non-metropolitan, high-growth counties which formed the basis of a second, expanded data base were not isolated strictly by an across-the-board percentage of growth standard. Such a standard was determined far too deceptive. Though the counties selected for further examination experienced 90 percent or more employment growth in the hotel industry, only those counties with an estimated 1984 employment level of 100 or more employees in SIC code #70, "Hotels and Other Lodging Places," were retained. For 1970, employment levels in many of the counties isolated for further examination were not shown separately because the industry often had fewer than 50 employees in a given county. In these instances, a median employment level of 25 employees was used. On the other hand, unreported but estimated employment levels for 1984 were recorded at the lowest level of the range, for example, at 100 employees where the number of employees was estimated at between 100 and 249, providing a very conservative estimate of hotel industry employment growth in these southeastern counties.

After the identification of high-growth counties was completed, the resultant 84-county data base was revised and expanded. Twenty-four of the original fields of data were removed from the high-growth county data base, leaving only 18 essential sets of data. The fields eliminated from the "high-growth" county data base included information thought to be extraneous, data from years outside the study's benchmarks, or data from inconsistent sources. The eliminated fields were: physicians per population of 100,000; self-employed workers; 1981 Bureau of Economic Analysis data on transfer payments and per capita income; three fields of educational achievement for 1980 only; six fields of United States Department of Agriculture classifications identifying a county's economic base and its location in relation to interstate highways; and 11 fields of employment data for years outside the study's benchmark dates. To this framework of population, limited labor force data, and employment level data from the food and hotel industries, more than 100 fields of information were added, including extensive data from 1970 and 1980 Census reports and limited unemployment data from state sources. Unless otherwise indicated, all references to 1970 and 1980 findings are based upon Census data. Fields for the purpose of comparing 1970, 1980, and limited 1984 data were also added to the data base. Beyond 1980, the study necessarily relies heavily upon national and state data for its statistical portrait of post-1980 economic conditions for women and children.

"National data suggest bleak economic trends for women and children."

Given the clear limitations of dated social and economic data available via the Census, it is recommended that further analysis of the counties identified in this study be conducted when data from the 1990 Census becomes available. A subsequent analysis should also include the most current data available on hotel/motel employment levels in the identified counties. Such data would provide an invaluable perspective on the long-range impacts of life and work in a tourism economy. Though national statistics clearly indicate that economic circumstances are worsening for women and children, data gathered in the course of this study would suggest that women living and working in counties which rely heavily upon tourism as an economic mainstay are faring even more poorly. However, only a comparison with 1990 data for the fields of information collected in the course of this study would confirm the existence of a sustained disparity. It is possible, though highly unlikely given the findings of this study, that over an extended time period, the 20-year window that 1990 Census data would open, for example, tourism economies will begin to yield tangible benefits for indigenous peoples. Such a conclusion, however, would run counter to both national and local data which suggest a far more bleak trend for women and children in general, as well as for families, particularly those headed by women who live and work in tourism economies.

Introduction Notes

[1]Herman Kahn, "Tourism and the Next Decade," in Donald Hawkins and Elwood L. Schaffer, eds., *Tourism Planning and Development Issues* (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1980).

[2]See Stephen B. Britton, "The Political Economy of Tourism in the Third World," *Annals of Tourism Research* 9; Louis A. Perez, "Aspects of Underdevelopment: Tourism in the West Indies," *Science and Society* 37 (Winter); E. Philip English, *The Great Escape?* (Ottawa, Canada: The North-South Institute, 1986); and Sevier County, Tennessee, Case Study, included in this report.

[3]Linda K. Richter, "State Sponsored Tourism: A Growth Field for Public Administration?" *Public Administration Review* (November/December 1985): 832.

[4]Ibid., 833.

[5]U.S. Travel Data Center, "Survey of State Travel Offices, 1986- 87," January 1987, 5.

[6]Richter, 836.

[7]Stuart A. Rosenfeld and Edward M. Bergman, *Making Connections: After the Factories Revisited* (Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: Southern Growth Policies Board, 1989) 37.

[8]Charles L. Blockson, "Sea Change in the Sea Islands: 'Nowhere to Lay Down Weary Head,'" National Geographic, December 1987, 751. Also see Mark Pinsky, "Sea Island Plantations Revisited," and June M. Thomas, "No Place in the Sun for the Help," *Southern Exposure*, May/June 1982.

[9]Blockson, 735.

[10]Larry Brown, M.D., *Physicians' Task Force on Hunger in America, Hunger Counties 1986 – the Distribution of America's High-Risk Areas* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1986).

[11]U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, The Diversity of Specialized Counties Social and Economic Structures in Nonmetropolitan

The Forgotten Servants

The Study Findings

Those southeastern counties which are the focus of this study were identified as sites of high-growth tourism industries based upon employment data in the hotel industry. This data was secured from the U.S. Census Bureau's *County Business Patterns* reports for 1970 and 1984. As previously indicated, no county retained in the data base had a 1984 employment level of fewer than 100 employees in the hotel industry, specifically within the Standard Industrial Classification code, "Hotels and Other Lodging Places," indicating a significant industry presence in each county. Because the hotel industry is not labor intensive, those counties with the lowest 1984 employment levels in the industry may have as few as 10 hotels, still a mark of strong tourism industry presence.

In the period spanning 1970 to 1984, hotel industry growth soared in the 84 counties identified by the study. In 1970, an average of 122 people were employed by the hotel industry in the 84 counties of the study group. By 1984, however, study group counties averaged 421 employees in the "Hotels and Other Lodging Places" employment category in the 84 counties. The rates of growth among individual counties ranged from increases in the 90 percent range registered in Floyd County, Georgia (93 percent); Moore County, North Carolina (94 percent); and Shenandoah County, Virginia (94 percent), to apparently phenomenal but statistically uncertain growth in other counties. Industry growth among the highest growth counties, with the exception of Beaufort County, South Carolina, was based upon a median number of 25 employees for 1970 because employment levels below 50 were not recorded by the Census. In any event, the growth was remarkable.

Twenty-three of the "high-growth" counties identified in the study registered hotel industry employment growth in excess of 500 percent. The four highest recorded rates of growth, again based upon a 1970 figure of 25 employees, exceeded 1000 percent. They occurred in Terrebonne and Natchitoches Counties, Louisiana; Bath County, Virginia; and Pocahontas County, West Virginia. In Pocahontas County, for example, hotel industry employment levels grew by as much as 2000 percent, a phenomenal pace that correlates with county's record growth in the female labor force. Pocahontas County also led the entire study group of counties in this area of growth from 1970 to 1980, underscoring the tourism industry's heavy reliance upon women. West Virginia's Raleigh County also witnessed unprecedented growth in hotel industry employment, growth that likely exceeded 900 percent. Interestingly, Raleigh County trailed only Pocahontas County in overall growth of its female labor force from 1970 to 1980. In Bath County, Virginia, hotel industry employment rose an estimated 1900 percent, and in Natchitoches and Terrebonne Counties in Louisiana, hotel industry employment rose almost 1500 per-

Food Industry Growth

	No. of Employees 1970	No. of Employees 1980	% of Growth
Alabama			
Escambia	204	372	82.0%
Arkansas			
Carroll	43	208	384.0%
Faulkner	243	909	274.0%
Pope	272	1006	270.0%
Cleburne	48	171	256.0%
Montgomery	25	72	188.0%
Boone	182	505	177.0%
Ouachita	136	368	171.0%
St. Francis	187	423	126.0%
Union	305	582	91.0%
Mississippi	309	456	48.0%
Florida			
Collier	600	3722	520.0%
Hernando	112	652	482.0%
Indian River	362	1729	378.0%
Manatee	1027	4662	354.0%
Lake	465	2050	341.0%
Okaloosa	966	3627	275.0%
Putnam	217	603	178.0%
Sumter	159	434	173.0%
Columbia	362	935	158.0%
St. Lucie	945	2137	126.0%
Georgia			
Liberty	80	612	665.0%
Banks	25	167	528.0%
Bartow	167	709	325.0%
Gordon	140	544	289.0%
Hall	460	1654	260.0%
Glynn	603	2008	233.0%
Troup	317	861	172.0%
Thomas	158	424	168.0%
Floyd	654	1675	156.0%
Crisp	190	423	123.0%
Harris	25	51	104.0%
McIntosh	25	25	0.0%
Kentucky			
McCracken	612	1746	185.0%
Madison	504	1200	138.0%
Mason	135	279	107.0%
Louisiana			
Tangipahoa	456	1670	266.0%
Terrebonne	1020	2986	193.0%
Iberia	385	1095	184.0%
Lafourche	361	907	151.0%
Natchitoches	274	573	109.0%
St. Mary	722	1305	81.0%
Mississippi			
Leflore	203	1180	481.0%
Oktibbeha	94	475	405.0%
Adams	223	745	234.0%
Lincoln	85	250	194.0%
Alcorn	205	382	86.0%
North Carolina			
Avery	25	375	1400.0%
Dare	64	823	1186.0%
Swain	25	223	792.0%
Johnston	276	859	211.0%
Carteret	346	1039	200.0%
Pitt	952	2559	169.0%
Moore	278	743	167.0%
Craven	554	1267	129.0%
South Carolina			
Horry	808	5640	598.0%
Beaufort	297	1686	468.0%
York	508	1708	236.0%
Colleton	121	351	190.0%
Tennessee			
Sevier	351	1624	363.0%
Hamblen	267	1136	325.0%
Cocke	100	312	212.0%
Monroe	152	432	184.0%
Maury	361	810	124.0%
Campbell	186	351	89.0%
Humphreys	84	154	83.0%
Virginia			
Spotsylvania	25	547	2088.0%
Montgomery	387	1488	284.0%
Stafford	159	547	244.0%
Warren	103	327	217.0%
Henry	174	548	215.0%
Lancaster	25	66	164.0%
Shenandoah	226	397	76.0%
Augusta	268	461	72.0%
Bath	25	25	0.0%
Lunenburg	25	25	0.0%
Rockbridge	136	109	-20.0%
West Virginia			
Pocahontas	25	193	672.0%
Raleigh	344	1008	193.0%
Morgan	25	70	180.0%
Monongalia	499	1388	178.0%
Jefferson	229	592	159.0%
Mercer	468	1089	133.0%
Tucker	101	138	37.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Hotel Industry Growth

	No. of Employees 1970	No. of Employees 1980	% of Growth
Alabama			
Escambia	25	182	628.0%
Arkansas			
St. Francis	25	233	832.0%
Mississippi	25	229	816.0%
Ouachita	25	144	476.0%
Union	25	130	420.0%
Faulkner	25	108	332.0%
Montgomery	25	105	320.0%
Cleburne	25	100	300.0%
Carroll	33	121	267.0%
Boone	58	162	162.0%
Pope	94	237	152.0%
Florida			
Sumter	25	166	564.0%
Hernando	25	134	436.0%
Putnam	34	120	253.0%
Lake	241	658	173.0%
Indian River	208	667	173.0%
St. Lucie	136	362	159.0%
Manatee	379	947	150.0%
Collier	937	2278	143.0%
Columbia	172	379	120.0%
Okaloosa	617	1352	119.0%
Georgia			
Gordon	25	209	736.0%
Bartow	30	197	557.0%
Thomas	25	144	476.0%
Hall	133	609	358.0%
McIntosh	25	108	332.0%
Banks	25	100	300.0%
Liberty	25	100	300.0%
Troup	50	144	188.0%
Harris	115	263	129.0%
Glynn	1018	2187	115.0%
Crisp	168	337	101.0%
Floyd	148	286	93.0%
Warren	25	114	356.0%
Lunenburg	25	100	300.0%
Rockbridge	25	100	300.0%
Spotsylvania	109	302	177.0%
Shenandoah	169	327	94.0%
Kentucky			
Mason	25	100	300.0%
Madison	90	276	207.0%
McCracken	218	480	120.0%
Louisiana			
Natchitoches	25	398	1492.0%
Terrebonne	25	278	1012.0%
Iberia	25	233	832.0%
Tangipahoa	25	116	364.0%
St. Mary	115	276	140.0%
Mississippi			
Lincoln	25	160	540.0%
Leflore	25	158	532.0%
Alcorn	25	109	336.0%
Adams	181	472	161.0%
North Carolina			
Pitt	83	371	347.0%
Swain	35	145	314.0%
Carteret	93	352	279.0%
Johnston	110	332	202.0%
Avery	124	317	156.0%
Dare	224	563	151.0%
Craven	92	200	117.0%
Moore	615	1194	94.0%
South Carolina			
Colleton	25	213	752.0%
Beaufort	298	2352	689.0%
Horry	890	4016	351.0%
York	113	493	336.0%
Tennessee			
Campbell	25	221	784.0%
Hamblen	25	159	536.0%
Monroe	25	144	476.0%
Sevier	399	2055	415.0%
Cocke	25	119	376.0%
Humphreys	25	103	312.0%
Maury	25	100	300.0%
Virginia			
Bath	25	500	1900.0%
Lancaster	25	231	824.0%
Montgomery	51	429	741.0%
Augusta	25	210	740.0%
Stafford	25	135	440.0%
Henry	25	120	380.0%
West Virginia			
Pocahontas	25	525	2000.0%
Raleigh	25	273	992.0%
Morgan	25	161	544.0%
Jefferson	25	159	536.0%
Tucker	25	129	416.0%
Monongalia	298	806	171.0%
Mercer	203	526	159.0%
Oktibbeha	85	177	108.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

cent and nearly 1000 percent respectively.

By 1984, seven of the rural, high-growth counties identified by the study recorded employment levels in the hotel industry in excess of 1,000 employees, representing a strong industry presence for a rural county. Those counties included Collier (2,278) and Glynn (2,187) in Georgia; Okaloosa (1,352) in Florida; Moore (1,194) in North Carolina; Beaufort (2,352) and Horry (4,016) in South Carolina; and Sevier (2,055) in Tennessee.

An additional nine counties recorded 500 or more employees in the industry in 1984. These record-high employment levels in the hotel industry contrast sharply with 1970 employment levels for which only Glynn County, Georgia, recorded leading industry employment exceeding 1,000 employees, and only four additional counties, Moore in North Carolina, Okaloosa and Collier in Florida, and Horry in South Carolina, reported 500 or more employees in the industry. By 1984, the number of counties with hotel industry employment of more than 500 workers had increased three-fold.

The food industry also experienced record growth in the counties that are the focus of this study during the study period from 1970 to 1984. In 1970, the average number of employees in the food industry, SIC code #57, "Eating and Drinking

Places," stood at 289 for the 84-county group, but by 1984 the average number of employees had grown to 960. Though this industry's expanded presence is not caused by tourism growth alone, it is a close companion to hotel industry growth and obviously correlated with increased tourism and leisure pursuits.

A Ballooning Population

The decade spanning 1970 to 1980 witnessed dramatic population growth in the southeastern United States. While the nation's overall population expanded by an estimated 11.5 percent over the 10-year period, those 12 southeastern states embraced by this study increased their populations by an average of 17.2 percent. Though the Southeast clearly became a magnet for people, for industry, and for development on an oftentimes grand scale, it nevertheless remained the nation's poorest region. In 1980, the region was still essentially rural, home to 42 percent of the entire nation's non-urban population.[1]

In this predominantly rural region, developers saw enormous opportunity to capitalize on the increasing mobility of the population and the public's fascination with escape to more simple surroundings such as those typically found in the Southeast. As a result, once remote areas were sometimes transformed into tourist "attractions" that eventually supplanted rural simplicity with the middle class offerings travelers ultimately demand. In the 84 counties identified as high-growth tourism industry sites throughout the Southeast, expanding development and growing appeal to the traveling public were often paralleled by dramatic population growth that, on the average, far exceeded the national pace. The 84 study group counties experienced an average population increase of 29.5 percent, outdistancing regional and national averages.

Only three counties included in the study actually experienced population losses from 1970 to 1980: Mississippi County, Arkansas; Leflore County, Mississippi; and Ouachita County, Arkansas. These population losses mirrored an overall decline in ranking experienced by these two economically depressed southeastern states over the decade. Though both Mississippi and Arkansas made modest population gains during the decade, Mississippi slipped from its 1970 ranking as 29th in the nation to 31st in terms of population. Likewise, Arkansas went from 32nd to 33rd.[2]

"Sixty-five of the 84 high-growth counties registered population growth that paralleled or exceeded the national rate of growth."

Each of the counties experiencing actual population losses is transected by a major interstate highway and is the likely recipient of increased tourist traffic as a result. Population has remained virtually static in these counties, declining only by 1.1 percent in Ouachita County, Arkansas, 1.4 percent in Leflore County, Mississippi, and 4.1 percent in Mississippi County, Arkansas, because the hotel industry is serving travelers enroute to other destinations. Clearly, growth in the tourism industry has not transformed these and several other southeastern counties into work force or resident magnets. Nineteen or 22.6 percent of the high-growth counties in the study group either experienced marginal population losses or moderate population growth that lagged behind the national average.

A much larger percentage of the study group counties, however, experienced significant population growth. Sixty-five or 77.3 percent of the high-growth counties registered population growth that paralleled or exceeded the national rate of growth. But 29.7 percent of those counties which became magnets to tourists recorded upward population shifts of 30 percent or more. Four counties (Spotsylvania County, Virginia; Liberty County, Georgia; Collier and Hernando County, Florida) undoubtedly underwent dramatic transformation during the decade as their populations rose by more than 100 percent. Hernando County, Florida, located on the booming west coast of the state, saw its population soar by a phenomenal 161 percent, from 17,004 people in 1970 to 44,469 people in 1980.

Interestingly, the most dramatic gains again took place in those states which have experienced surges in population over recent decades. Five out of the 10 counties recording the highest rate of population growth in the study group were located in Florida. From 1960 to 1980, the Sunshine State's population nearly doubled while its success as a tourist destination continued to rival most states in the nation, as well as many nations throughout the world. Florida's overall population has risen from its 1940 ranking as 27th to seventh in the nation. Over the decade spanning 1970 to 1980, the state gained 3 million new residents and moved from its position as the ninth most populous state in the nation to seventh. Similarly, both Georgia and Virginia gained nearly a million new residents over the same period. While Virginia held its rank as 14th in the nation in terms of population, Georgia moved from 15th to 13th, the same approximate status which it has held now for decades.[3]

Urban Transformations

Paralleling the overall upward trend in population growth in the 84 high-growth counties of the study group was equally strong growth in urban populations. The average increase for those rural southeastern counties where the hotel industry has enjoyed significant growth was, in fact, so skewed by the emergence of urban communities where there were previously none that averages offer little meaning. In six counties where there were no recorded urban populations in 1970, relatively small urban communities emerged over the decade, transforming the es-

Population Trends

	Population			Urban Population		
	1970	1980	Growth	1970	1980	Growth
Alabama						
Escambia	34912	38440	10.1%	15040	18481	22.9%
Arkansas						
Boone	19073	26067	36.7%	7239	9567	32.2%
Carroll	12301	16208	31.7%	0	2968	296600.0%
Cleburne	10349	16909	63.4%	0	4589	458800.0%
Faulkner	31578	46192	46.3%	15510	20375	31.4%
Mississippi	62060	59517	-4.1%	31955	38493	20.5%
Montgomery	5821	7771	33.5%	0	0	0.0%
Ouachita	30896	30541	-1.1%	15147	15356	1.4%
Pope	28607	39021	36.4%	11750	17033	45.0%
Union	45428	48573	6.9%	25286	25270	-0.1%
St. Francis	30799	30858	0.2%			
Florida						
Collier	38040	85971	126.0%	25159	73719	193.0%
Columbia	25250	35399	40.2%	14199	13061	-8.0%
Hernando	17004	44469	161.5%	4060	12050	198.8%
Indian River	35992	59896	66.4%	25010	42871	71.4%
Lake	69305	104870	51.3%	30056	41165	36.9%
Manatee	97115	148442	52.9%	69316	152018	
Okaloosa	88187	109920	24.6%	0	0	0.0%
Putnam	36424	50549	38.8%	9310	10175	9.3%
St. Lucie	50836	87182	71.5%	32990	73861	123.9%
Sumter	14839	24272	63.6%	0	2665	266400.0%
Georgia						
Banks	6833	8702	27.4%	0	0	0.0%
Bartow	32911	40760	23.8%	9929	9508	-4.2%
Crisp	18087	19489	7.8%	10733	10914	1.7%
Floyd	73742	79800	8.2%	36490	51089	40.0%
Gordon	23570	30070	27.6%	4748	5563	17.2%
Glynn	50528	54981	8.8%	33498	30350	-9.4%
Hall	59405	75649	27.3%	15554	18058	16.1%
Harris	11520	15484	34.2%	713	982	37.7%
Liberty	17569	37583	113.9%	8582	26340	206.9%
McIntosh	7371	8046	9.2%			
Troup	44466	50003	12.5%	29895	30878	3.3%
Thomas	34562	38098	10.2%	18155	18463	1.7%
Kentucky						
Madison	42730	53369	24.9%	23817	29931	25.7%
Mason	17273	17765	2.8%	7411	7983	7.7%
McCracken	58281	61310	5.2%	35366	37767	6.7%
Louisiana						
Iberia	57397	63752	11.1%	36469	39277	7.7%
Lafourche	68941	82483	19.6%	26753	40264	50.5%
Natchitoches	35219	39863	13.2%	15974	16664	4.3%
St. Mary	60752	64253	5.8%	39609	46923	18.5%
Tangipahoa	65875	80698	22.5%	39999	66785	67.0%
Terrebonne	76049	94393	24.1%	23361	27480	17.6%
Mississippi						
Adams	37293	38035	2.0%	19704	25460	29.2%
Alcorn	27179	33038	21.5%	11581	13839	19.5%
Leflore	42111	41525	-1.4%	22400	23019	2.8%
Lincoln	26198	30174	15.2%	10700	10800	0.9%
Oktibbeha	28752	36018	25.3%	15964	16169	-6.0%
North Carolina						
Avery	12655	14409	13.9%	0	0	0.0%
Carteret	31603	41092	30.0%	8601	8185	-4.8%
Craven	62554	71043	13.6%	35549	35228	-0.9%
Dare	6995	13377	91.2%	0	0	0.0%
Johnston	61737	70599	14.4%	14135	18933	33.9%
Moore	39048	50505	29.3%	5937	12041	102.8%
Pitt	73900	90146	22.0%	36937	44808	21.3%
Swain	8835	10283	16.4%	0	0	0.0%
South Carolina						
Beaufort	51136	65364	27.8%	25657	39564	54.2%
Colleton	27711	31776	14.7%	6257	6209	-0.8%
Horry	69992	101419	44.9%	20551	35168	71.1%
York	85216	106720	25.2%	46938	63230	34.7%
Tennessee						
Campbell	26045	34923	34.1%	6902	10996	59.3%
Cocke	25283	28792	13.9%	7328	7580	3.4%
Hamblen	38696	49300	27.4%	20318	19683	-3.1%
Humphreys	13560	15957	17.7%	3794	4405	16.1%
Maury	44028	51095	16.1%	25001	29747	19.0%
Monroe	23475	28700	22.3%	6954	7609	9.4%
Sevier	28241	41418	46.7%	2661	7768	191.9%
Virginia						
Augusta	44220	53732	21.5%	0	6479	647700.0%
Bath	5192	5860	12.9%	0	0	0.0%
Henry	50901	57654	13.3%	9073	11167	23.1%
Lancaster	9126	10129	11.0%	0	0	0.0%
Lunenburg	11687	12124	3.7%	0	0	0.0%
Montgomery	47157	63516	34.7%	17241	40983	137.7%
Rockbridge	16637	17911	7.7%	0	0	0.0%
Shenandoah	22852	27559	20.6%	0	2627	262600.0%
Spotsylvania	16424	34435	109.7%	0	0	0.0%
Stafford	24587	40470	64.6%			
Warren	15301	21200	38.6%	8211	11126	35.5%
West Virginia						
Jefferson	21280	30302	42.4%	3023	2857	-5.5%
Mercer	63206	73942	17.0%	23174	26306	13.5%
Monongalia	63714	75024	17.8%	34517	32489	-5.9%
Morgan	8547	10711	25.3%	0	0	0.0%
Pocahontas	8870	9919	11.8%	0	0	0.0%
Raleigh	70080	86821	23.9%	19884	23829	19.8%
Tucker	7447	8675	16.5%	0	0	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

sential character of these once entirely rural communities.

The most significant transformations, from the total absence of an urban population to a small but undoubtedly keenly felt urban presence, occurred in Augusta, Shenandoah, and Stafford Counties, Virginia; Sumter County, Florida; and Carroll and Cleburne Counties, Arkansas. These newly formed urbanized areas ranged in population from 2,627 people in Shenandoah County to 6,478 people in Stafford County in 1980. Again, four out of the six counties were located in populous and generally prosperous Virginia and Florida, states where the most dramatic changes in terms of the character of the population are occurring. Augusta and Shenandoah Counties in Virginia lie in the spectacular Shenandoah Valley region while Stafford County is located near populous Washington, D.C., making it an accessible weekend destination for thousands of travelers. Sumter County, Florida, lies in the state's mid-central lakes region but offers quick access to the west coast, and Cleburne and Carroll Counties in Arkansas lie on the border of the Ozark Mountain range, an increasingly successful attraction.

While new ubanized areas emerged in six counties in the study group, 10 counties experienced declines in urban population ranging from a 9.4 percent drop in Glynn County, Georgia, to a barely perceptible loss of 13 persons in Union County, Arkansas. Almost 30 percent of the counties included in the study group either experienced a modest decline in their urban populations, which ranged as high as 35,549 people in 1980 in Craven County, North Carolina, or witnessed no change in the essentially rural character of the area encompassed by the county. Thirteen high-growth tourism counties remained strictly rural in the character of their populations.

Overall, however, 70 percent of those counties included in the study, 59 counties, experienced increased urbanization. This transformation of the very character of individual counties occurred in a region which remained essentially rural. Only the states of Florida and Virginia actually experienced overall losses in their rural populations over the decade spanning 1970 to 1980 while emerging local tourism economies began to experience increased urbanization as their dependence upon the traveling public grew.

These rural southeastern counties likely came to be regarded as desirable destinations by would-be tourists because of the simple, uncomplicated, unhurried stlye of living which they represented. However, as tourist traffic to these areas increased, so did urbanization, essentially robbing affected communities of those qualities which once made them most appealing. The resultant losses suffered by indigenous people – cultural, social, and personal -- are virtually immeasurable.

Black Population

	1970 Black Pop.	1970 % of-Pop.	1980 Black Pop.	1980 % of-Pop.	Total % of Growth
Alabama					
Escambia	23748	68.0%	1137	3.0%	-52.1%
Arkansas					
Faulkner	2836	9.0%	3702	8.0%	30.6%
Pope	671	2.3%	858	2.2%	27.9%
Union	13369	29.4%	13970	28.8%	4.5%
Ouachita	11109	36.0%	11002	36.0%	-1.0%
Mississippi	16527	26.6%	16167	27.2%	-2.2%
St. Francis	14558	47.3%	14190	46.0%	-2.5%
Florida					
Okaloosa	6350	7.2%	9372	8.5%	47.6%
Collier	3178	8.4%	4433	5.2%	39.5%
Sumter	3399	22.9%	4570	18.8%	34.5%
St. Lucie	15696	30.9%	18997	21.8%	21.0%
Indian_River	6514	18.1%	7765	13.0%	19.2%
Manatee	11433	11.8%	13332	9.0%	16.6%
Hernando	2401	14.1%	2793	6.3%	16.3%
Lake	12056	17.4%	13153	12.5%	9.1%
Columbia	6312	25.0%	6841	19.3%	8.4%
Putnam	9732	26.7%	10358	20.5%	6.4%
Georgia					
Liberty	6006	34.2%	13748	36.6%	128.9%
Banks	374	6.5%	450	5.2%	20.3%
Glynn	12464	24.7%	14510	26.4%	16.4%
Hall	5987	10.1%	6762	8.9%	12.9%
Bartow	4181	12.7%	4720	11.6%	12.9%
Troup	14118	31.8%	15633	31.3%	10.7%
Thomas	13706	39.7%	14626	38.4%	6.7%
Floyd	9605	13.0%	10237	12.8%	6.6%
Crisp	7284	40.3%	7645	39.2%	5.0%
Harris	5185	45.0%	5303	34.3%	2.3%
McIntosh	3679	49.9%	3633	45.2%	-1.3%
Gordon	1222	6.2%	1185	3.9%	-3.0%
Kentucky					
Madison	2752	6.4%	3186	6.0%	15.7%
McCracken	5960	10.2%	6124	10.0%	2.8%
Mason	1608	9.3%	1343	7.6%	-16.5%
Louisiana					
Terrebonne	11423	15.0%	14596	15.5%	27.8%
Lafourche	7731	11.2%	9205	11.2%	19.1%
Tangipahoe	20648	31.3%	24295	30.1%	17.7%
Natchitoches	13056	37.1%	14450	36.2%	10.7%
Iberia	15964	27.8%	17640	27.7%	10.5%
St. Mary	17056	28.1%	18485	28.8%	8.4%
Mississippi					
Oktibbeha	10004	34.8%	12355	34.3%	23.5%
Lincoln	8035	30.7%	9049	30.0%	12.5%
Alcorn	3196	11.8%	3427	10.4%	7.2%
Adams	17865	47.9%	18429	48.5%	3.2%
Leflore	24374	57.9%	24558	59.1%	0.8%
North Carolina					
Dare	495	7.1%	817	6.1%	65.1%
Craven	15906	25.4%	19294	27.2%	21.3%
Pitt	25569	34.6%	30966	34.4%	21.1%
Moore	9673	24.8%	10656	21.1%	10.2%
Carteret	3517	11.1%	3857	9.4%	9.7%
Johnston	13071	21.2%	13918	19.7%	6.5%
South Carolina					
York	9745	11.4%	23826	22.3%	144.5%
Horry	17398	24.9%	22414	22.1%	28.8%
Beaufort	16848	32.9%	21504	32.9%	27.6%
Colleton	12930	46.7%	14436	45.4%	11.6%
Tennessee					
Humphreys	516	3.8%	632	4.0%	22.5%
Hamblen	2086	5.4%	2341	4.7%	12.2%
Maury	8035	18.2%	8508	16.7%	5.9%
Monroe	868	3.7%	888	3.1%	2.3%
Cocke	699	2.8%	668	2.3%	-4.4%
Virginia					
Spotsylvania	3578	21.8%	5082	14.8%	42.0%
Warren	933	6.1%	1186	5.6%	27.1%
Stafford	2284	9.3%	2888	7.1%	26.4%
Montgomery	1416	3.0%	1788	2.8%	26.3%
Henry	11036	21.7%	13469	23.4%	22.1%
Augusta	1947	4.4%	2252	4.2%	15.7%
Bath	555	10.7%	553	9.4%	-0.4%
Lancaster	3536	38.7%	3374	33.3%	-4.6%
Lunenburg	5051	43.2%	4764	39.3%	-5.7%
Rockbridge	691	4.2%	529	3.0%	-23.4%
West Virginia					
Monongalia	1097	1.7%	1648	2.2%	50.2%
Raleigh	6880	9.8%	6825	7.9%	-0.8%
Mercer	5323	8.4%	5028	6.8%	-6.5%
Jefferson	2731	12.8%	38	0.1%	-98.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Note: Includes only counties with black population of 400 or more.

Declining Black Populations

Changes in the black and white populations of the study's high-growth tourism counties over the 1970-80 decade suggest that successful tourism development may translate into an essentially inhospitable climate for blacks. County-level white populations in the study group increased by an average of 33.5 percent, more than triple the national rate of increase of 9.3 percent for the white population over the decade. On the other hand, black population increases averaged only 13.8 percent in those counties with black populations of 400 or more people, as compared with an overall national increase of 18 percent. One-fourth of the study group counties actually registered declines in black population, ranging from a precipitous 98.6 percent drop in Jefferson County, West Virginia, where the black population fell from 2,731 people in 1970 to just 38 residents in 1980 to a virtually static black population in Bath County, Virginia, that fell from 555 to 553 residents. Ten of the counties experienced black population declines of 15 percent or more.

Among the most significant increases in black population were those in York County, South Carolina, which is located south of metropolitan Charlotte, North Carolina, in the north central part of the state, and in coastal Pitt County, North Carolina. In York County, the black population increased by 144.5 percent, from 9,745 to 23,826 residents while it increased 21.1 percent in Pitt County, from 25,569 to 30,966 residents. Coastal Horry County, South Carolina, experienced a 28.8 percent black population increase, more significant than shifts which represented a higher percentage of growth but an inconsequential number of people. Population increased in Horry County by more than 5,000 residents.

The slower pace of growth in black populations in the study group is likely a reflection of many factors, all of which make these communities less than hospitable to blacks. The general lack of real opportunity in tourism communities may force many young people to leave their homes in search of work, resulting in a gradual erosion of both black and white populations, but the impact appears to be particularly sharp for blacks in the rural Southeast. At the same time, successful tourism sites inevitably experience escalating housing costs and consumer prices, factors which all contribute to the gradual displacement of low-income blacks and whites. Blacks, however, suffer the consequences of poverty in the United States, particularly in the Southeast, in startlingly disproportionate numbers, three to one compared to whites. The impact of rising living costs in tourism communities is, therefore, felt far more sharply in already distressed black communities.

Sea Change in the Work Force

In the early 1980s, popular media observers witnessed industrial movement to the rural Southeast and pronounced it a magnet for development, predicting a new prosperity as a result. But the popular myth of the New South ran counter to the realities of poverty that continued to be experienced at a far greater rate than in any other region of the nation. The New South, it seemed, still had the same old problems. Though this once predominantly agrarian region underwent significant transformation during the 1970-80 decade and in subsequent years, rural southeastern economies continued to enjoy far fewer opportunities than those in urban areas and those in other regions of the nation. Though employment growth in nonmetropolitan southern counties nearly doubled the national average from 1977-1984, jobs occurred largely within the service sector. At the same time, unemployment consistently remained much higher in rural counties and real per capita income actually declined.[4]

Framing this era of growth without substantive economic improvement in rural counties is an exploitative attitude endemic to the service industry. It has gradually been institutionalized by both the public and private sectors. The public sector furthers such exploitation of communities by promoting them to business and industry as good location sites based upon the abundant availability of low-cost labor. Though promotional materials do not say this directly, the underlying message is clear: This is a community where people are underemployed, where abundant, desirable "cheap labor" is available. State and local governments, as well as Chambers of Commerce and other powerful business and industry advocates, want to promote development with little or no regard for the quality of jobs and the quality of life it will bring.

The private sector too often moves into such communities for all the wrong reasons, to take advantage of already disadvantaged people. Compounding the exploitative nature of employment in the service industry is a widely adopted yet outmoded authoritarian management style which relies upon coercion and intimidation to motivate employees rather than incentive and reward. For the service industry, this is both an illogical and philosophically disjointed style of management. It demands that those workers who are on the front lines of service provide a quality experience to the client without tangible rewards for their effort. In an essentially flat organizational structure with scarce opportunities for advancement, most service industry employees find themselves trapped at the lowest wage level in the nation without a means of escape. Only at great personal sacrifice and by dedicating years of part-time work toward an education, can an escape route be carved. On the job, service sector employees are rarely given incentives to provide the quality client-worker experience upon which the very livelihood of so many service industries depends. Instead, they are relegated to the status of servant. Dismissal from a marginal job, of which there is an abundance, is the consequence of one's failure to perform. Probably as a direct result, the entire service industry has become a volatile employment sector where high turnover rates abound. In response, employers increasingly view workers as disposable commodities, rather than question their own roles in creating the very problems they eschew.

Ironically, it is the male-dominated manufacturing sector that has become the laboratory for bold experimentation in participative management in the United States. There, workers are being granted increasingly expanded roles in the management, improvement, and design of their jobs. In addition, incentives such as gainsharing, profit-sharing, and even employee buyouts are becoming more and more commonplace. Perhaps such experimentation is only possible in industries with the resources to seek advice from the best management minds in the country. But incentive, reward, and a sense of participation are fundamental to quality of work life. And nowhere but in the service industry is the quality of the worker's experience more critical to the outcome of the product.

This massive national shift to service industry dominance has left an indelible mark on rural economies, particularly on women workers who often find few opportunities outside of the industry. As societal caregivers, women enjoy little mobility. They often must take what employment opportunities their communities provide. As a result, many women emerged from unpaid domestic work only to find that formal employment offered no real liberation from the powerlessness and entrapment of the past. Though there is no way of determining where women actually worked prior to their employment in the tourism industry, it is likely that many entered the work force for the first time during the study period. Prior work experience probably included unpaid domestic and agricultural work or work in light manufacturing. In spite of record gains in the professions, more and more women found themselves systematically segregated into low-wage employment ghettos such as those which predominate in the service industry. During the decade spanning 1970 to 1980, for example, the ranks of service industry employees grew 35.5 percent, from U.S. Department of Labor estimates of 11.5 million employees in 1970 to 17.8 million employees in 1980. During that same time period, women continued to dominate the industry even though the full flush of their massive entry into the work force was yet to be realized. In 1970, 53.8 percent of service industry employees were women; by 1980, 58.4 percent were women. And the vast majority of these service industry jobs continued to be non-supervisory: 90.7 percent in 1970 and 89.9 percent in 1980.[5]

During the same time period, the manufacturing sector increased the ranks of its employees by only 4.6 percent, relatively modest growth that would soon disappear in the aftermath of the 1982 recession. Across the decade, women played a minor role in the manufacturing sector, holding only 28.1 percent of these higher paying jobs in 1970 and enjoying only modest gains over the entire decade, reaching an employment level of only 31.1 percent of the manufacturing work force by 1980.[6]

The wage gap between these two major employment sectors, one moving toward a precipitous decline, one expanding rapidly, remained dramatic. While non-supervisory, production workers received an average weekly wage of $133.33 in 1970, service industry employees averaged weekly wages of $96.66, only 72.4 percent of those received by manufacturing employees. By 1980, the gap had widened. Service industry wages amounted to only 66 percent of those received by the average production worker, an average of $190.71 per week in contrast to $288.62 for production workers.[7] While manufacturing wages remained higher, legions of former production workers moved into the service sector at wages that represented a mere fraction of their previous earnings. And, though manufacturing generally requires a higher skill level, it places no demand for quality interactions with customers on its employees.

The disparities between a key travel industry and the service industry in general as well as the manufacturing sector were even more startling. Within the service industry, the Standard Industrial Classification of "Hotels, Motels and Tourist Courts," (a sub-classification of the larger employment sector of "Hotels and Other Lodging Places") for which a full complement of data was available revealed a dramatic disparity in wage levels for tourism industry employees. Compared to the overall service industry and the manufacturing sector, workers employed in this travel industry category were confronted with a signficant wage gap. The average employee of hotels, motels and tourist courts, for example, earned only 70.5 percent of what service industry employees in general earned in 1970 and only 51.1 percent of what production workers in the manufacturing sector averaged each week. Over the subsequent decade, the disparity in their earnings remained virtually constant within the service industry. By 1980, this hotel industry segment of employees was receiving wages that still averaged just 71.1 percent of those for service industry employees in general, representing a slight gain. But hotel industry employees lost ground in comparison to manufacturing employees, on average earning only 47 percent of what manufacturing production workers earned each week, $135.73 as compared to $288.62.[8]

More recently, in spite of slowed wage growth in the manufacturing sector, wage disparities between the broad categories of manufacturing and services have continued. By 1984, the average weekly earnings of non-supervisory manufacturing workers stood at $374.03 per week while service industry wages averaged just 66 percent of the weekly manufacturing wage at $247.43, representing no gain over a four-year period. Interestingly, manufacturing workers also averaged weekly hours in 1984 that slightly exceeded the benchmark of 40 hours while service industry employees, who are often relegated to part-time employment, averaged only 32.6 hours per week.[9] Though part-time status accounts for some of the disparity in weekly wages, the unavailability of full-time service industry employment combined with significantly lower hourly wages puts workers in this job sector at an economic disadvantage. Nationally, as well as regionally, this rapidly expanding female-dominated employment sector continued a long tradition of low-wage, part- time work. And predictions for the future place other key tourism job roles, those of cashiers, waiters and waitresses, and food preparation in and out of the fast food industry among the fastest growing in the nation.[10] In each of these jobs low wages predominate.

"...In many rural counties tourism became the economic mainstay for communities."

Against this backdrop of change, states and many local communities, nevertheless, eagerly sought to capture the attention of interested developers willing to transform the merely simple into the spectacular. In many rural southeastern counties, tourism industry development rapidly became the economic mainstay of many communities. In some cases, there were alternatives; in others, tourism was the only route to development, incomplete though it was. As a result, marginal, low-wage service industry jobs proliferated, and sometimes intensive demand attracted record numbers of workers.

An Expanding Work Force

The 84 counties identified as sites of high growth in the tourism industry experienced significant growth in their civilian labor forces, far in excess of that experienced by the nation as a whole, and extraordinary growth in their female labor forces. From 1970 to 1980 counties in the study group recorded an average labor force increase of 61.2 percent, more than double the increase experienced by the nation as a whole, 29.1 percent. Similarly, increases in both the male and female labor forces of these counties far outpaced those of the nation. Throughout high-growth counties in the 12 states encompassed by this study, male labor forces increased by an average of 45.4 percent, again more than double the national increase of 20.1 percent for all men. Reflecting one of the most dramatic labor force phenomena of the century, the female labor force in counties encompassed in the study group jumped 90.8 percent, again more than twice the national increase of 44.4 percent. Though these surges in the labor force reflected significant job creation in the identified tourism industry counties, the massive entry of women into these contained economies accounted for much of the drama of change. This factor alone attests to the generally marginal nature of the vast majority of jobs created in tourism economies, predominantly underpaid, undervalued "women's work."

Overall civilian female labor force growth ranged from a modest decline of 4.3 percent in Lancaster County, Virginia, the only county in the study group which actually experienced a decline in its female work force, to gains in excess of 100 percent in 21 counties. Median growth of the civilian female labor force stood at 62 percent in study group counties compared to 42.7 percent median growth in their overall labor forces. On average, the 84 counties identified by the study experienced a 90.8 percent increase in their civilian female labor forces compared to a national average of 44.4 percent. Sixty-five of the 84 high-growth counties, 77 percent, registered increases in their female labor forces that exceeded the national pace of growth.

Though the labor forces of those counties included in the study group experienced dramatic overall growth, the magnetism of tourism counties varied from state to state. Historically depressed West Virginia's emerging tourism counties witnessed the most

Labor Force Trends

	Civilian Labor Force			Female Labor Force		
	1970	1980	Growth	1970	1980	Growth
Alabama						
Escambia	11951	14834	24.1%	4654	6000	28.9%
Arkansas						
Boone	7028	11044	57.2%	2724	4728	73.6%
Carroll	4740	6691	41.2%	1820	2874	57.9%
Cleburne	3206	6076	89.5%	1139	2367	107.8%
Faulkner	11285	20244	79.4%	4382	8887	102.8%
Mississippi	19431	21374	10.0%	7851	9705	23.6%
Montgomery	1930	2948	52.7%	711	1140	60.3%
Ouachita	11213	11784	5.1%	4316	4954	14.8%
Pope	11298	16977	50.3%	4274	6961	62.9%
St. Francis	10152	11241	10.7%	4055	4795	18.2%
Union	16906	19286	14.1%	6415	7750	20.8%
Florida						
Collier	14270	36273	154.2%	5277	15023	184.7%
Columbia	9430	15078	59.9%	3627	6545	80.5%
Hernando	5521	14528	163.1%	2036	6046	196.7%
Indian River	12909	24850	92.6%	5097	10796	111.8%
Lake	23977	39565	65.1%	9241	17087	84.9%
Manatee	29579	56626	91.4%	11929	25402	112.9%
Okaloosa	23250	40838	75.6%	10117	19011	87.9%
Putnam	13049	18573	42.3%	5119	7689	49.8%
St. Lucie	18874	36053	91.0%	7562	15028	98.7%
Sumter	5020	9251	84.3%	1876	3898	107.8%
Georgia						
Banks	2670	4145	55.2%	1014	1730	70.6%
Bartow	13543	19079	40.9%	5084	8391	65.0%
Crisp	6627	7992	20.6%	2751	3541	28.7%
Floyd	30476	37647	23.5%	12081	16989	40.6%
Glynn	18387	25887	40.8%	7511	11436	52.3%
Gordon	10197	14110	38.4%	3992	6032	51.1%
Hall	24858	36649	47.4%	10011	15931	59.1%
Harris	4169	7050	69.1%	1672	2988	78.6%
Liberty	3959	8370	111.4%	1785	4310	141.5%
McIntosh	2480	3097	24.9%	930	1288	38.5%
Thomas	12911	16470	27.6%	5254	7524	42.9%
Troup	18363	22527	22.7%	8246	10247	24.2%
Kentucky						
Madison	17197	23669	37.6%	6921	10442	50.9%
Mason	6553	7606	16.1%	2385	3081	29.2%
McCracken	22676	27038	19.2%	8252	11140	35.0%
Louisiana						
Iberia	18186	26556	46.0%	5818	9928	70.6%
Lafourche	21900	33376	52.4%	5553	11106	100.0%
Natchitoches	10916	15160	38.8%	4271	6553	53.4%
St.Mary	20094	27380	36.3%	6044	9692	60.4%
Tangipahoa	20516	30536	48.8%	7289	12420	70.4%
Terrebonne	23737	38929	64.0%	6389	13199	106.6%
Mississippi						
Adams	12815	15522	21.1%	4909	6599	34.4%
Alcorn	10536	14509	37.7%	4106	6313	53.8%
Leflore	14357	15295	6.5%	6055	7143	18.0%
Lincoln	9302	11311	21.6%	3481	4614	32.5%
Oktibbeha	10001	14610	46.1%	3835	6618	72.6%
North Carolina						
Avery	4571	6397	39.9%	1734	2731	57.5%
Carteret	11863	16681	40.6%	4560	6931	52.0%
Craven	18304	25405	38.8%	7843	11672	48.8%
Dare	2426	5870	142.0%	892	2487	178.8%
Johnston	25358	33370	31.6%	9887	14680	48.5%
Moore	15486	23104	49.2%	6628	10637	62.9%
Pitt	28710	42537	48.2%	12099	19444	60.7%
Swain	2721	4170	53.3%	989	1849	87.0%
South Carolina						
Beaufort	11568	21728	87.9%	5079	10599	108.7%
Colleton	9837	13328	35.5%	3777	5791	53.3%
Horry	24554	45632	85.8%	10076	21192	110.3%
York	36855	52218	41.7%	16001	23089	44.3%
Tennessee						
Campbell	7201	12632	75.4%	2594	4794	84.8%
Cocke	9022	11864	31.5%	3101	4695	51.4%
Hamblen	15889	22678	42.7%	5630	9544	69.5%
Humphreys	4782	6652	39.1%	1505	2481	64.9%
Maury	17574	23698	34.8%	6629	10048	51.7%
Marion	8790	12045	37.0%	3317	4765	43.7%
Sevier	11277	19129	69.6%	4132	7998	93.6%
Virginia						
Augusta	17662	25188	42.6%	6426	10407	62.0%
Bath	2141	2949	37.7%	710	1077	51.7%
Henry	22707	29535	30.1%	8996	13395	48.9%
Lancaster	4094	4313	5.3%	2047	1960	-4.3%
Lunenburg	4179	5332	27.6%	1539	2240	45.5%
Montgomery	18357	28206	53.7%	6460	12056	86.6%
Rockbridge	6666	8211	23.2%	2301	3228	40.1%
Shenandoah	9602	13120	36.6%	3619	5388	48.9%
Spotsylvania	6161	15465	151.0%	2129	6298	195.8%
Stafford	8399	17975	114.0%	2972	7062	136.6%
Warren	6373	9768	53.3%	2333	4051	73.6%
West Virginia						
Jefferson	8410	22486	167.4%	2909	11482	294.7%
Mercer	21288	55546	160.9%	7467	29782	299.4%
Monongalia	22907	60346	163.4%	8416	30572	263.3%
Morgan	2972	8005	169.3%	958	4122	330.3%
Pocahontas	2579	7487	190.3%	683	3810	457.8%
Raleigh	20327	63649	213.1%	6604	33574	408.4%
Tucker	2411	6527	170.7%	766	3342	336.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

dramatic growth among states represented in the study. West Virginia's high-growth counties saw their civilian labor forces increase 176.4 percent over the decade. Their female civilian labor forces, however, jumped 341.5 percent. Seven of the eight counties experiencing the highest percentages of civilian labor force growth were in West Virginia: Raleigh, Pocahontas, Tucker, Morgan, Jefferson, Monongalia, and Mercer Counties. Likewise, women entered the labor forces of West Virginia's booming tourism communities in record numbers as the Mountain State's seven high-growth counties led the study group in terms of percentage of growth in the civilian labor force. The actual numbers of women entering the work force in these seven West Virginia counties were also dramatic. In Raleigh County, for example, the civilian female labor force grew from 6,604 workers in 1970 to 33,574 women in 1980, a 408.4 percent increase. Similarly, Mercer County's civilian female labor force grew by 299.4 percent from 7,457 to 29,782 women in the work force. In Monongalia County, the civilian female labor force swelled as 22,156 additional women sought formal employment over the decade, representing a 263.3 percent increase.

Surprisingly, the populous and booming state of Florida trailed behind West Virginia both in terms of overall growth of the labor force and of actual numbers of new workers entering the work force in its high-growth rural tourism counties. While West Virginia's 10 high-growth counties absorbed more than 143,000 new workers over the decade, representing a growth rate of 176.4 percent, Florida's 10 counties in the study group gained 135,783 new workers, growing at a rate of 91.9 percent. In terms of actual numbers of new workers in rural tourism counties, South Carolina's four high-growth counties, three of them along its increasingly popular coastline, gained nearly as many new workers as populous Virginia's 11 rural counties did, just over 50,000 workers compared to Virginia's 53,721 new workers. Unlike Virginia, the phenomenal population growth in South Carolina's and West Virginia's high-growth counties may be a direct result of worker migration from less prosperous counties, of which there are many. Overall, rural tourism counties in South Carolina experienced 62.7 percent growth in their labor forces while Virginia tourism counties experienced 52.3 percent growth, exceeded in the study only by North Carolina's eight tourism counties which experienced 55.5 percent growth in their civilian labor forces.

High-growth rural tourism counties embraced by the study experienced phenomenal civilian labor force growth, growth that far outdistancing the national average of 29.1 percent in counties in nine of the 12 states embraced by the study. Only Alabama's sole high-growth county, Escambia, which experienced 24.1 percent growth; Kentucky's three counties, 24.3 percent; and severely depressed Mississippi's five counties, 26.6 percent, trailed the national rate of civilian labor force growth. No counties included in the study experienced a decline in their civilian labor forces as growth ranged from a modest 5.1 percent gain in Ouachita County, Arkansas, to growth in excess of 100 percent in 12 counties, nine in West Virginia, two in Florida (Hernando, 163 percent, and Collier, 154 percent), and one in Virginia (Spotsylvania, 151 percent). Much of this unprecedented growth in the civilian labor forces of rural counties located in the most impoverished region of the United States is directly attributable to the entry of thousands of women into the work forces of the tourism economies which are the subject of this study.

Joblessness

While those counties identified as sites of high-growth in rural tourism industries clearly made dramatic gains in their work forces, particularly their female work forces, they simultaneously experienced increasing problems with unemployment. Unemployment, the strongest indicator of widespread economic deficiencies, disproportionately affected women, who found both jobs and joblessness in the cyclical rural tourism economies of the Southeast. Black women were affected most adversely. In addition, available unemployment data only reflects those workers actively seeking employment. Discouraged workers who have abandoned the pursuit of employment are not included. Though their numbers are impossible to determine, they are likely higher in communities where high unemployment has persisted, such as many of those embraced by the study. The success of tourism development and the resultant work opportunities created by that success in the study's high-growth counties was paralleled by a steady rise in unemployment from 1970 to 1984 in virtually every county.

Overall, the 84 rural high-growth counties in the study group saw unemployment rise 2.1 percent from 1970 to 1980 and an additional 2.9 percent over the following four years. Only 15 of the 84 counties experienced a decline in unemployment from 1970 to 1980, and only 19 counties witnessed unemployment declines over the subsequent four-year period. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the 84 counties registered a rise in unemployment of 1 percent or more in the period ranging from 1970 to 1984. Sixty counties from 1970 to 1980 and 55 counties from 1980 to 1984 saw unemployment rates rise by more than 1 percent. Twenty-six counties, 31 percent of those in the study group, experienced an increase in unemployment in excess of 3 percent from 1970 to 1980. From 1980 to 1984, 40 percent of the group, 34 counties, saw unemployment rise by 3 percent or more.

Unemployment Rates

	1970	1980	1984
Alabama			
Escambia	7.6%	9.6%	13.0%
Arkansas			
St. Francis	11.4%	9.8%	15.2%
Mississippi	9.6%	8.4%	14.8%
Montgomery	3.2%	10.1%	11.8%
Cleburne	8.3%	10.1%	9.5%
Ouachita	6.7%	6.2%	8.9%
Union	4.7%	5.9%	8.7%
Faulkner	4.2%	6.6%	8.7%
Carroll	5.2%	6.7%	8.3%
Pope	7.0%	7.3%	8.1%
Boone	5.4%	5.8%	6.9%
Florida			
St. Lucie	2.6%	6.5%	12.8%
Lake	4.8%	6.0%	12.6%
Sumter	4.8%	6.6%	12.4%
Indian River	3.4%	4.7%	9.5%
Putnam	4.3%	7.3%	8.7%
Collier	2.6%	3.8%	8.4%
Hernando	3.7%	6.1%	7.8%
Columbia	3.2%	5.5%	6.3%
Okaloosa	6.5%	8.4%	6.0%
Manatee	2.8%	4.6%	5.2%
Georgia			
McIntosh	4.7%	10.1%	9.8%
Crisp	2.6%	4.7%	9.4%
Bartow	4.1%	5.4%	8.7%
Thomas	2.6%	5.7%	7.9%
Gordon	3.7%	6.2%	7.5%
Floyd	3.2%	6.9%	7.4%
Troup	3.6%	7.3%	6.8%
Liberty	4.8%	10.6%	6.4%
Harris	2.1%	6.9%	6.3%
Glynn	3.0%	4.9%	6.3%
Hall	1.3%	4.1%	5.5%
Banks	1.8%	5.5%	4.3%
Kentucky			
McCracken	3.4%	7.6%	10.5%
Mason	7.4%	4.5%	10.0%
Madison	5.8%	8.8%	4.7%
Louisiana			
Iberia	6.1%	5.5%	14.7%
Tangipahoa	6.0%	8.3%	14.3%
St. Mary	4.8%	4.6%	13.8%
Terrebonne	3.3%	3.1%	11.2%
Lafourche	4.3%	3.7%	11.1%
Natchitoches	7.6%	8.4%	9.2%

Note: 1984 data from individual states is not calculated by the same methodology used by the Census Bureau.

	1970	1980	1984
Mississippi			
Alcorn	7.1%	6.8%	17.3%
Lincoln	3.9%	5.8%	14.8%
Adams	5.6%	8.1%	13.5%
Leflore	6.2%	9.1%	13.4%
Oktibbeha	5.6%	7.8%	7.5%
North Carolina			
Swain	4.6%	10.8%	15.6%
Avery	3.6%	8.9%	8.4%
Moore	3.3%	4.2%	7.1%
Carteret	5.4%	6.2%	6.7%
Dare	3.8%	7.2%	6.7%
Craven	0.9%	7.4%	6.2%
Pitt	5.7%	6.6%	6.1%
Johnston	4.2%	4.1%	5.9%
South Carolina			
Horry	5.0%	5.6%	8.0%
York	3.9%	5.6%	7.1%
Colleton	5.3%	7.5%	7.0%
Beaufort	5.4%	8.6%	5.5%
Tennessee			
Cocke	8.6%	15.1%	23.3%
Humphreys	2.1%	7.0%	19.2%
Campbell	8.9%	13.4%	16.7%
Sevier	5.6%	11.6%	14.9%
Monroe	7.2%	10.6%	11.7%
Hamblen	4.7%	9.3%	9.7%
Maury	4.3%	6.2%	8.2%
Virginia			
Lancaster	7.5%	9.0%	13.6%
Bath	6.5%	9.9%	13.4%
Lunenburg	4.1%	5.3%	9.2%
Rockbridge	3.9%	7.2%	8.0%
Shenandoah	1.4%	4.2%	6.7%
Henry	2.1%	3.7%	6.5%
Montgomery	3.7%	6.3%	6.1%
Warren	5.4%	7.4%	5.5%
Augusta	1.4%	4.4%	5.4%
Spotsylvania	1.3%	5.7%	4.7%
Stafford	2.5%	5.1%	2.8%
West Virginia			
Pocahontas	8.8%	4.5%	14.8%
Tucker	4.2%	4.5%	14.1%
Raleigh	5.8%	4.4%	13.1%
Mercer	5.0%	4.3%	11.4%
Morgan	6.1%	4.3%	10.6%
Monongalia	4.2%	3.2%	8.7%
Jefferson	3.0%	5.0%	6.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Employment and State Services

The average unemployment rate for the study's high- growth tourism counties grew steadily in every state from 1970 to 1980 to 1984. Only counties in West Virginia and Louisiana registered unemployment rates that trailed national averages in 1980, with West Virginia actually registering a modest decline over the period ranging from 1970 to 1980. The marginal 1 percent drop in rural tourism unemployment in West Virginia over the decade was, however, subsequently offset by a sharp increase in overall unemployment which rose to 11.2 percent by 1984. In Louisiana, unemployment in rural tourism counties trailed the national average in 1980 alone, surpassing it by 1984 with an overall rate of 8.2 percent. Outside of these two exceptions, unemployment sustained by the counties rose steadily, in some cases dramatically.

Though the unemployment increases in rural southeastern tourism counties mirrored national trends over the study period, they were, in general, far more dramatic than national rates. While the national unemployment rate rose from 4.3 percent in 1970, to 7.1 percent in 1980, to 7.5 percent in 1984, rural southeastern tourism counties witnessed unemployment growth that ranged from 4.7 percent in 1970 to 6.8 percent in 1980 to 9.6 percent in 1984. The sharp upturn in joblessness that occurred from 1980 to 1984 marked a significant departure from national trends in these rural economies. While the rest of the nation embarked on the road to sustained overall economic health in the wake of the 1982 recession, rural tourism counties in the study group began experiencing unemployment that exceeded the national average by 2 percent. Clearly, successful tourism development did not solve unemployment problems in the counties identified in this study. Instead, its essentially seasonal, part-time nature, in all likelihood contributed to them.

Counties in some states experienced far more devastating problems than overall averages suggest. In the state of Tennessee, which ranked fifth in the nation in terms of overall state spending designed to encourage travel and tourism in 1986-

87, unemployment in its seven rural tourism counties rose from 5.9 percent in 1970 to 10.5 percent in 1980, to a staggering 14.8 percent in 1984. In the state of Mississippi, tourism offered no real balm to unemployment in rural counties as study group counties watched the ranks of the unemployed rise from 5.7 percent of the work force in 1970 to 7.5 precent in 1980 to 13.3 percent in 1984. Alabama's lone high-growth county, Escambia, also experienced steady, sharp growth in unemployment, which rose from 7.6 percent in 1970 to 9.6 percent in 1980, to 13 percent in 1984. Only counties in two of the states embraced by the study, Georgia and South Carolina, saw unemployment rise in their rural tourism counties at a pace slower than that experienced by the nation as a whole.

Those counties which experienced the sharpest rise in unemployment over the period of 1970 to 1980 included Tennessee's Sevier County, home to Gatlinburg and burgeoning Pigeon Forge, the focus of a case study encompassed in this report, and adjacent Cocke County. Home to one of the Southeast's most successful tourism developments, a magnet to tourists from throughout the region, the area has experienced profound and protracted problems with unemployment that have been exacerbated by its heavy reliance upon tourism as an economic base. In Sevier County, unemployment jumped from a modest rate of 5.6 percent in 1970 to 11.6 percent in 1980 while unemployment in neighboring Cocke County registered the second highest increase for the 1970-80 period, from 8.6 percent in 1970 to 15.1 percent in 1980. In the subsequent four-year period, the rise in unemployment slowed to 3.3 percent in Sevier County but continued to escalate dramatically in Cocke County which experienced another 8.2 percent increase.

Mountainous Montgomery County, Arkansas, however, experienced the sharpest rise in unemployment from 1970 to 1980, a 6.9 percent increase; however, that pace slowed over the next four years to a 1.7 percent rise. Three rural North Carolina counties, coastal Craven County (6.5 percent), and the Appalachian counties of Swain (6.2 percent) and Avery (5.3 percent), which, like Watauga County, was cited as one of North Carolina's hungriest counties,[11] also ranked among those counties with the sharpest increase in unemployment from 1970 to 1980. Too, coastal McIntosh and Liberty Counties in Georgia experienced respective 5.4 percent and 5.8 percent rises in unemployment in the 1970-80 timeframe.

Though only eight study group counties experienced rises in unemployment in excess of 5 percent from 1970 to 1980, 21 counties experienced increases of such proportions over the subsequent four-year period. The sharpest increase recorded from 1980 to 1984, according to state unemployment data, took place in Humphreys County, Tennessee, where unemployment rose 12.2 percent, from 7 percent in 1980 to 19.2 percent in 1984. In addition, five of Louisiana's six high-growth counties experienced a jump in unemployment rates in excess of 5 percent from 1980 to 1984, perhaps as much a reflection of that state's overall economic depression in the wake of an oil industry slump as an indicator of problems associated with dependence upon tourism. Tourism county unemployment rate increases, nevertheless, ranged from 9.2 percent in St. Mary County to a 6 percent increase in Tangipahoa County. Additionally, six of West Virginia's seven high-growth counties registered jumps in employment rates of 5 percent or more between 1980 and 1984, ranging from a 5.5 percent jump in Monongalia County to a 10.3 percent increase in Pocahontas County. In recent years, this historically depressed state has experienced severe economic difficulties manifested in mounting joblessness rates and diminishing work opportunities. The gap created by a sharp decline in the once dominant coal industry is clearly not being closed by new opportunities in the tourism industry.

While those rural tourism counties identified as sites of high growth in the hotel industry registered steady, sometimes sharp increases in unemployment over the study period, the problem was more keenly felt by women. As women entered the work force in record numbers, they also began to suffer the consequences of unemployment in disproportionately large numbers. Though unemployment rates for women increased at about the same pace as overall unemployment rates in the study group counties during the period spanning 1970 to 1980, women consistently experienced unemployment at a higher rate. While the average overall 1970 rate of unemployment for these rural tourism counties stood at 4.7 percent in 1970, 6 percent of the civilian female labor force looking for work was unemployed. In 1980, the overall rate in the 84 study group counties stood at 6.8 percent while 7.9 percent of women in the study's rural counties were unemployed.

The disparity between male unemployment and female unemployment rates in the study group counties was slightly wider. In 1970, men were unemployed at a rate of 4 percent compared to the 6 percent rate for women in the identified high-growth counties. The gap endured over the decade. By 1980, men were unemployed at a rate of 6.3 percent in the study's identified rural tourism counties while women experienced unemployment at a rate of 7.9 percent. In both years, men were unemployed in rural southeastern tourism counties at rates that lagged behind national averages while the plight of unemployment remained more pronounced for women than for workers in general. The rate of female unemployment consistently outpaced both overall national averages and the vast majority of state averages. Women were unemployed in the rural tourism counties of the study at a higher rate than were all workers in every study group state in 1980 with the exception of those in Kentucky and West Virginia where unemployment respectively averaged 8.5 percent and 8.4 percent compared to the 7.9 percent overall rate experienced by women in identified tourism counties.

Though women in 33 of the study's 84 counties enjoyed declining or virtually unchanged rates of unemployment over the 1970-80 decade, the vast majority worked in economies that became increasingly inhospitable to them. Fifty of the 84 study group counties registered increases in female unemployment, and, in 13 high-growth tourism counties, unemployment rates for women jumped by five or more percent, ranging from a 5.1 increase in Cocke County, Tennessee, to an 11.7 increase in Montgomery County, Arkansas. During 1970, the highest rates of unemployment for women occurred in Arkansas (St Francis, 15.8 percent; Mississippi, 11.2 percent; Pope, 9.4 percent; and Ouachita, 9.2 percent); West Virginia (Morgan, 13.2 percent; Pocahontas, 9.7 percent); Tennessee (Cocke, 12.5 percent; Sevier, 9 percent); Florida (Okaloosa, 9.9 percent); and South Carolina (Beaufort, 8.8 percent). In the majority of these 10 counties with the highest rates of 1970 unemployment for women, the decade brought declines; however, female unemployment remained unchanged in Okaloosa County, Florida, and actually escalated in severely depressed Cocke County and Sevier County, Tennessee. Beaufort County, South Carolina, also witnessed an upsurge in female unemployment from 8.8 percent to 11.4 percent over the decade.

Unemployment for male residents of the identified high growth counties was comparatively low. Only in 10 study group counties did men experience unemployment rates in excess of 5 percent, and only four out of 84 counties recorded male unemployment rates that exceeded the national average of 7.1 percent. In 1980, male workers in the study group counties did not experience unemployment at a rate higher than the maximum 8.8 percent recorded in Craven County, North Carolina. Female workers in 24 counties, on the other hand, were unemployed at rates higher than the maximum experienced by male workers in the study group, suggesting that burgeoning tourism economies not only rely upon but also spurn female workers at a higher rate. Tourism economies rely heavily upon female workers but their invariably seasonal nature often leaves women without employment options for months out of every year.

Though female workers in study group counties in general fared more poorly than male workers and the work force as a whole, the plight of black women was far more difficult. In 1970, for example, the average rate of unemployment for black women in those high-growth counties with a black population of 400 or more stood at 8.6 percent compared to an average female rate of 6 percent, an average unemployment rate of 4.7 percent, and an average male unemployment rate of 4 percent. By 1980, the disparity had widened. Black women in 72 high-growth tourism counties were experiencing unemployment at a rate of 12.1 percent while women in general were unemployed at a rate of 7.9 percent. In contrast, the overall unemployment rate for study group counties was only 6.8 percent and only 6.3 percent for men in those counties. This significant disparity not only indicates that employment opportunities are limited for black women in rural tourism economies but also strongly suggests that such economies may discriminate against black women, the poorest of the poor in the Southeast.

Limited state affirmative action data on unemployment patterns subsequent to 1980 suggests that the disparity between joblessness for women and men remained constant in the high- growth tourism counties of this study. In Mississippi, for example, women experienced unemployment in the high-growth tourism counties at an average annual rate of 15.2 percent in 1984 compared to 11.5 percent for men. Similarly, women in South Carolina's rural tourism counties were unemployed at an average rate of 8.6 percent in 1984 as compared to 5.5 percent for men. Women seeking employment in West Virginia's high-growth tourism counties, however, experienced unemployment at a lower rate than men in 1984, 12.1 percent compared to 14 percent for men. But men in virtually every region of severely depressed West Virginia have been disproportionately affected by the increased mechanization of the coal industry and the resultant loss of jobs. In the counties included in this study, female-dominated tourism jobs likely form the major employment sector. As a result, women are at a dubious advantage in terms of employment. Overall, however, it seems likely that women continue to experience unemployment at higher rates than men in tourism-dependent rural economies. As a result, those who have joined the increasing ranks of female heads of households have found fewer and fewer real earnings opportunities.

Impoverishment

While steady rises in unemployment throughout the 84 high-growth, rural tourism counties identified in this study would ordinarily indicate a rise in poverty rates, U.S. Census data paints an altogether different picture. Perhaps no more than a reflection of the increasing national prosperity of the 1970-80 decade, poverty rates for study group counties declined for individuals, families, and children. The significance of the decline, however, is questionable, given that many of these rural economies became magnets for wealthy retirees and other new and more affluent residents – managers, entrepreneurs and developers. As a result, the percentage of the population which experienced poverty was necessarily diminished. While this expanding population of more affluent residents appeared to diminish the magnitude of poverty and the actual numbers of those living in poverty declined as well, this decade-long tide of increasing prosperity turned in the 1980s. Women and children suffered the consequences in record numbers as more and more of them slipped behind the poverty line. Throughout this shift in economic circumstances, the South remained true to its history of impoverishment felt far deeper than in any other region of the United States.

Over the decade spanning 1970 to 1980, the percentage of the population living on incomes below the poverty level declined in the 84 counties embraced by this study, dropping 7.6 percent from an average poverty rate of 25.3 percent in 1970 to an average rate of 17.7 percent in 1980. Perhaps more importantly, the actual number of individuals living in poverty also declined by 12.1 percent. The rate of impoverishment for individuals in these increasingly tourism-dependent counties, however, dramatically outdistanced the national averages of 13.7 percent in 1970 and 12.4 percent in 1980. Additionally, the 1980 poverty rate for individuals in rural southeastern tourism counties exceeded overall poverty rates for individuals in eight of the 12 states embraced by the study.

Throughout the South, the economic gap to be closed was an extraordinarily wide one, but many individual high-growth tourism counties made little progress in closing it. More than 40 percent of the counties included in the study group witnessed only very modest declines of poverty rates, declines of 5 percent or less. Two counties, Mongtomergy County, West Virgnia, and Union County, Arkansas, actually experienced increases in the poverty rate for individuals in an era during which the nation as a whole witnessed a dramatic decline in the rate of impoverishment. In 1970, 95 percent of the rural southeastern tourism counties, 80 of the 84 identified in the study, experienced poverty rates higher than the national average. In 1980, 69 out of 84, 82 percent of study group counties, fared more poorly than the nation as a whole. Twenty percent or more of the population in 25 rural tourism counties continued to live below the poverty line, underscoring the magnitude of poverty on a county-by-county level.

As more and more women entered the labor force, increasing many previously marginal family incomes, families found themselves faring better throughout the nation, the region, and the identified tourism counties. An overall family poverty rate of 21.2 percent in 1970 declined to 14 percent in the 84 high- growth counties of the study. But, again, families living in increasingly tourism-dependent rural counties in the South fared more poorly than families in general. In 1970, families in tourism counties were poor at a rate nearly double that for U.S. families in general, 21.2 percent compared to a national average of 10.7 percent. The disparity remained but narrowed over the subsequent decade as the national poverty rate for families declined to 9.6 percent, compared to 14 percent in the tourism counties of the study group. Too, the 1980 rate for tourism counties was greater than overall family poverty rates in seven of the 12 states embraced by the study.

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On an individual county basis, half of the study group counties registered family poverty rates of 20 percent or higher in 1970, rates that ranged upward to a high of 47.3 percent in Oktibbeha County, Mississippi. By 1980, family poverty rates had declined dramatically by individual counties. Only 11 of the 84 counties in the study registered family poverty rates of 20 percent or higher, the highest rates occurring in Leflore County, Mississippi, 27 percent, and

Poverty Rates

	1970	1980	% Change
Alabama			
Escambia	30.9	21.0	-9.9
Arkansas			
Union	19.1	20.2	1.1
Carroll	22.7	18.5	-4.2
Boone	23.3	17.3	-6.0
Faulkner	20.2	13.6	-6.6
Pope	24.3	16.4	-7.9
Montgomery	31.2	22.7	-8.5
St. Francis	42.8	33.8	-9.0
Mississippi	35.3	26.3	-9.0
Ouachita	30.3	21.0	-9.3
Cleburne	36.9	20.1	-16.8
Florida			
Collier	16.0	13.6	-2.4
Okaloosa	13.7	10.9	-2.8
Columbia	24.3	19.7	-4.6
Putnam	26.1	21.3	-4.8
Indian River	19.1	12.3	-6.8
St. Lucie	26.7	17.1	-9.6
Lake	22.5	11.0	-11.5
Hernando	25.3	13.4	-11.9
Sumter	34.0	20.6	-13.4
Manatee	24.7	11.0	-13.7
Georgia			
Glynn	17.3	16.1	-1.2
Gordon	15.1	12.9	-2.2
Bartow	15.1	12.9	-2.2
Floyd	15.4	12.3	-3.1
Crisp	32.4	28.6	-3.8
McIntosh	35.2	31.4	-3.8
Hall	17.7	10.9	-6.8
Troup	25.2	18.0	-7.2
Thomas	32.1	21.4	-10.7
Liberty	32.5	20.9	-11.6
Banks	24.0	11.6	-12.4
Harris	29.7	17.2	-12.5
Kentucky			
Mason	20.3	19.8	-0.5
Madison	24.3	21.1	-3.2
McCracken	17.7	12.9	-4.8
Louisiana			
Terrebonne	17.8	14.4	-3.4
Lafourche	17.8	13.6	-4.2
St. Mary	23.2	15.6	-7.6
Iberia	26.9	15.4	-11.5
Tangipahoa	40.2	26.0	-14.2
Natchitoches	45.1	26.2	-18.9
Mississippi			
Alcorn	25.1	18.5	-6.6
Adams	35.5	27.8	-7.7
Oktibbeha	37.3	28.2	-9.1
Leflore	47.3	34.9	-12.4
Lincoln	34.9	22.1	-12.8
North Carolina			
Craven	22.0	18.5	-3.5
Swain	29.9	25.9	-4.0
Carteret	18.0	14.0	-4.0
Dare	16.4	11.3	-5.1
Moore	23.9	13.7	-10.2
Johnston	28.5	17.9	-10.6
Avery	29.6	18.0	-11.6
Pitt	35.2	23.5	-11.7
South Carolina			
York	16.3	11.0	-5.3
Beaufort	28.8	17.1	-11.7
Colleton	37.6	25.7	-11.9
Horry	31.0	18.0	-13.0
Tennessee			
Hamblen	19.1	15.6	-3.5
Maury	20.1	15.5	-4.6
Cocke	33.3	27.5	-5.8
Sevier	22.8	15.1	-7.7
Humphreys	20.9	13.0	-7.9
Monroe	27.9	19.4	-8.5
Campbell	41.1	24.8	-16.3
Virginia			
Montgomery	14.4	19.7	5.3
Henry	12.0	9.8	-2.2
Warren	13.2	10.7	-2.5
Shenandoah	15.8	12.3	-3.5
Rockbridge	19.4	14.7	-4.7
Stafford	11.7	6.6	-5.1
Augusta	15.2	10.0	-5.2
Spotsylvania	17.2	9.9	-7.3
Lancaster	26.3	16.1	-10.2
Lunenburg	32.3	18.6	-13.7
Bath	30.7	12.7	-18.0
West Virginia			
Monongalia	18.9	16.3	-2.6
Morgan	19.7	16.7	-3.0
Jefferson	17.4	13.4	-4.0
Mercer	22.5	15.1	-7.4
Raleigh	23.7	13.0	-10.7
Tucker	28.5	17.0	-11.5
Pocahontas	31.4	13.6	-17.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

in St. Francis County, Arkansas, 27.8 percent, and in St. Francis County, Arkansas, 27.8 percent. In spite of the growing prosperity in expanding local tourism economies, the overwhelming majority of counties continued to record family poverty rates that exceeded national averages. In 1970, only three of the 84 study group counties had family poverty rates lower than the national average. By 1980, circumstances improved somewhat in comparison with the national benchmark, but not significantly. Only 18 high-growth counties had family poverty rates lower than the national rate of 9.6 percent. The remaining 66 counties, 78.5 percent of the study group, fared more poorly than the nation as a whole.

A 1988 University of Louisville Urban Studies Center study of state poverty rates suggests that the expansion of the tourism industry in Kentucky's three high-growth counties had little impact on the rate of poverty. In each of the three counties, the study showed that poverty rates actually rose from 1979, the year 1980 Census data was collected, to 1984. In far western McCracken County, for example, poverty rose from a rate of 12.9 percent in 1979 to 14.9 percent in 1984, from an estimated 7,900 persons to 9,100 persons. The Madison County rate rose only modestly from 21.1 percent to 21.4 percent over the same time period as an additional 600 people slipped below the poverty level. In Mason County, the overall rate of poverty escalated from 19.8 percent in 1979 to 22 percent in 1984, but the population living below the poverty line only increased by an estimated 200 persons.

Though poverty data is not available in most states beyond the 1980 benchmarks established by the Census, these estimates strongly suggest that tourism dependence continues to be an inadequate development strategy over a sustained period of time.

In these Kentucky counties reliance upon this low-wage, cyclical industry has not remedied the consequences of poverty. In fact, it may have contributed to increased impoverishment.

Economic Setbacks for Women and Children

While economic circumstances improved for individuals and for most families over the 1970-80 decade, poverty became far more commonplace in the lives of women who headed families. These family units experienced poverty at a rate that surpassed national and state rates, as well as overall family rates in identified high-growth counties, suggesting that expanding tourism employment opportunities for women yielded little in the way of real economic opportunity. While female-headed households in study group counties experienced poverty at a rate similar to that felt by all families in 1970, the decade witnessed an extraordinary jump in poverty rates for female heads of households with no husband present. In 1970, the percentage of families headed by women and living below poverty level in study group counties exceeded the group's average poverty rate for families by 3.6 percent, 24.8 percent as compared to an average family poverty rate of 21.2 percent. But, by 1980, this marginal gap became a gulf. While families in general experienced poverty at a much diminished average rate of 14 percent among study group counties, the average rate of poverty for female-headed households jumped to 33.2 percent in 1980, an average increase of 8.4 percent for families headed by women during the same time period in which overall family poverty rates in the study group declined by 7.2 percent.

The increase in impoverishment among those living in households headed by women in the study group counties stood in dramatic contrast to national and state poverty rates for families in general. The 1980 average poverty rate of 33.2 percent for female-headed households in the study group contrasted sharply with overall family poverty rates in every state embraced by the study. Mississippi, which recorded the highest family poverty rate in the region – and the nation – in 1980, for example, registered an overall family poverty rate of 18.7 percent, a rate that is about half that of impoverishment among women heading households in the selected rural tourism economies. Nationally, the percent of the population living in families with incomes below the poverty level dipped to 9.6 percent in 1980, less than half the rate of poverty for families in Mississippi and less than one-third that for female-headed households in the study group.

Throughout the nation the economic plight of women was steadily worsening over the 1970-80 decade, and the impact of this increasing "feminization of poverty"[12] was clearly felt among women in tourism-dependent areas. As a backdrop to the precipitous decline in economic circumstances for women in the study group counties, national trends reflected a similar, pronounced economic decline for women heading

Percentage of Poor Families Headed by Women

	1970	1980	% Change
Alabama			
Escambia	30.3%	38.9%	8.6%
Arkansas			
St. Francis	23.6%	40.1%	16.5%
Ouachita	27.0%	42.1%	15.1%
Mississippi	24.3%	34.4%	10.1%
Boone	11.9%	21.7%	9.8%
Union	33.5%	41.0%	7.5%
Pope	16.6%	23.9%	7.3%
Carroll	12.2%	17.9%	5.7%
Faulkner	18.3%	21.4%	3.1%
Cleburne	8.4%	11.3%	2.9%
Montgomery	13.4%	16.3%	2.9%
Florida			
Collier	15.2%	29.4%	14.2%
Manatee	22.6%	36.2%	13.6%
Putnam	32.8%	43.7%	10.9%
St. Lucie	33.5%	42.9%	9.4%
Lake	22.1%	30.8%	8.7%
Sumter	24.1%	31.9%	7.8%
Hernando	22.0%	27.4%	5.4%
Okaloosa	37.4%	42.3%	4.9%
Indian River	30.1%	31.7%	1.6%
Columbia	31.4%	30.1%	-1.3%
Georgia			
Floyd	30.8%	46.3%	15.5%
Thomas	32.1%	46.2%	14.1%
McIntosh	32.4%	46.3%	13.9%
Crisp	39.2%	52.1%	12.9%
Gordon	17.1%	28.5%	11.4%
Glynn	41.8%	52.0%	10.2%
Hall	27.6%	35.6%	8.0%
Liberty	26.0%	32.9%	6.9%
Bartow	25.5%	31.2%	5.7%
Troup	37.6%	42.9%	5.3%
Banks	14.8%	15.3%	0.5%
Kentucky			
McCracken	30.1%	45.1%	15.0%
Madison	21.8%	35.6%	13.8%
Mason	25.8%	21.9%	-3.9%
Louisiana			
St. Mary	23.2%	44.0%	20.8%
Natchitoches	23.7%	36.9%	13.2%
Tangipahoa	26.9%	39.8%	12.9%
Iberia	29.6%	42.2%	12.6%
Terrebonne	24.6%	34.7%	10.1%
Lafourche	23.9%	33.7%	9.8%

	1970	1980	% Change
Mississippi			
Lincoln	27.8%	40.0%	12.2%
Oktibbeha	25.6%	37.5%	11.9%
Leflore	31.2%	42.1%	10.9%
Adams	41.9%	51.1%	9.2%
Alcorn	20.7%	23.7%	3.0%
North Carolina			
Pitt	29.7%	44.1%	14.4%
Craven	31.2%	44.1%	12.9%
Moore	29.1%	40.7%	11.6%
Johnston	25.8%	33.1%	7.3%
Carteret	29.1%	34.5%	5.4%
Swain	15.9%	21.0%	5.1%
Avery	18.1%	16.6%	-1.5%
Dare	28.7%	25.4%	-3.3%
South Carolina			
Beaufort	12.2%	47.7%	35.5%
Colleton	29.1%	37.1%	8.0%
York	38.0%	42.6%	4.6%
Horry	27.5%	31.7%	4.2%
Tennessee			
Maury	22.8%	39.3%	16.5%
Humphreys	19.5%	32.8%	13.3%
Hamblen	21.9%	31.7%	9.8%
Cocke	20.8%	25.9%	5.1%
Monroe	19.2%	24.2%	5.0%
Sevier	16.2%	20.2%	4.0%
Campbell	22.1%	23.6%	1.5%
Virginia			
Bath	16.0%	41.4%	25.4%
Lancaster	25.1%	46.0%	20.9%
Montgomery	12.6%	30.5%	17.9%
Warren	25.8%	43.0%	17.2%
Spotsylvania	18.8%	31.3%	12.5%
Augusta	17.8%	28.0%	10.2%
Lunenburg	20.7%	28.1%	7.4%
Henry	26.3%	33.5%	7.2%
Stafford	25.3%	28.1%	2.8%
Rockbridge	18.5%	19.6%	1.1%
Shenandoah	25.6%	19.9%	-5.7%
West Virginia			
Jefferson	24.4%	34.0%	9.6%
Monongalia	17.3%	23.8%	6.5%
Tucker	22.2%	27.4%	5.2%
Mercer	30.4%	32.2%	1.8%
Raleigh	29.4%	31.1%	1.7%
Morgan	25.9%	13.6%	-12.3%
Pocahontas	22.8%	7.4%	-15.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

households across the nation. In 1970, an estimated 33 percent of families living below the poverty level were headed by women, but by 1980 the percentage of impoverished families headed by women had expanded to 44 percent.[13]

Women in the rural tourism economies of the Southeast were actually faring slightly better than many female heads of households in 1970 while suffering real economic setbacks in comparison to most families. Though the percentage of the nation's population living in families with female householders with no husband present declined from 38.4 percent in 1970 to 32 percent in 1980, actual numbers were far more dramatic. Over the decade, the number of persons living below the poverty level in female- headed households increased by 3 million. By 1984, the ranks of the impoverished living in female-headed households would again expand to include almost 3 million more people.[14] This deepening national trend was undoubtedly mirrored by similar, sharp increases in impoverishment among women heading households in rural tourism economies. While tourism became more and more entrenched in these rural southeastern counties, the benchmark minimum wage remained unchanged. As a result, the incomes of women working in the tourism industry remained virtually unchanged.

Black Family Poverty

For black families, particularly female-headed black families, the plight of poverty in southeastern tourism communities intensified over the 1970-80 decade and beyond. In counties with black populations of 400 or more, black families made up a disproportionate share of those living below the poverty level, just as the ratio of black female-headed households among black families living in poverty increased. While blacks represented only 18.5 percent of the overall population of high-growth tourism counties in 1970, black families made up an average of 37.1 percent of those families living below the poverty level in those counties. In 25 of the 71 high-growth counties, 35.2 percent of those counties with black populations of 400 or more, black families represented half the families living in poverty.

The burden of poverty in these rural communities continued to be borne by blacks across the decade. By 1980, blacks had lost population ground in the high-growth counties, averaging a 2.2 percent decline in terms of percentage of the population. And, in contrast to white population growth, the numbers of blacks grew in high-growth tourism counties by just 13.8 percent while the white population soared 33.5 percent. At the same time, black families appeared to make little if any movement out of poverty. The actual numbers of black families living below the poverty level continued to comprise an average of 36.5 percent of all families living in poverty. Though the numbers of black families living below poverty level declined by an average of 13 percent in the high-growth

Family Median Income

	1970	1980	Growth
Alabama			
Escambia	$6321	$14113	123.0%
Arkansas			
Cleburne	4680	12329	163.0%
Faulkner	6569	16367	149.0%
Pope	6224	14964	140.0%
Montgomery	4726	11131	136.0%
Carroll	5562	12915	133.0%
Boone	5832	13270	128.0%
Ouachita	6350	13982	120.0%
Mississippi	5698	12518	120.0%
St. Francis	5532	11814	114.0%
Union	7344	15412	113.0%
Florida			
St. Lucie	6358	15884	150.0%
Manatee	6591	16161	148.0%
Indian River	7219	17607	144.0%
Hernando	5863	13915	137.0%
Sumter	5657	13318	135.0%
Lake	6352	14392	127.0%
Okaloosa	7876	16955	115.0%
Columbia	7354	15506	111.0%
Collier	9136	19174	110.0%
Putnam	6803	13556	99.0%
Georgia			
Harris	6586	17328	164.0%
Banks	6144	15071	145.0%
Hall	7788	17817	129.0%
Thomas	6368	14521	128.0%
Glynn	7958	17689	122.0%
Troup	7250	16017	121.0%
Crisp	6423	14077	119.0%
McIntosh	5630	11788	109.0%
Floyd	8265	17286	109.0%
Bartow	8046	16532	106.0%
Gordon	7807	15954	104.0%
Liberty	6063	12055	99.0%
Kentucky			
McCracken	8204	18728	128.0%
Mason	7140	15327	115.0%
Madison	6937	14754	113.0%
Louisiana			
Natchitoches	4598	13343	190.0%
Tangipahoa	5208	14316	175.0%
Iberia	7109	19268	171.0%
Lafourche	7855	19947	154.0%
St. Mary	8146	20588	154.0%
Terrebonne	8338	20918	151.0%
Mississippi			
Lincoln	5646	14508	157.0%
Oktibbeha	5878	14063	139.0%
Leflore	5316	12177	129.0%
Alcorn	6601	14674	122.0%
Adams	6916	14556	110.0%
North Carolina			
Dare	6538	16329	150.0%
Pitt	6448	15982	148.0%
Johnston	6023	14865	147.0%
Moore	6824	16779	146.0%
Avery	5528	13022	136.0%
Carteret	7156	16068	125.0%
Swain	5169	10982	112.0%
Craven	7046	14945	112.0%
South Carolina			
Beaufort	6590	17044	159.0%
Horry	6101	15249	150.0%
Colleton	5834	13765	136.0%
York	8399	19336	130.0%
Tennessee			
Campbell	4389	12079	175.0%
Sevier	6377	15208	138.0%
Maury	7251	16999	134.0%
Monroe	5921	13497	128.0%
Humphreys	7850	17865	128.0%
Cocke	5437	11933	119.0%
Hamblen	7219	15326	112.0%
Virginia			
Bath	5424	14840	174.0%
Lancaster	5993	16349	173.0%
Stafford	8631	22927	166.0%
Spotsylvania	7764	20600	165.0%
Lunenburg	5860	14100	141.0%
Rockbridge	7011	15649	123.0%
Augusta	8178	18101	121.0%
Shenandoah	7075	15627	121.0%
Warren	7957	17106	115.0%
Montgomery	8255	17084	107.0%
Henry	8459	17427	106.0%
West Virginia			
Pocahontas	5089	14979	194.0%
Tucker	6243	13656	164.0%
Raleigh	6737	17744	163.0%
Monongalia	7758	18676	141.0%
Mercer	6945	16681	140.0%
Morgan	6897	16072	133.0%
Jefferson	7721	17577	128.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

counties, the portion of all families living in poverty made up by black families remained virtually unchanged.

This lack of black family movement out of poverty was mirrored in national trends as those living in poor black families made up a startling percentage of the overall black population, a percentage that remained virtually unchanged from 1970 (30 percent) to 1980 (30.9 percent). By 1984, however, the plight of black families had worsened considerably as an estimated 33.2 percent of the black population – an additional 1.3 million people – were living below the poverty line as compared to 13.1 percent of the overall population and 10.1 percent of the white population.[15]

Black women in the study group's rural tourism counties headed a growing number of households sustained on below poverty incomes. Over the decade spanning 1970 to 1980, the portion of black families living in poverty that were headed by women increased by an average of 17 percent in the study group counties. The trend likely worsened over the subsequent four years. Nationally, the percentage of black families headed by women without a spouse present in the household expanded to 55.9 percent of all black families in 1984 as compared to 33 percent in 1970. Though circumstances also worsened for white women, the percentage of all white female headed families living below the poverty level was far smaller at 8.9 percent in 1970 compared to 17.3 percent in 1984.[16]

Increasing Income, Deepening Disparities

Though families in rural southeastern tourism counties made substantial income gains over the 1970-80 decade, a gap between their incomes and those enjoyed by the average U.S. family nevertheless remained. While the average median annual income for families living in the 84 study group counties stood at just $6,682 in 1970, the national average was substantially higher at $9,596. The family income progress of the subsequent decade suggests that families living and working in tourism economies fared far better overall as the tourism industry experienced growth. However, the improvement in overall family circumstances is tied, at least in part, to the massive entry of women into the labor force, a factor that enhanced economic circumstances for many intact families but did little to foster economic advancement for most women heading families.

By 1980, family median income in the identified tourism counties grew to an average of $15,612 per year, an average gain of nearly $9,000 or 135 percent. Nationally, family median incomes grew by a far more modest rate of 72 percent to $16,550, but the average U.S. family nevertheless became more prosperous than those families living in rural tourism counties in the Southeast. Additionally, only 1980 family median incomes for the states of Arkansas, $14,641, and Mississippi, $14,591, – the two lowest state family median incomes in the nation – trailed behind those realized among families in study group counties. No other states in the nation recorded an overall family median income lower than the average for identified tourism counties.[17] Clearly, families in counties experiencing significant growth in the tourism industry improved their economic circumstances, closing much of a substantial economic gulf that lay between them and most Americans; however, they continued to be sustained on incomes that were lower than those enjoyed by the overwhelming majority of American families.

Black families, on the other hand, continued to survive on incomes that lagged far behind those of families in general. In 1970, the average black family median income for the study group stood at $4,377, 34.5 percent lower than the income enjoyed by the average family in the study group ($6,682); 54.4 percent lower than the national median income for families ($9,596); and 30.3 percent lower than the national median income for black families in current dollars ($6,279).[18] Though black families in those study group counties with black populations of 400 or more made significant economic gains over the decade, enjoying a 148 percent rise in their median incomes, they continued to receive incomes that were much lower than those enjoyed by most families -- black and white -- throughout the nation.

Though substantial income growth was realized by all family units over the 1970-80 decade, 1980 income data revealed dramatic disparities between the earnings of other families and those headed by women. While 1980 family median income in the study group counties averaged $15,612, income for households headed by women when no spouse was present averaged only $8,258 a year, just 53.2 percent of the median

Income Disparities – 1980

Family Median Income

	All Families	Married Couples	Female Heads
Alabama			
Escambia	$14113	$16227	$7242
Arkansas			
Faulkner	16367	17451	9196
Carroll	12915	13659	7839
Cleburne	12329	12915	7796
Pope	14964	15952	7641
Union	15412	17394	7111
Mississippi	12518	14123	6965
Montgomery	11131	11521	6695
Ouachita	13982	15709	6448
Boone	13270	13911	6418
St. Francis	11814	14282	5306
Florida			
Indian River	17607	19108	9986
Manatee	16191	17060	9612
Collier	19174	20354	9587
Hernando	13915	14428	8629
Lake	14392	15300	8567
Okaloosa	16955	18418	8561
St. Lucie	15884	17062	8147
Columbia	15506	17008	8065
Sumter	13318	14224	6498
Putnam	13556	14925	5668
Georgia			
Banks	15071	15343	10000
Gordon	15954	17083	9654
Hall	17817	19209	9485
Bartow	16532	17858	9250
Floyd	17286	19127	9207
Troup	16017	17696	8840
Glynn	17689	19986	7987
Thomas	14521	16492	7628
Harris	17328	18928	7138
Liberty	12055	12938	5700
Crisp	14077	16522	5560
McIntosh	11768	13976	5368
Kentucky			
McCracken	18728	20462	9057
Mason	15327	17886	8843
Madison	14754	16361	6622
Louisiana			
Lafourche	19947	21077	10024
Terrebonne	20918	22257	9130
St. Mary	20688	22589	8451
Iberia	19268	20836	8389
Natchitoches	13343	16063	7353
Tangipahoa	14316	16925	6756
Mississippi			
Alcorn	14674	15966	8300
Oktibbeha	14063	16385	7512
Lincoln	14508	16031	6977
Leflore	12177	14842	6509
Adams	14656	17833	5884
North Carolina			
Dare	16322	17466	9260
Avery	13022	13602	9211
Moore	16779	18315	8234
Johnston	14885	16169	7773
Pitt	15982	18588	7607
Swain	10982	11973	7303
Carteret	16068	17298	7221
Craven	14945	16657	6250
South Carolina			
York	19336	20927	10581
Horry	16249	16336	8525
Colleton	13765	16526	7296
Beaufort	17044	18930	7063
Tennessee			
Hamblen	15325	16624	8766
Sevier	15208	16092	8338
Monroe	13497	14685	8171
Maury	16999	18504	7749
Campbell	12079	13189	7610
Humphreys	17863	19142	7500
Cocke	11933	13216	6875
Virginia			
Stafford	22927	24094	12917
Spotsylvania	20600	21705	11028
Shenandoah	16627	16593	10606
Augusta	18101	19254	10491
Bath	14840	16949	10000
Rockbridge	16649	16270	9691
Warren	17106	18507	9641
Henry	17427	18641	9510
Montgomery	17084	18504	9109
Lunenburg	14100	15226	8657
Lancaster	16349	17587	5833
West Virginia			
Monongalia	18676	20212	10273
Jefferson	17577	18720	10123
Raleigh	17744	18914	9637
Mercer	16681	18019	9581
Pocahontas	14979	15854	9578
Morgan	16072	16885	9281
Tucker	13856	16043	8558

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

income received by the average study group family. In 27 of the high growth counties, women who headed households received incomes that were less than half those enjoyed by study group families in general. Too, those women with responsibility for families in the study group counties generally fared far more poorly than women throughout the nation in 1980. Median income for female-headed households across the nation stood at $10,408 (constant dollars) in 1980,[19] 20 percent higher than that received by women working and living in tourism-based, rural counties. Only in four of the 84 high-growth counties isolated by the study, all in increasingly prosperous Virginia, did women heading households receive higher median incomes than those enjoyed by women in similar circumstances across the nation (Stafford, $12,917; Spotsylvania, $11,028; Augusta, $10,491; and Shenandoah, $10,606). Overall, five out of the 10 highest incomes recorded for female-headed households in the study group were found in Virginia (Bath County, $10,000).

The disparity between incomes for families headed by women and those of married couples was equally

Male/Female Income Disparities
Median Income

	Women 1970	Men 1970	Men Income	Women 1980	Men 1980	Men's Income
Alabama						
Escambia	$2767	$5149	42.0%	$3682	$8322	44.2%
Arkansas						
Mississippi	2653	4546	58.4%	4047	8150	49.7%
Carroll	2970	4351	68.3%	4091	8336	49.1%
Montgomery	2984	4715	63.3%	3271	7115	46.0%
Boone	2806	4967	56.5%	3866	8459	45.7%
St. Francis	2951	4540	65.0%	3362	7447	45.0%
Cleburne	2357	4692	50.2%	3411	7792	43.8%
Faulkner	2821	5172	54.5%	3934	9100	43.2%
Ouachita	3001	5411	55.5%	3861	8975	43.0%
Union	2902	6387	45.4%	3966	10244	38.7%
Pope	2840	4838	58.7%	3186	8900	35.8%
Florida						
Collier	2908	6583	44.2%	5865	11635	50.4%
Indian River	2719	6288	43.2%	5208	10911	47.7%
Manatee	2998	5950	50.4%	4963	10541	47.1%
Okaloosa	3011	6910	43.6%	4834	10379	46.6%
Lake	2574	5406	47.6%	4416	9549	46.2%
Sumter	2116	5291	40.0%	3735	8127	45.9%
Columbia	2963	5717	51.8%	4126	9519	43.3%
St. Lucie	2602	5694	45.7%	4544	10502	43.2%
Putnam	2488	5807	42.8%	3733	8850	42.2%
Hernando	2354	5591	42.1%	3940	9409	41.9%
Georgia						
Banks	3317	4444	74.6%	5391	8929	60.4%
Thomas	3088	5045	61.2%	4683	8585	54.5%
Gordon	2395	4361	54.9%	5213	10044	51.9%
Hall	3464	5722	60.5%	5390	10587	50.9%
Liberty	2617	4975	52.6%	3598	7172	50.2%
Bartow	3522	6232	56.5%	5055	10280	49.2%
Troup	3543	5372	66.0%	4484	9290	48.3%
Harris	2723	4622	58.9%	4587	9588	47.8%
Floyd	3339	6414	52.1%	4891	10644	46.0%
Crisp	2511	5210	48.2%	3876	8752	44.3%
Glynn	2753	6650	41.4%	4673	11170	41.8%
McIntosh	5127	2073	247.3%	2959	8372	35.3%
Kentucky						
Mason	3312	5547	59.7%	4554	8693	52.4%
Madison	2657	4847	54.8%	3376	7285	46.3%
McCracken	3201	7165	44.7%	4514	12761	35.4%
Louisiana						
Natchitoches	1960	4284	45.8%	3214	7916	40.6%
Tangipahoa	2456	4864	50.5%	3731	9325	40.0%
Iberia	2073	6279	33.0%	4076	12673	32.2%
Terrebonne	2762	7098	38.9%	4460	15018	29.7%
Lafourche	2508	6702	37.4%	3861	13825	27.9%
St. Mary	2307	7031	32.8%	3892	13971	27.9%

	Women 1970	Men's 1970	Men Income	Women 1980	Men 1980	Men's Income
Mississippi						
Leflore	2679	4221	63.5%	3898	6623	58.9%
Oktibbeha	2425	3937	61.5%	3122	5646	55.3%
Alcorn	3318	5153	64.4%	4785	9985	47.9%
Lincoln	2862	4816	59.4%	3776	9152	41.3%
Adams	2842	6559	43.3%	3663	9274	39.5%
North Carolina						
Swain	3184	4336	73.4%	4202	5964	70.5%
Moore	3169	4973	63.7%	5405	9644	56.0%
Johnston	2905	4548	63.9%	4763	8574	55.6%
Avery	2929	4197	69.8%	5782	10390	55.6%
Pitt	2252	4689	48.0%	4102	7621	53.8%
Dare	2486	5639	44.1%	5048	9712	51.9%
Craven	2941	5953	49.4%	4244	8666	48.9%
Carteret	2637	5853	45.1%	4448	9981	44.6%
South Carolina						
Beaufort	2537	4989	50.9%	4775	8562	55.8%
Horry	2851	4902	58.2%	4659	8888	52.4%
Colleton	2990	4656	64.2%	3976	8072	49.3%
York	3405	5731	59.4%	5445	11386	47.8%
Tennessee						
Hamblen	3450	5540	62.3%	4857	9935	48.9%
Cocke	3017	4574	66.0%	3633	7702	47.2%
Campbell	2698	4510	59.8%	3711	7961	46.6%
Sevier	2680	5006	53.5%	3882	9195	42.2%
Maury	2954	5879	50.2%	4430	11079	40.0%
Monroe	3081	4501	68.5%	3827	9600	39.9%
Humphreys	2829	7126	39.7%	3845	12044	31.9%
Virginia						
Montgomery	3170	5892	53.8%	3794	5688	66.7%
Henry	3741	5880	63.6%	6142	10002	61.4%
Lunenburg	3071	4516	68.0%	4632	7890	58.7%
Bath	2621	3802	68.9%	4836	8477	57.0%
Shenandoah	3298	5195	63.5%	4866	9560	50.9%
Rockbridge	3471	5481	63.3%	4427	8916	49.7%
Warren	3428	6276	54.6%	5123	11724	43.7%
Augusta	3747	6048	62.0%	5787	13820	41.9%
Stafford	3802	7094	53.6%	5787	13820	41.9%
Lancaster	1921	4594	41.8%	3960	9628	41.1%
Spotsylvania	3288	6468	50.8%	5313	13416	39.6%
West Virginia						
Monongalia	3176	6325	50.2%	4263	8480	50.3%
Pocahontas	2651	4840	54.8%	4130	9097	45.4%
Jefferson	3100	5687	54.5%	4573	10405	44.0%
Tucker	2944	4706	62.6%	3651	8486	43.0%
Morgan	2828	5951	47.5%	4262	10355	41.2%
Mercer	3139	6387	49.1%	4539	11166	40.6%
Raleigh	3174	7058	45.0%	4697	12382	37.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

dramatic in 1980. Married-couple families received an average median income of $17,046 in the high-growth counties embraced by the study, 51.6 percent higher than that received by women heading households in these economies. However, married couple families in study group counties, often comprised of two marginal income wage earners, received an average of $6,000 a year less than the average married-couple family in the nation in 1980 ($23,141).[20] More specifically, only married-couple families in a lone high-growth tourism county, Stafford County, Virginia, enjoyed an income level ($24,094) that exceeded the national average.

In those rural southeastern tourism economies identified by this study, the disturbing disparities between incomes for families headed by women and all other family units stemmed from a sustained and increasing gap between the incomes of men and women. In 1970, women 15 years and older in high-growth tourism counties earned just 56.3 percent of what men in the same age group earned, an average annual income of just $2,918 as compared to the average of $5,398 earned by men. While the median income level for men in the counties identified by the study trailed behind the national average of $6,670, women in these rural economies were actually earning slightly more than most women across the nation in 1970, almost $3,000 a year as compared to $2,237 nationally. This slight economic edge may have been directly tied to the presence of tourism jobs in these counties, jobs which routinely go to women. Women in many of these counties were participating in the labor force at a higher rate than most women in 1970. In contrast to the marginal gains that women made across the nation over the decade, the disparity between male and female median incomes actually increased in the rural tourism counties identified by the study. By 1980, women in the 84-county group were receiving incomes that averaged just 46.3 percent of those received by men, $4,352 as compared to $9,596. Furthermore, as tourism became more entrenched as an industrial base, women in the study group counties lost ground, receiving incomes that trailed those of most women in the nation by more than $500 a year.

Women who participated in the labor forces of the rural tourism counties embraced by this study weathered a precipitous decline in their incomes, one that likely worsened over the subsequent four years. They slipped from inadequate incomes that nevertheless exceeded those received by most women by 23 percent in 1970, to incomes that lagged behind those most women received by 12 percent in 1980. If such a pace of income decline in relation to the national average for women were sustained over the subsequent four years, the income of women living and working in tourism counties could have been expected to slip an additional 14 percent behind the national average for women.

In 1980, women in only 14 of the 84 study group counties received median incomes that exceeded those for most women in the nation. Not only did women in the rural, high-growth tourism counties of the Southeast fare badly in contrast to men, they sustained fairly substantial losses in comparison to most women, the vast majority of whom remained in virtually powerless economic positions.

Summary of Regional Findings

This study seeks to illuminate some of the social and economic consequences of tourism development in rural communities in the Southeast. Specifically, it examines the impact of such economies on those who are most economically vulnerable: low- income women and their children. Overall, the economic data gathered and analyzed in the course of this study of 84 "high-growth" rural southeastern counties portrays a significant economic decline for women and the families for whom they are responsible. Clearly, the growing presence of the tourism industry in the counties identified by this study has not yielded transformations in economic circumstances for rural women. Instead, women in rural tourism economies in the South have weathered significant losses in terms of their increased ranks among the unemployed, their presence among the inpoverished, and their declining incomes compared to men living and working in the same economies. Although these same losses have been experienced by women across the nation, they are more pronounced in virtually every county examined in this study.

Ironically, state government-financed tourism promotion efforts, which accounted for more than $234 million in state expenditures in fiscal year 1986-87, appear to contribute far more to the private sector than to the public good. In tourism economies, these promotional efforts have helped boost the success of development that is having a disproportionately negative impact on women and, as a direct result, their children. Once high-paying, male-dominated, and inevitably terminal construction jobs diminish as development becomes more established, the mainstay of tourism economies becomes low-wage, female-dominated, marginal jobs on a road to nowhere. Waitresses, hotel maids, and retail clerks are the undervalued, underpaid backbone of an industry that appears to take far more than it gives to indigenous peoples. In addition to creating virtually inescapable job ghettos for women, a successful tourist attraction more often than not places serious stress on local infrastructure while it degrades the environment and local culture, gradually diminishing the power of the attraction that first lured visitors to the community.

In the process of blindly promoting more of the same unplanned, poorly executed development, state governments may have unwittingly created a series of long-range problems that will ultimately cost far more than sensible planning and sober policy analysis. But clearly they have indirectly contributed to the exacerbation of already difficult economic circumstances for women and children throughout the southeast United States. Not until an adequate human infrastructure is in place – a living wage, guaranteed health care benefits, child care provisions, and the enactment and enforcement of protective labor laws -- can low-income women hope to gain real opportunity in tourism economies.

The consequences of successful, unchecked development are explored more fully in the following chapter.

Chapter Notes

[1]U.S. Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, United States Summary, 1980, Census of Population (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1983).

[2]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1987* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1986) 20.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Stuart A. Rosenfeld and Edward M. Bergman, *Making Connections: After the Factories Revisited* (Research Triangle Park, North Carolina: Southern Growth Policies Board, 1989) ix.

[5]Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment, Hours, and Earnings, U.S., 1909-84* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1985).

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, March 1985, 77.

[11]Larry Brown, M.D., *Physicians' Task Force on Hunger in America, Hunger Counties 1986 - the Distribution of America's High-Risk Areas* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1986).

[12]See Diana Pearce, "The Feminization of Poverty: Women, Work and Welfare," *Urban and Social Change Review*, February 1978, and Barbara Ehrenreich and Frances Fox Piven, "The Feminization of Poverty," *Dissent*, Spring 1984.

[13]*General Social and Economic Characteristics, United States Summary, 1980*, 1-10w.

[14]*Statistical Abstract*, 443.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid, 436.

[17]Ibid, 439.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid, 441.

[20]Ibid.

A Case Study

Sevier County, Tennessee

Nestled in one of the most spectacularly scenic regions of the Southeast, Sevier County, Tennessee, is home to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most visited national park in the country. Every year, it is estimated that between 5 to 10 million people wind their way through the valleys and hollows beneath this range of the Appalachian Mountains, wreathed in veils of fog, the "smoke" of the park's name. The majestic mountains are a breathtakingly beautiful spectacle, one that stands in sharp contrast to the expansive, unchecked commercial development that has flourished in the valleys below. In spite of the insistence of politicians and marketing experts alike that this wildly out- of-control development is an unqualified success, there is evidence that it poses long-term threats to the natural beauty which first lured visitors to the Great Smoky Mountains. And this "progress," which has enriched state and local government coffers as well as political careers, has done little to improve the plight of low-income Sevier Countians, particularly those who have been hardest hit by the otherwise buoyant economy of the 1980s -- women and children.

Today, the once pristine Smoky Mountains and the cultural isolation which they enfolded are experienced by many visitors only from a roadside overlook or in the form of a degrading plastic replica of a native "hillbilly." What draws many of today's visitors to Sevier County, Tennessee, is the bustle of activity along what local residents call "the strip" of Pigeon Forge and the downtown congestion of Gatlinburg. There they find the myriad businesses which make up what has come to be labeled as the tourism industry, one of the fastest growing employment sectors in the nation. Hotels, motels, gift shops, restaurants, museums, and amusement parks line the six-lane highway which transports visiting tourists through Pigeon Forge's strip of development, then, after a brief trek through the national park, onto the narrow, congested streets of Gatlinburg. At the peak of the tourist season, the traffic that lines Parkway Drive rivals that of many major metropolitan areas, a situation that, not surprisingly, has become the target of recurring complaints from local residents, as well as visitors.

Though Pigeon Forge's relatively new tourism development, much of which is less than a decade old, ends at the national park line, it seems that every conceivable tourist attraction has been jammed into this once quaint village. The original cluster of rustic establishments, including an 1830 flour mill and famed Pigeon Forge Pottery, that were once the heart of Pigeon Forge are now dwarfed by the surrounding development. From diversions for children like "Haunted Golf," "Blazing Wheels Raceway," and waterslides, to representatives of virtually every known fast food establishment, to an array of wares that even the most industrious shopper could not survey in an entire week, to sprawling, multinational resort hotels, Pigeon Forge is not what it used to be. Today, local promoters of tourism boast that Pigeon Forge, which is home to fewer than 3,000 people, offers pillows to 30,000 guests. Ironically, the accomodations for guests are far more comfortable than those afforded a large community of native Sevier Countians.

For many visitors, the majesty of the Smokies pales in comparison to the festivities at the nationally famous country music theme park, Dollywood, named after Sevier County's favorite daughter, country singer, film and television star, Dolly Parton. In the county seat of Sevierville, it is a statue of Dolly Parton, guitar in hand – not that of legendary Indian fighter John Sevier for whom the county was named – that graces the front lawn of the courthouse. If not drawn by Dollywood, which attracted an estimated 1.5 million people in 1988, visitors to Sevier County are often lured by the temptation of bargains. Pigeon Forge is vying for the title of "outlet capitol" of the Southeast, and the year-round visitors and year-round employment local civic leaders hope will accompany it.

Unlike the more recently developed Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg has been an established tourist attraction for decades. Long regarded by some as a prime resort area and by others as the classic "tourist trap," its teeming development is crowded into narrow Appalachian valleys, unlike the wide flat lands of Pigeon Forge. Downtown Gatlinburg reflects the range of visitors who are attracted to the town, as commercial establishments range from posh clothiers, an elegant European antique shop, and a gourmet food shop to a host of attractions built around country music. Among them are a country music museum that features such dubious exhibits as the wrecked automobile in which country singer Barbara Mandrell nearly lost her life. A new but quaint wedding chapel aimed at prospective honeymooners stands next to the former home of a laser show theatre now offered for sale by a local realtor. Add to that the usual mix of international hotel chains, restaurants, and fast food es-

"Accomodations for guests are far more comfortable than those afforded many native Sevier Countians."

tablishments, and the scope of attractions in downtown Gatlinburg becomes dizzying.

The development which appears to be stacked along this slender valley extends into the heavily forested moutainsides which envelope the town. Sprawling hotels, condominiums, chalets, entire resorts, and vacation homes are literally perched on the steeply sloping mountains above Gatlinburg. Many of these developments are the products of engineering feats that defy the laws of physics. Large scale development, entire complexes of condominiums, for example, can be found on the very top of the mountains around Gatlinburg. Among them are ski resorts aimed at capturing a wintertime clientele, but such attractions seemed anything but successful during a January visit when the town appeared empty and desolate. In sharp contrast, automobile and pedestrian traffic during peak summer season months is extremely heavy.

In the process of expanding tourism development, the Appalachian communities of Sevier County have sacrificed the simplicity and the slow pace of the culture that originally attracted visitors to the area. The ever widening product lines that have become available to Sevier County visitors are more likely to be made in Pacific Rim nations or the Third World than in Sevier County. Though there is a strip of shops outside of Gatlinburg in an area known as the Glades where local artisans sell their crafts, locally made items take on the aura of museum relics in downtown Gatlinburg where the Arrowmont School and its gift shop, Arrowcraft, are located. As Gatlinburg's oldest craft shop, established in 1926 by Pi Beta Phi, a fraternity for women, the shop has served as a preservationist force in the county, creating a national market for area crafts and sustaining a local network of craftspersons.

Today, the economy of Sevier County literally lives and dies by tourism. The communities of Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg are examples of tourism promotion brought to fruition. During peak months of the tourism season, it is difficult to imagine the area accomodating more guests. At the same time, this enormous "success" reveals the multitude of problems associated with such development, including environmental and cultural degradation, the gradual erosion of quality of life, and the virtual absence of significant economic benefits for the men and women who perform the day-to-day work of maintaining this economy.

Not only have the Pigeon Forge strip and downtown Gatlinburg become garish, crowded, wildly out-of-control developments, there is evidence that the very foundation on which this development was built is being eroded. The devastating effects of acid rain have been witnessed on the majestic mountaintops which first lured visitors to the area. Public outcry has, for the moment, centered only on the environmental impact of nearby Tennessee Valley Authority coal-fired plants. However, the cumulative effects of emissions from millions of automobiles inching their way along the Pigeon Forge strip and through severely congested downtown Gatlinburg cannot be ignored. But addressing the issue of automobile emissions and their impact on the local environment would undoubtedly require an evaluation of the environmental impact of tourism, something city fathers will not likely undertake.

In addition, encounters with the regal black bear, which were once regarded as a routine experience in the Smokies, are being discouraged by forest rangers as tourists persist in feeding the bears inappropriate and potentially dangerous foods. Visitors to the area are more likely to encounter a black bear today in the form of a plaster mold or a stuffed animal at local eating establishments. As with the lazy, moonshine drinking hillbilly which has become a demeaning, ubiquitous symbol of local culture, mountain life has been reduced to caricature. For the entertainment of guests, even dignity has been sacrificed.

They are underpaid and undervalued workers, many of whom must appeal to strangers to make even the minimum wage.

Perhaps the ultimate irony of the burgeoning tourism development in Sevier County, Tennessee, lies in its appeal to families. Promoted as a place for "complete family fun," a quaint, simple, homespun atmosphere where traditional values, hospitality, and wholesome entertainment abound, Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg nevertheless are home to many families in severe economic distress. Their problems are not uncommon in the United States, but, in Sevier County, they are exacerbated by the county's reliance upon tourism as an economic base. It is an industry in which low-wage, seasonal jobs without benefits predominate. It is not an economy in which most families – even those with two wage earners – can hope to survive without some form of assistance.

Jobs created by the tourism industry are predominantly service industry jobs in their most demeaning and servile form, jobs that require ministering to a privileged leisure class with disposable income, time for pleasure, and expectations of deference. It is not surprising that women are the backbone of this industry, working as hotel maids, waitresses, cooks, retail clerks and parking attendants. They are underpaid and undervalued workers, many of whom must appeal to the generosity of total strangers in order to make even the minimum wage.

In spite of the demeaning nature of the work they perform and the economic fragility of their circumstances, visitors who expect to encounter warmth and hospitality from those in the role of servants will not be disappointed in Sevier County. The thousands of women who minister to the needs of tourists in hotel, retail, entertainment, and food establishments give what visitors expect to receive. In the main, these women are products of a repressive, isolated mountain culture which validates women only in the role of service to others. Deference and subservience are regarded as admirable feminine qualities, cultural ideals. This cultural ideal is a natural catalyst for success in an economy which relies upon the abilities of workers to assume a posture of hospitable subservience. And in Sevier County, women do just that. They serve, warmly and generously.

But, behind the suface glitter of the tourism industry in which they work, their families are in distress. Low wages, seasonal employment patterns, and non-existent benefits are only the beginnings of economic difficulties for single women who head households, as well as for many two-income families. As in most tourism-based economies, families and individuals struggling to survive on marginal incomes do not fare well. Prices for virtually every necessity -- food, shelter, and clothing -- are generally inflated by businesses eager to capture every available tourist dollar. Tennessee also clings to one of the nation's most regressive tax systems, one that cuts deeply into low-income family budgets. As a result, already inadequate wages are stretched beyond their limits. On wages that, even in the most competitive tourism economy, barely exceed the federal provision of $3.35 an hour, women who head households are confronted with economic impossibilities. They simply cannot hope to support families on wages that translate into poverty for single individuals.

It is the plight of these women, low-income, rural women who live and work in Sevier County, Tennessee, as well as the overall impact of the successful promotion and development of this tourism-based economy, that this case study addresses. The many facets of quality of life, only the surface of which are revealed by statistics, will be the focus of this exploration. We will attempt to discover how women and their families fare in an economy that depends upon the kindness – and the business – of strangers for its survival.

A Classic Southern Culture

Created in 1794 from a part of Jefferson County, the outlying boundaries of Sevier County, Tennessee, have remained virtually unchanged since its formation. Named for Colonel John Sevier, the first governor of Tennessee, the county is legendary as the site of numerous battles between white settlers and the native American Cherokee tribe, whose descendants remain a visible though degraded and exploited presence in neighboring Cherokee, North Carolina. Sevier won notoriety for his numerous battles with Indians, who were eventually forced into submission, agreeing to relinquish title to all lands south of the Holston and French Broad Rivers. During the protracted period of warring between white settlers and native Americans, Sevier County achieved the dubious historical distinction of being the scene of the last battle between white men and Indians east of the Mississippi River.[1]

Ironically, a local historian cites South Carolina native, Jane Huskey Oglesby, part Indian and head of a family that included five sons and two daughters, as the first known settler in the Gatlinburg area.[2] Her married name was later shortened to Ogle, a name that continues to dominate the local power structure; however, it is a structure that today, by most observers' accounts, includes few if any women in a real participatory role.

From its post-Revolutionary War founding years until contemporary times, the Sevier County economy remained principally agricultural. Even today, life behind the strip of commercial tourism establishments appears essentially rural, standing in sharp, jarring contrast to the glitter of neon lights that line the Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg strips of development. But traditional family values are not simply a selling point in this county. Instead they are a tool for survival in many families where mutiple generations share the responsibility of supporting and sustaining the family, much as the area's founding settlers undoubtedly did.

The tourism industry is deeply rooted in the consciousness of Sevier County. Its origins undoubtedly date back to the 1912 founding of the Pi Beta Phi Settlement School in Gatlinburg, which became a source of arts revival. Though the women's fraternity initially aimed to provide education and health care to the mountain people, the teaching and, ultimately, the preservation of mountain crafts became an integral part of the settlement school's purpose.[3] In 1926 the Arrowcraft Shop was founded as an outlet for the sale and display of the work of area artisans. Local lore also dates the inception of the tourism industry back to 1916 when Andrew Huff built the Mountain View Hotel, which was originally intended to provide temporary housing for timber buyers on business trips to the area. When the state of Tennessee began to move toward the development of a national park with acquisitions of land in 1925 and Congress passed enabling legislation in the following year, another important cornerstone in the foundation of today's tourism industry was laid.

Many characteristics of contemporary life in Sevier County seem remarkably provincial in spite of the burgeoning development which has evolved in the county. It is still home to the same family names which local historians cite as the founding settlers of the area. However, the distinctions of class associated with a family name have become somewhat blurred by time and circumstance. The powerful and legendary names of Ogle and Reagan, though they grace innumerable small businesses throughout the county, are just as likely to belong to a waitress or a hotel maid today. But privilege is still clearly associated with members of certain branches of these founding families, and, in a county where many insist that "who you know" translates into opportunity, it is clear that classism remains a powerful local force. Many individuals interviewed in the course of this case study cited "connections" as critical to securing a good job locally, even in factories owned by outside corporations.

And connections remain the exclusive domain of white residents of Sevier County. Like much of Eastern Tennessee's rural areas, Sevier County is home to only a very small, quite segregated community of blacks. A few older black residents reside outside of Sevierville in an isolated, rural community known as Burton's Hill. Inside Sevierville, members of the black community, which comprises less than 1 percent of the population, reside mainly in low-income housing. Sevier County is generally described as inhospitable to blacks; vestiges of segregation clearly remain. One young woman charged that the public schools of Gatlinburg were considered off limits to young blacks, and an area businessman reported having heard a prominent Gatlinburg businessman utter a racial epithet during the course of a local business group's meeting.

For all its success in tourism development, Sevier County remains clearly uninviting to black vacationers. Very few come to the area as tourists, undoubtedly in part because the local culture remains too reflective of traditional Southern character. Only half a dozen black people and two Oriental couples, noted exceptions to an otherwise overwhelmingly white tourist profile, were sighted vacationing in the area over a busy five-day period.

In essence, the Appalachian culture of Sevier County has retained some of its original character. The influx of multinational corporations and millions of people from diverse cultures has not drastically altered the indigenous people. While their surroundings have been dramatically transformed, they remain an unassuming, unpretentious people to whom hospitality comes easily. And a deep commitment to family often bridges the enormous gaps in support left by this cruelly lacking economy. At the same time, the longstanding isolation of this mountain culture now seems to be manifested in an inviolate separateness from the hoards of visitors who come to the area during the tourist season. And it is quite possible that the hospitality one encounters is more a reflection of a sustained posture of subservience than of cultural values. Appalachians have historically been recognized as a proud, even aloof people who harbor real disdain for intruders. To most visitors, local culture is likely no more than a curiosity, and encounters with indigenous peoples are most often limited to interactions with them in the role of servant. Furthermore, the vast majority of visitors to the area come from neighboring and deep South states which share many cultural similarities. The cumulative result seems to have been the retention of ideas and values, some of which have undergone intensive reevaluation and challenge in other regions, particularly urban areas of the United States.

Today, Sevier County remains rigidly patriarchal and inhospitable to blacks, who are neither visibly employed in the tourism industry nor attracted to the locale as tourists. For women, particularly the few black women who continue to live in Sevier County, circumstances undoubtedly remain enormously difficult. Outside of an intact nuclear family, economic independence is a virtual impossibility. Here, there are abundant low-paying jobs for the female servants Appalachian culture idealizes but none for the breadwinners so many women must now be.

A Growth Industry

Most tourism communities and the state government entities that assist with their promotion and expansion have come to view tourism as an economic boon with few deficits. The promotion of tourism has made its way onto statewide political agendas throughout the South, which reportedly leads the nation's regions in the number of visitors and jobs generated by travel spending.[4] Not surprisingly, campaign promises of increased allocations for tourism development and promotion have become commonplace planks on southern political platforms. Tennessee is no different. In fact, the Volunteer State led the entire region in its commitment of dollars to tourism during 1987, spending $10.9 million to lure visitors to the state. In 1988, projected spending levels for promotion and development in tourism-dependent Florida were expected to lead the Southeast region at $10.7 million. But Tennessee was not far behind. According to the National Governors' Association, Tennessee budgeted $9.4 million for tourism, ranking it ninth in the nation for tourism spending, behind more populous states with far more expansive revenue bases, states such as New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois.

Tennessee state government's structure for the promotion of tourism has been cited as a model program. When the Tennessee General Assembly created the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development in 1976, the state became the first in the nation to lend cabinet-level status to this promotional arm of government. The department is charged by state law as follows:

> *The tourism division shall promote new investment in the tourist industry, provide comprehensive services to existing tourist enterprises, promote in other states the attractions of Tennessee, distribute Tennessee information publications and supervise the system of welcome centers in the state.*[5]

Likewise, the commissioner who heads the department is charged with a series of directives. Each duty outlined for the commissioner is promotional in nature. Today, the department's organizational structure reflects its commitment to the sole purpose of advancing tourism development. Beyond the mechanics of bureaucracy – personnel, accounting, etc. – the department's staff is dedicated to the tasks of marketing, information gathering, and the management of a network of welcome centers. One staff member is assigned responsibility for research, but even this effort is geared strictly toward the department's overall charge to promote tourism.

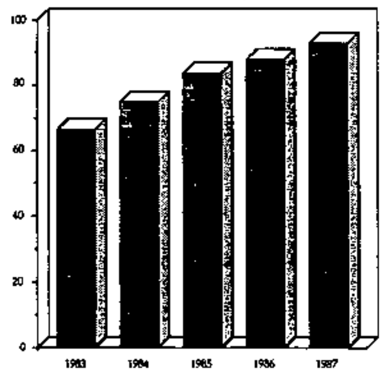
"... Sevier County remains rigidly patriarchal and inhospitable to blacks, who are neither visibly employed nor attracted as tourists."

Over the course of the decade spanning fiscal year 1978-79 to fiscal year 1988-89, for which the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development has data, the department's overall budget has increased by 73.4 percent, from $2.8 million in fiscal year 1978-79 to a projected $10.4 million for fiscal year 1988-89. At the same time, the portion of its budget dedicated solely to spending for advertising has increased more than 14-fold. In 1978-79, the state dedicated just $216,000 to advertising, but by fiscal year 1988-89, its advertising budget had ballooned to a proposed $3.1 million, a 93 percent increase over the decade. However, an April 1989 audit conducted by the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury cited the department's 1986 overall advertising budget as the fifth largest in the nation at $4.4 million.[6]

As the state's fiscal commitment to the promotion of tourism widened, workers in tourism-dependent economies found themselves on the receiving end of a development strategy that seldom translated into improved economic circumstances. The potential costs of tourism development, in fact, so heavily outweigh its benefits to a community and a state that the Tennessee Comptroller strongly recommended more thorough studies of the actual return on the Department of Tourism Development's advertising dollars in the future. In the official performance audit dated April 1989, the comptroller also isolated Sevier County for closer examination. The audit concluded that the combined local governments of Sevier County realized an estimated $4.1 million tax benefit after meeting the demands on services such as police, fire, and sanitation costs. Though this represents a significant return for Sevier County, the audit further examined the benefits to those living and working in the tourism economy.

As a result, the audit concluded that jobs created by tourism develop-

Travel-Generated Employment by Year
In Thousands of Jobs

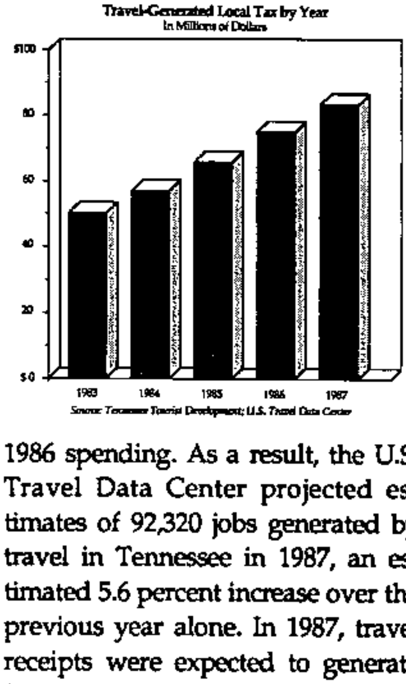


Source: Tennessee Tourist Development; U.S. Travel Data Center

ment in Tennessee were low-wage and seasonal, offering an average annual wage of only $9,086 in 1985, as compared to a statewide average of $16,987 and a national average of $19,185. Secondly, the critical audit pointed out that almost half the tourism-related jobs in Tennessee in 1985 were in the food industry where the average annual wage was only $6,697, only $1,200 above the poverty level for an individual. In sharp contrast, the state's average manufacturing wage during the same time period, the audit recounted, was $19,047. Additionally, the audit echoes the findings of this study, underscoring the seasonality of tourism jobs, resultant high unemployment rates, and increased dependence upon public assistance during economic downturns.[7] Though the comptroller's approach to assessing the real return on public dollars used to promote tourism represents a breakthrough, Tennessee's public sector consciousness has not always reflected such enlightenment.

Like many states, Tennessee has pursued, perhaps blindly, the mighty tourism dollar with a vengeance. Aggressive though they are, however, Tennessee's efforts to promote tourism have not directly translated into top billing as a tourist attraction, though most observers rate its efforts as a success. The 16th most populous state in the nation, Tennessee now ranks 22nd in receipts of travel expenditures, estimated at $4.1 billion in 1986, according to the U.S. Travel Data Center.[8] Preliminary 1987 data placed Tennessee fourth in the Southeast region in terms of travel expenditures, behind Florida, the nation's second most popular travel site, North Carolina, and Georgia.[9] An estimated 42.2 million travelers visited Tennessee in 1987, spending approximately $4.6 billion, representing an 11.6 percent increase over

Travel-Generated Local Tax by Year
In Millions of Dollars



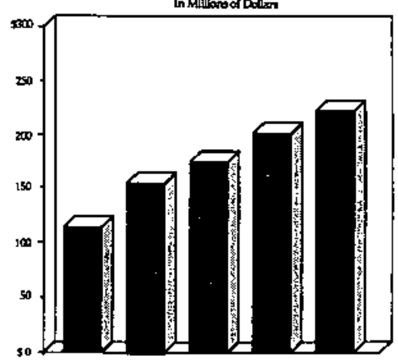
Source: Tennessee Tourist Development; U.S. Travel Data Center

1986 spending. As a result, the U.S. Travel Data Center projected estimates of 92,320 jobs generated by travel in Tennessee in 1987, an estimated 5.6 percent increase over the previous year alone. In 1987, travel receipts were expected to generate $222.5 million in state tax revenue, 6.3 percent of all collections, while local governments were expected to garner $83.2 million in revenue.[10]

Sevier County has fared exceptionally well as a Tennessee tourism site, attracting far more tourists and their dollars than any other rural county in the state. In 1987, Sevier County trailed behind only the state's two most populous and popular counties: Davidson County, home of Nashville, which is generally regarded as the country music capitol of the world and Shelby County, home of Memphis, Tennessee's largest city. According to a 1987 study prepared by the U.S. Travel Data Center for the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, travelers spent an estimated $462.9 million in Sevier County, which, it was calculated, helped create 10,760 local jobs at an annual payroll of $96 million. For the state of Tennessee, travel to Sevier County resulted in state tax receipts of $28.1 million while local governments netted $11.9 million.[11]

Though only data collected under a different model by the U.S. Travel Data Center is available for 1980, the year of the earliest available report on the economic impact of tourism, it clearly suggests phenomenal growth. Travel expenditures in 1980, according to the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, were estimated at $347 million as compared to a 1987 estimate of $462.9 million; state tax receipts were estimated at $13.8 million as compared to an estimated $28.1 million for 1987; and local tax receipts were thought to have exceeded $4.5 million in 1980 while they

Travel-Generated State Tax by Year
In Millions of Dollars



Source: Tennessee Tourist Development; U.S. Travel Data Center were estimated at $11.9 million in 1987.[12] In spite of the different models used in developing these economic impact assessments,[13] it is abundantly clear that Sevier County's tourism economy has experienced extraordinary growth.

The enormity of the state and local success story in luring visitors to the Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg area has sparked intense local activity and the development of promotional entities in both communities. In Gatlinburg, the Chamber of Commerce assumes reponsibility for local promotion and development efforts while Pigeon Forge has established its own Department of Tourism, which operates out of a prominent visitors' center on Parkway Drive near the beginning of the town's sprawling development. First established in 1980 as a department of the city, it too was previously a Chamber of Commerce entity. Today, according to director Veta King, the department has an operating budget in excess of $1 million. Financed by lodging and amusement taxes, most of the budget for this department of city government is earmarked for advertising, $800,000 in fiscal year 1988-89 alone.

Interestingly, the department apparently also played a pivotal role in securing Dolly Parton's investment in the amusement park formerly known as Silver Dollar City, now known as Dollywood. According to King, the Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism developed "a package" for Parton, whom they reportedly had heard wanted a theme park in the area. Included in that package were such enticements as the city government's offer to further develop the access road to the giant theme park and increase its 1986 advertising budget.

Having encouraged Parton's investment in the theme park which now bears her name, King said, the local tourism department began working cooperatively with Dollywood's promotional arm in 1987. Together, the two expanded Pigeon Forge advertising beyond the 12 surrounding media markets to a total of 20 markets, according to Ms. King. Local officials are apparently pleased with the results as the city experienced a 47 percent increase in the volume of local business in the first year of the expanded campaign and a 20 percent increase during the subsequent year, according to King. That volume of business, however, did not "trickle down" to those most in need in Pigeon Forge. While the owners of the myriad tourist businesses in Pigeon Forge prospered at the hands of this publicly financed advertising effort, most of their employees continued to subsist on minimal wages and seasonal jobs.

In spite of the apparent drawbacks of this tourism economy, both promotional entities in the county eagerly responded to requests for information, providing packets stuffed with information that attests to the burgeoning development the region has experienced. The information ranges from water consumption to hotel expansion to demographic profiles of visitors to the area. Though the governments of Sevier County have not neglected to levy taxes that affect virtually every business owner and visitor, the sheer magnitude of the area's business volume is enough to attract entreprenuers, developers, and, of course, more tourists.

A certain lure for developers and entrepreneurs, the growth of the county has been thoroughly documented by both the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce and the Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism. For example, the city of Pigeon Forge reported the licensing of 196 businesses in 1974, a number which had nearly doubled by 1987. Of the businesses licensed for 1987, 156 were reportedly crafts, gifts, and specialty shops, 48 were clothing stores, 55 were motels, and 63 were restaurants. Spending on nonresidential construction in Pigeon Forge also soared from $310,460 in 1980 to $2.3 million in 1987. Similarly, Gatlinburg reported having licensed 495 shops, 100 restaurants, 103 hotels/motels, and 36 attractions in 1987 alone.

While it is clear that literally hundreds of entrepreneurs are flocking to both areas in order to capitalize on its capitve audience of tourists, a 1980-87 economic analysis of the entire Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area prepared by the Research and Statistics Division of the Tennessee Department of Employment Security suggests considerable volatility. From 1980 to 1987, a total of 1,496 firms entered Sevier County while 964 left. A fairly consistent pattern of such volatility was seen over the years until 1986 and 1987 when the number of exiting firms represented smaller portions of those entering the county.[14]

A direct measure of the growth in the tourism industry, a cornerstone for this study, is seen in the expansion of the hotel/motel industry. According to the city's tourism department data, the number of motel units in Pigeon Forge alone has soared since the late 1950s when there were reportedly only 110 motel rooms in the town. During the 1960s, however, an additional 788 units were added and another 1,034 during the 1970s. By 1987, Pigeon Forge reported having 4,136 motel units available to tourists. In Gatlinburg, there were reportedly 6,563 hotel/motel units and an additional 1,023 condominium and chalet units available in 1987.

While it is estimated that 5 million people visit Gatlinburg annually, as many as 10 million people may have been visitors to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 1987, according to park ranger Glen Cardwell. That estimate, however, is in question. According to Pigeon Forge Tourism Department Director Veta King, it was based upon a simple car count of entrances to the national park that did not reflect the actual number of visitors, only the number of times automobiles entered the park. Nevertheless, it is estimated that about half of the park's visitors enter via Gatlinburg. Park officials have estimated that the ranks of visitors swelled from 8.4 million in 1980 to 10.2 million in 1987 while the number of visitors to Gatlinburg increased by nearly a million during the same time period. During the same year, Pigeon Forge accomodated 1.2 million people in local hotels and motels, according to Veta King, and played host to an estimated 3 to 4 million people, rivaling Gatlinburg's long-standing leadership as the county's main attraction.

Still, Gatlinburg remained one of the state's strongest attractions. The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development reported that surveyed travelers rated Gatlinburg as the third most frequent destination in the state during 1987, attracting 12.8 percent of those coming into Tennessee, while Pigeon Forge ranked seventh, attracting an estimated 8 percent of visitors to the state. While the Smoky Mountains rated highest on visitors' plans, Dollywood in Pigeon Forge was the only other Sevier County attraction rated by visitors. It ranked eleventh among visitors to the state.

A 1986 Gatlinburg visitor survey prepared by the U.S. Travel Data Center offers a detailed demographic profile of travelers to the town, providing a revealing look at people who choose to make this resort their destination. The survey undoubtedly has provided a framework for marketing campaigns aimed at those deemed most receptive to the area's lure. The survey's 412 responses suggested that Gatlinburg attracts many visitors of modest incomes, 30 percent of whom earn less than $20,000 a year. Only 21 percent of those surveyed reported earning more than $40,000 a year. The vast majority, 79 percent, however, indicated that they owned their own homes. Most visitors, 37 percent, were accompanied by only one other member of their household on their trip to Gatlinburg while 76 percent of the respondents brought no children under the age of 18 along. Visitors to Gatlinburg were overwhelmingly white (94 percent), married (65 percent), had a high school diploma or less education (64 percent), and were over the age of 35 (63 percent). Retirees formed the largest occupational group of visitors at 20 percent while blue collar workers represented 19 percent of those surveyed. Only 10 percent of respondents cited their occupations as professional or upper management roles.

> *Gatlinburg appealed mainly to white, middle-aged, married couples of modest or moderate incomes in 1986.*

Clearly, Gatlinburg remained an affordable, working class attraction which appealed mainly to white, middle-aged, married couples of modest or moderate incomes in 1986. This consumer profile reflects the images and values depicted in area promotional literature and, though income brackets are clearly higher, suggests that the people who visit the area share a kinship that extends beyond love of the area's beauty. Interestingly, Gatlinburg's appeal appears to contrast slightly with that of Pigeon Forge. Though there were no available demographic profiles of visitors to Pigeon Forge, its preponderance of attractions aimed at children would suggest that it attempts and likely succeeds in luring more families with children. For both of these neighboring communities, the peak months of tourist activity are the summer months, June through August, and October, when the mountain foilage attracts nearly as many visitors as in summer months. From the standpoint of business owners and employees, the tourist season is generally regarded as a six-month period beginning with the month of May and ending with the final weeks of October; however, there are varying degrees of activity during that time. Business does not peak until after Memorial Day, for example, and September is routinely a slower month. The occupancy rates of hotels in Pigeon Forge in 1986, for example, ranged from 40 percent in May to 85 percent in July to 50 percent in September, then back up to 70 percent in October, according to the Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism. What few analysts seem to recall is that the fortunes of families rise and fall with the capriciousness of the visiting public. A slow month for a waitress or a hotel maid, even in the peak season, can drastically reduce family incomes.

A Changing Population and Work Force

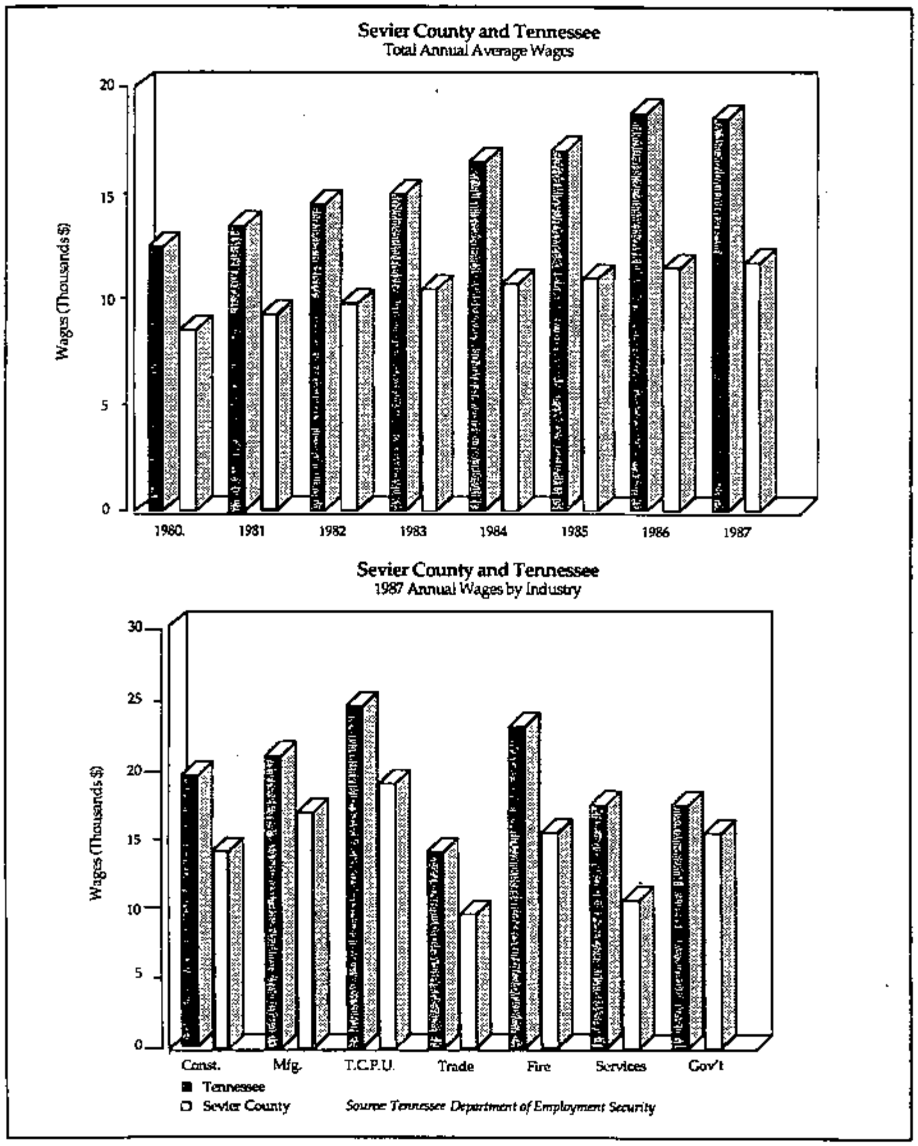
The phenomenal success Sevier County has enjoyed in luring travelers to its myriad attractions has resulted in a dramatic shift in employment patterns as well as in the overall structure of the local economy. In this study of non-metropolitan counties in 12 southeastern states, Sevier County ranked fifth in terms of the number of employees in the hotel industry out of the 84 "high-growth" counties identified. According to employment levels reported in the U.S. Census Bureau's *County Business Patterns,* hotel/motel industry employment soared from 399 in 1970 to 2,055 workers in 1984, representing a 415 percent increase in this single but dominant travel industry.[15] Sevier County's dramatically high hotel employment levels were only outranked by two coastal South Carolina counties, Horry County, where the highest number of industry employees were found in the Myrtle Beach area, and Beaufort County; Gulf Coast Collier County, Florida; and coastal Glynn County, Georgia.

The surge in tourism development in Sevier County paralleled a shift in employment patterns. Recording a total work force of only 3,869 people in 1970, *County Business Patterns* cited the manufacturing sector as the county's largest employer of 1,196 people. Significantly, the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) "retail trade" was not far behind manufacturing, reporting 1,107 employees, 351 of which worked in "Eating and Drinking Establishments," a category of employment tied to the travel industry. Sevier County's "contract construction" industry, also clearly connected to the development of tourism, recorded 478 employees in March 1970. The "service" sector reported a total of 742 employees, the majority of whom reportedly worked in "Hotels and Other Lodging Places," the benchmark indicator of growth used in this study.[16]

Mirroring the national trend of ballooning service sector growth and a declining manufacturing sector, employment patterns in Sevier County shifted over the 14-year period of examination encompassed by the study. By 1984, County Business Patterns reported 3,659 employees in the service industry, nearly five times as many employees as were reported in 1970. Again, the vast majority of those employees, 56 percent or 2,055 workers were employed in the industry category "Hotels and Other Lodging Places," representing a 415 percent increase in employment levels. The second largest employment category in 1984 was "Retail Trade" where 3,601 employees were reported, 1,624 or 45 percent of whom were cited as working in "Eating and Drinking Places," another prominent facet of the tourism industry.[17] These employment levels represented a 363 percent increase in the food industry, a strong but typical growth trend seen in counties throughout the Southeast region, which is likely tied to changes in lifestyles as much as it is to tourism development.

Retail trade in Sevier County has enjoyed such phenomenal growth over the past few years that sales led those in a 16-county area which includes metropolitan Knox County, home of the city of Knoxville. In 1986, Sevier County reported retail sales of $385.6 million, almost $50 million more than the preceding year. During 1987, according to the Tennessee Department of Revenue, the county again registered a strong boost in its retail business, this time by more than $60 million, netting total sales of $446.8 million.[18]

While the service sector experienced phenomenal growth on both the national and the state level, the manufacturing sector experienced a sharp decline. Between 1978 and 1985, according to the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Tennessee, Tennessee experienced a gross loss of an estimated 67,100 manufacturing jobs, which, with the post-recession revival of the economy and subsequent gains in the sector, evolved into a net loss of approximately 33,000 jobs. During the 14-year study period examined here, Sevier County manufacturing enjoyed only modest growth, increasing its work force from 1,196 in 1970 to 2,605 employees in 1984, according to *County Business Patterns*.[19] This 118 percent increase in employment in what is generally a high-wage industry would seem to bode well for employment trends in the county; however, the manufacturing sector represents only 21 percent of all employment while the service and retail sectors alone account for 60 percent of employment in Sevier County. The manufacturing sector of Sevier County is dominated by small operations geared to light manufacturing, industries which make automotive accessories, microphones, resistors, vending machines, and hardwood flooring, among others, and employ fewer than 300 people. The largest number of manufacturing employees in the county, however, are employed by textile and sewing factories, which, in general, offer lower wage scales than other manufacturing entities. Still, according to the Tennessee Department of Employment Security, the average 1984 weekly manufacturing wage in Sevier County stood at $286 while the average wage for service industry employees lagged well behind at only $172. Reporting retail trade firms cited wages that averaged only $163 a week.



Interestingly, women held 47 percent of the manufacturing jobs in Sevier County in September 1986, according to the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, but their ranks were concentrated in a single textile factory which dominates local manufacturing. In 1986, 58 percent of the industrial jobs held by women in Sevier County were in two local plants which manufacture textiles and clothing, mainly in Cherokee Textiles, Sevier County's largest employer, which manufactures cotton fabrics and then employed 579 women and 386 men. However, women were equal or dominant participants in work forces at smaller plants which manufacture automobile accessories, electromagnets, microphones, parquet flooring, food, and tool and die equipment. Women also dominate the only union- represented work force in Sevier County, which represents just 6 percent of the overall industrial labor force. Only two of 19 local industries have work forces represented by organized labor, a presence which is completely absent from the retail trade and service industries that provide most local employment. Tennessee, like most Southern states, is a "right-to-work" state which does not require union-represented employees to contribute to the support of the union which negotiates on their behalf for wages and benefits.

In addition to the overall shift in occupational patterns, the Sevier County boom in tourism development was paralleled by a surge in population growth and increased urbanization in this essentially rural county. After successive reports of a fairly static overall population in 1950 and 1960, notable only because of the 78 percent growth in a still quite small city population, the county enjoyed modest overall growth of 16 percent from 1960 to 1970, perhaps a harbinger of the future. During the subsequent decade, Sevier County experienced unprecedented growth. U.S. Census Bureau data for 1970 placed the county population at 28,241, but by 1980, the county's population had nearly doubled, increasing by 46.7 percent to 41,418 residents.[20] According to the East Tennessee Development District, a 19 percent population increase is expected over the current decade, indicating a slowing of the pace of growth. In 1988, Sevier County's population was estimated at 47,489 while projections for 1990 estimated an increase to 49,274 people, suggesting a fairly modest increase for the 1980s in comparison to growth during the 1970s.

From 1970 to 1980, the character of Sevier County's population also changed. Its small urban population nearly tripled, with the number of city dwellers increasing from 2,661 to 7,766.[21] But the huge population growth registered, not surprisingly, among white residents only. The almost statistically invisible black community of Sevier County actually experienced a 6 percent population loss between 1970 and 1980.[22] Overall, the county experienced dramatic change in its population and the character of its economy; however, that change did not influence the racial makeup of the county.

Chapter Notes

[1]Jeanette S. Greve, *The Story of Gatlinburg* (Strasburg, Virginia: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1931) 98.

[2]Ibid., 17.

[3]Ibid., 110.

[4]U.S. Travel Data Center, "Travel Facts III," 1984, 6.

[5]*The Tennessee Code Annotated*, Section 4-3-2204.

[6]William R. Snodgrass, Comptroller of the Treasury, State of Tennessee, "Performance Audit: Department of Tourist Development," April 1989, 13.

[7]Ibid., 23.

[8]U.S. Travel Data Center, "The Economic Impact of Travel on Tennessee Counties," June 1988, 6.

[9]Ibid., 7.

[10]Ibid., Executive Summary.

[11]Ibid., 21.

[12]U.S. Travel Data Center, "The Economic Impact of Travel on Tennessee Counties, 1980," May 1981.

[13]U.S. Travel Data Center (USTDC) estimates of the economic impact of travel at the county level after 1981 are based upon a revised economic model which includes data from the 1982 Census of Service Industries and Census of Retail Trade.

[14]Tennessee Department of Employment Security, "Knoxville – MSA, 1980-87, An Economic Analysis," August 1988, 40.

[15]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *County Business Patterns, 1970, Tennessee* and *County Business Patterns, 1984, Tennessee* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1972, 1986).

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid.

[18]"Sevier Leads Area in Retail Sales Jumps," *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, 10 March 1987.

[19]*County Business Patterns*.

[20]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *General Social and Economic Characteristics, Tennessee, 1980 Census of Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1983).

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid.

The Real Cost

Tourism in Sevier County

In spite of a generous commitment of dollars to tourism promotion and development, government mechanisms for accountability, and for assessing the real impact of tourism development, seldom reach beyond estimates of the number of visitors, their spending patterns, and the resultant tax receipts. Any data on jobs creation, for example, is tied to an economic model, such as that used by the U.S. Travel Data Center, which equates a certain level of tourist spending with the creation of a job. The nature of the job and the quality of life it affords workers was not the focus of any state economic impact analysis available upon request, and, though most state tourism entities have a research component, few of them actually collect and compile raw data. Most data on which state reports are based is collected and analyzed by industry consultants, such as the independent but industry-dependent, Washington, D.C.-based U.S. Travel Data Center, which tracks tourism data for Tennessee and other southern states included in this study. Though most states use such reports to justify budget allocations or to leverage increased spending, they seldom look beyond the surface economic impact of tourism activity. The Tennessee Comptroller's April 1989 performance audit of the state Department of Tourist Development marks an important step forward. The audit examines the real impact of tourism development on local communities, specifically Sevier County, and calls for greater accountability for public dollars. Though local political leaders in Sevier County have publicly expressed concern about the seasonal nature of employment patterns and the lack of diversity in the local economy, government efforts, both local and state, to document -- or remedy -- the economy's significant shortcomings had been conspiciously lacking prior to the Comptroller's report.

Though changes in the work force, the population, and a dramatic increase in the number of visitors to Sevier County, Tennessee, statistically illustrate the transformation which has taken place in this essentially rural county, only firsthand observation reveals how the character of rural life in this otherwise geographically isolated area has been drastically altered by the influx of travelers. The changes brought on by the peak tourist season demand that residents acclimate to the schizophrenic nature of life in Sevier County. At peak season, Sevier County becomes a virtual metropolis with all its attendant sounds and stresses. Traffic -- both pedestrian and automobile -- is extremely heavy, creating a continual source of anxiety and irritation. In response, residents have adopted survival skills, charting alternative, secondary routes to and from work to avoid the congestion of local traffic.

Though they have chosen to live and work in a rural community, that community is transformed into a noisy, congested, frenzied city for at least six months out of each year. For those who lack the social skills to cope with the demands of an urban environment, the peak season undoubtedly produces stress and uncertainty and intensifies rather than moderates insecurities. During the off season, the bustle of activity in Sevier County comes to an abrupt, dramatic halt. Life returns to its once routine slow pace, and thousands of local residents are reduced to idleness and joblessness yet, at the same time, confronted with the formidable challenge of survival, again an unrelenting source of stress.

On a more subtle level, the degradation of local culture has undoubtedly been witnessed and internalized by those who are a part of that culture. The image of the proud, self-sufficient mountaineer has been almost completely supplanted by that of the shiftless, lazy, moonshine-drinking "hillbilly," clearly an object of ridicule. This ubiquitous image suggests to visitors and residents alike that Sevier County culture was historically inferior. Ironically, locally owned businesses help perpetuate these images in murals, wood carvings, plaster molds, and souvenirs offered for sale. A general posture of deference, noted particularly among women employed in the tourism industry, only serves to reinforce the impression. As a result, escape from entrapment by a cultural image that suggests an innate inferiority, a proclivity for subservience – indeed, second class status – becomes extraordinarily difficult. Expectations are low, complacency is the standard response to such longstanding powerlessness, and pressure for change is virtually nonexistent. Sevier Countians, it seems, have traditionally expected and, as a result, received very little from the outside world.

What they have received in the form of "economic development" is a feast-to-famine way of life which has offered little improvement over the subsistence farming that historically enabled poor mountaineers to eke out a meager living. The once sustaining agricultural season is now consumed by intense demands upon the labor force of the county, which must seize the only work opportunity available to it. The county's infrastructure must accomodate and support a population which frequently reaches 10 times or more that of year-round, permanent residents. The demands on water, roads, police and fire protection, and solid waste disposal – all tax-supported services – become urban in scope for half of every year. Though tourists contribute to the local economy through a number of tax mechanisms, local residents continue to pay in the form of a regressive tax on necessities through those off-season months when tourists abandon Sevier County.

"At peak season, Sevier County becomes a virtual metropolis with all its attendant sounds and stresses."

Problems associated with tourism development are, it seems, far more plentiful than its benefits. Though the development of Sevier County, Tennessee, as a tourist attraction has clearly brought economic benefits to the area in the form of expanded local government revenues, it is apparent that those benefits have not "trickled down" to low-income, indigenous people, in spite of the area's extensive history as a successful attraction. Ironically, the failure of this economy to provide sufficiently for those workers who maintain it is the product of an inherently inadequate job market, one that both local and state governments have agressively sought to expand.

The inadequacies of Sevier County's tourism job market, like similar job markets throughout the nation, are numerous. A static federal minimum wage provision, unchanged since 1981, has virtually frozen the earnings of thousands of local workers for nearly a decade. Mirroring national trends, Sevier County businesses have come under increasing pressure to raise minimum hourly wages in order to compete for a dwindling pool of service workers, but even those increases have not compensated for the substantial losses in earning power incurred by minimum wage workers. Though hourly wages that exceed the federal benchmark are considered competitive, they seldom provide incomes above the poverty level. Even the modest increases that competition has forced employers to make simply fail to provide an income sufficient to support individuals, much less families.

The principal benefits of the tourism boom in Sevier County appear to have gone to a select group of businessmen, most of whom were fortunate enough to have sufficient capital on hand to seize the business opportunities the industry yielded. There are undoubtedly stories of entrepreneurial successes, of small amounts of money parlayed into fortunes, though none surfaced during the on-site study period, but improvements in quality of life for the poor of Sevier County are virtually imperceptible, from both personal perspectives and from statistical profiles. Few of the indigenous poor, particularly women and children, have been lifted out of poverty by tourism development. Instead of being tied to the unpredictability of the weather in a marginal agricultural economy, their fortunes are now tied to the caprice of a traveling public. And much of what tourism development brings has a direct and pronounced negative impact on quality of life for the poor, particularly for low-income women and their children.

A Part-Time Piece of the Pie

Overall, employment generated by the extensive tourism development of Sevier County offers predominantly "unskilled" though physically demanding jobs for which low wages, long hours, minimal job protections, and virtually nonexistent benefits are the rule. The immediate jobs produced by such an economy are principally those of food servers, hotel maids, and retail clerks, job roles which women traditionally dominate. Nationally, according to the U.S. Travel Data Center, women hold 53.6 percent of "travel" industry jobs[1] as compared to their 44.4 percent share of all industries. In spite of the often considerable physical demands of these jobs, they are seldom compensated accordingly, unlike many male-dominated jobs which require similar levels of physical strength. Instead, the character of these jobs is that of the obliging servant, the caregiver, a role that our society does not deem valuable and, therefore, does not reward. Though the "service industry" has become a growth sector in the U.S. economy, few employers reflect the fundamental value of the charge "to serve" in their levels of compensation to workers. Service jobs remain among the lowest paying on the employment ladder.

The county must accomodate and support a population which reaches 10 times or more that of permanent residents.

And, in Sevier County, even these jobs do not last. Though state and federal labor analysts record limited data on part-time employment, it is evident that Sevier County's tourism economy is fueled mainly by the energies of a part-time or temporary work force. The classification of "part-time" not only translates into partial annual wages for workers, it excludes many workers from benefits and protections generally reserved for full-time employees. Though even these protections are quite limited in Tennessee, part-time employees often work literally at the mercy of their employers. Industry employees in Sevier County consistently reported that they were not given breaks as required by law, even though they often worked as long as 15 hours a day. Others stated that their employers had failed to properly compensate them for overtime hours or that they were required not to log in hours in excess of 40 a week. One waitress reported having been asked to begin working two hours before she was documented as on the job by a timeclock.

Perhaps most shocking in Sevier County is the overall sense of complacency that underlies fairly open accounts of routine violations of the law. Women interviewed often revealed an ignorance of the specifics of labor laws (some did not know the minimum wage, for example), but they seemed to hold a clear awareness of a generalized injustice in the way they were being treated on the job. They were obviously afraid to challenge their employers for fear of repercussions in this tightly knit business community; they were often ignorant of their specific rights as employees; and, in general, they expressed a sense of powerlessness to effect change in the treatment they received in the workplace. Many viewed their only option as moving on to a new job. Interestingly, some women, when asked what change would most benefit them as employees, suggested that they needed more hours, more of the same ill treatment to which they had long ago grown accustomed.

The marginalized existence of workers such as tourism employees in Sevier County is only part of a larger national shift toward greater reliance on part-time work forces. This emerging 1980s trend has translated into limited benefits, lower wages, and minimal opportunity for hundreds of thousands of workers much like those in Sevier County. Fueling the trend is the push to reduce labor costs in order to assume a more competitive global profile, a push that not surprisingly has focused on those workers on the lowest rungs of the employment ladder. Free of the attendant financial burdens of benefits that are routinely provided to full-time workers, U.S. employers have replaced millions of employees with temporary and part-time workers. In its *Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, 1986*, the U.S. Department of Labor reported in May 1987 that an estimated 23 percent of the nation's work force held part-time jobs either voluntarily or due to economic reasons that precluded the possibility of full-time employment.[2]

The South, as defined by the Census (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Oklahoma, and Texas, which are exluded from this study), reported the largest number of part-time workers, an estimated 6.5 million, but the lowest percentage of part-time workers of the four regions, only 21 percent compared to 26 percent in the Midwest, 24 percent in the West, and 23 percent in the Northeast.[3]

In Tennessee, however, it was estimated that part-time employees comprised an estimated 30 percent of the state's labor force. In Sevier County, that percentage is likely much higher, but, because state labor analysts do not compile data on part-time employment, it is impossible to determine just what percentage of the work force is part-time. Nevertheless, it is evident that the overwhelming majority of employees in the tourism industry, the mainstay of Sevier County's economy, are temporary or part-time workers. Statewide, the majority, 63 percent, of part-time workers reported that they voluntarily chose part-time work of 34 hours or less a week, but the remaining 37 percent of the state's work force, an estimated 82,000 workers, reported working part-time for one of a variety of "economic reasons" which prevented them from securing full-time work. In Sevier County, such economic reasons are a tourism industry standard.[4]

"...employees reported that they were not given breaks as required by law, even though they often worked up to 15 hours a day."

Across Tennessee, the vast majority of unemployed workers, 76 percent, reported that they were looking for full-time rather than part-time work.[5] Though full-time work remains the clear preference of unemployed workers in search of jobs, opportunities to secure it are necessarily diminishing with the increase of part-time employment. In Sevier County, the opportunities for full-time, permanent employment are extremely limited. As a result, the vast majority of workers simply do not have access to jobs that pay a living wage. They must take what the tourism industry offers or leave. Many local men, whose very traditional male roles in child care afford them much greater mobility than women, leave the area for better work opportunities, sometimes making long, difficult commutes in order to secure better wages.

Marginal Work, Minimal Protections

As with many other Southern states, wage and hour provisions in Tennessee labor laws are minimal. Workers enjoy few protections beyond the fundamentals of the bedrock federal legislation, the Fair Labor Standards Act. However, the stringent requirements of the act do not extend to employers who gross less than $362,500 annually. Outside of these parameters, states must fill the void of wage and hour protections. Tennessee has neglected to do so. Like Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, it has enacted no state minimum wage legislation for the protection of workers not covered by federal law.[6] As a result, employers who are exempt from the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act are not required to pay a minimum wage or to pay overtime. In an economy such as Sevier County's where small businesses abound, many of which are likely marginal operations, workers are undoubtedly affected by the absence of state wage and hour provisions, regardless of competitive pressures. These businesses are essentially free to schedule and pay workers at whatever hours and wages they will accept.

Though Tennessee's state wage provisions are sorely lacking, the federal minimum wage provision itself, the alleged foundation of protection for the nation's most vulnerable workers, has simply failed in its charge. While the minimum wage has remained the same -- $3.35 an hour -- since 1981, prices have increased 39 percent over the past eight years. Historically, this bedrock wage would have lifted a breadwinner and two dependents out of poverty, but in 1989, a family of three with one full-time breadwinner will fall $2,900 short of the federal poverty line.

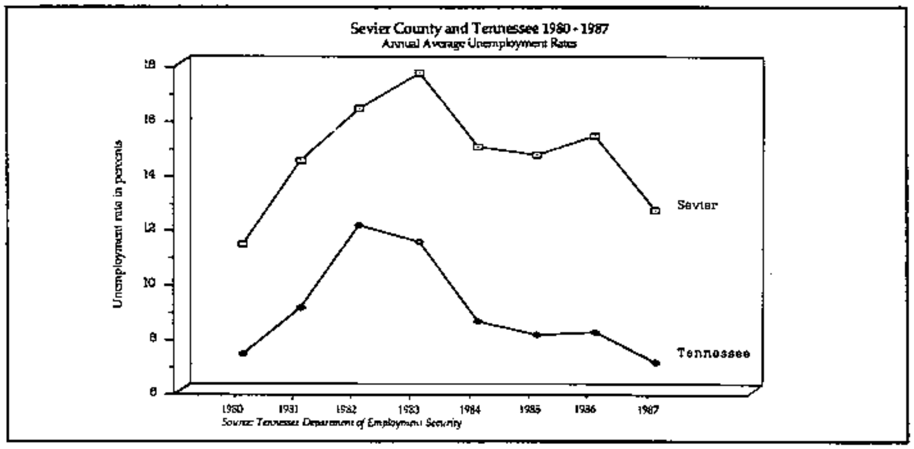
Similarly, the once honored tradition of setting the minimum wage at 50 percent of the average national wage has been callously abandoned. Today, the minimum wage is equal to only 35.5 percent of the average national wage, its lowest relative to the average since 1949. In order to be restored to the traditional 50 percent level, it would be necessary to raise the minimum to $4.85 an hour immediately.

For food servers, the federal provision guarantees only a portion of those wages afforded other employees covered by the act. Under this provision, employers are permitted to claim up to 40 percent of the hourly minimum wage in tips, requiring them to pay food servers only $2.01 an hour. The underlying presumption with the federal legislation, as in subsequent state legislation modeled after it, is that the gap in hourly wages will be closed by tips. Since Tennessee does not have a state minimum wage provision, food servers working in establishments that fall outside the federal purview have no wage requirements. In contrast, some states, such as California and, more recently, Minnesota, have passed legislation to equalize wages for food servers, eliminating the tip credit provision altogether. Such legislation is a reflection of growing recognition of the exploitive nature of such a wage construct, the overall fallacy of the presumptions on which it was based, and the pressing need to extend living wages to the millions of workers now employed in the food service industry.

"... more than 20 percent of the population continues to be unemployed for at least part of the year."

With the exception of more expensive restaurants where customers tend to leave higher tips, the present federal provision essentially guarantees low or minimal wages for most food servers. Only intense volume, a rapid turnover of customers, such as that found in many modestly priced Sevier County restaurants during peak season, lends food servers the opportunity to make good wages through tips, but the demands on these workers are extraordinary. However, unlike other minimum wage workers, graciousness and, oftentimes, a subservient demeanor -- not the work performed -- determine whether or not food servers will receive even the minimum in wages. In Sevier County, wages for food servers generally reflected the absolute minimum standard --$2.01 an hour -- while wages for other workers had edged upward.

In addition, Tennessee is one of six remaining "at will" states in the nation which permit employers to dismiss employees without just cause, without notice, without severence pay, and without compensation for earned sick and vacation pay. The first explanation of dismissal that a worker gets often does not come until the former employer contests his or her claim for unemployment insurance. Though there is reportedly a movement afoot in the Tennessee legislature to modernize the state's outdated labor laws, materials aimed at prospective industries continue to make note of Tennessee's "at will" status. Coupled with a traditional Southern "right-to-work" stance, which prohibits labor unions from requiring workers whom they represent in negotiations to contribute to the union's support, Tennessee's overall profile becomes one of permissiveness toward business and industry. Indirectly, state policies seem to sanction the exploitation of its own workers. The goal of luring business and industry, major revenue contributors, to the state appears to have long superceded consideration of the protection of workers' rights and the improvement of quality of life for all Tennesseans, presumably government's first and foremost charge.

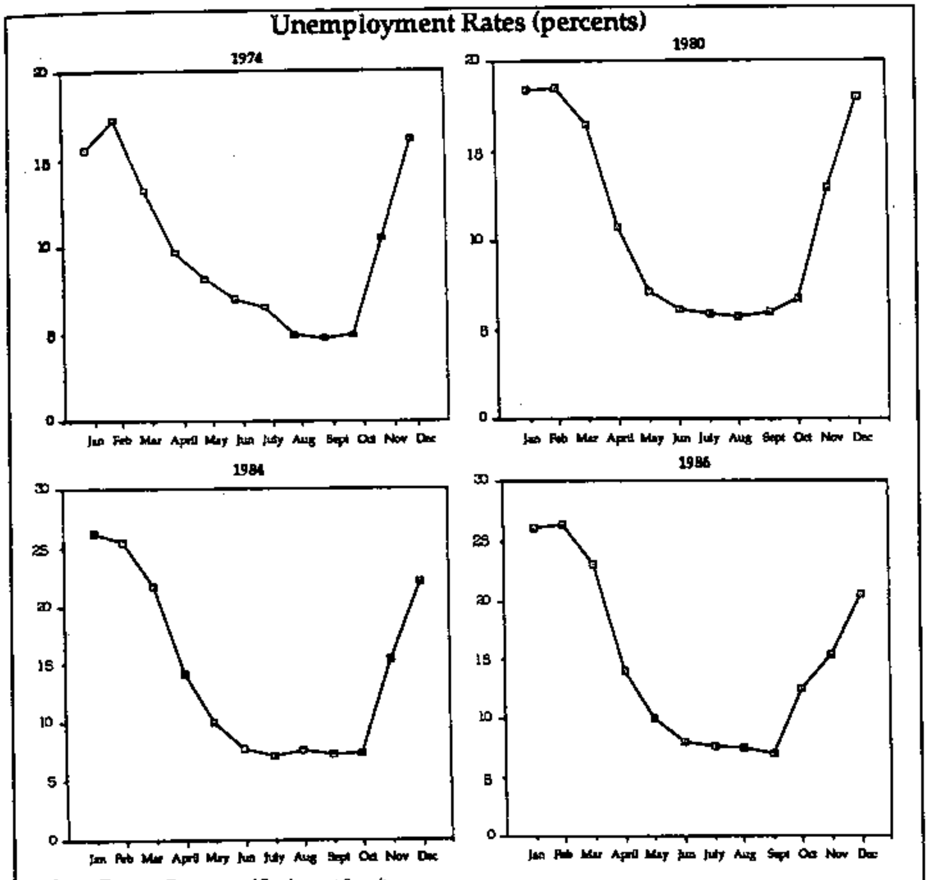


From Feast to Famine: Joblessness in Sevier County

Not surprisingly, many Sevier County residents find life in a tourism economy marginal at best, largely because already inadequate employment opportunities are strictly seasonal. Most tourism industry employees in Sevier County reported that they worked intensively, for long, arduous hours six months out of every year, then essentially waited for work for six months. Most indicated that they drew unemployment insurance during the off season at a weekly rate that represented a mere fraction of their on-season earnings. A few workers, generally those who were married and not solely dependent upon their income for survival, indicated that they were pleased with the seasonality of their work. However, the vast majority of those workers interviewed expressed frustration and displeasure with the cyclical nature of their work. Even for those workers who are fortunate enough to remain employed during the off season, the "opportunity" generally means reduced hours, reduced tips, and reduced incomes. Waitresses in a high-profile Southern chain restaurant, for example, reported earning twice as much during the six months of the peak tourist season as during the six months of the off season. They, however, were lucky. Most of the restaurant's food servers had been completely laid off.

"High unemployment has persisted over a period of relative economic health throughout most of the rest of the nation.

As a result of Sevier County's heavy reliance upon the tourism industry as a source of employment, unemployment has remained a persistent and, in fact, worsening problem over the years. The overall unemployment rates for the county over the study period indicate an acceleration in unemployment that directly paralleled growth in the industry. As this tourism economy expanded dramatically, unemployment increased. In 1970, the U.S. Census Bureau recorded the overall unemployment rate for the county at just 5.6 percent, but by 1980, that overall rate had more than doubled, reaching 11.6 percent. Subsequent unemployment data, as recorded by the Tennessee Department of Employment Security, though incompatible with Census Bureau data, indicates that the trend has not only continued, it has worsened. State labor analysts report overall unemployment averages for Sevier County of 16.3 percent for 1982, 14.9 percent for 1984, and 15.3 percent for 1986. By



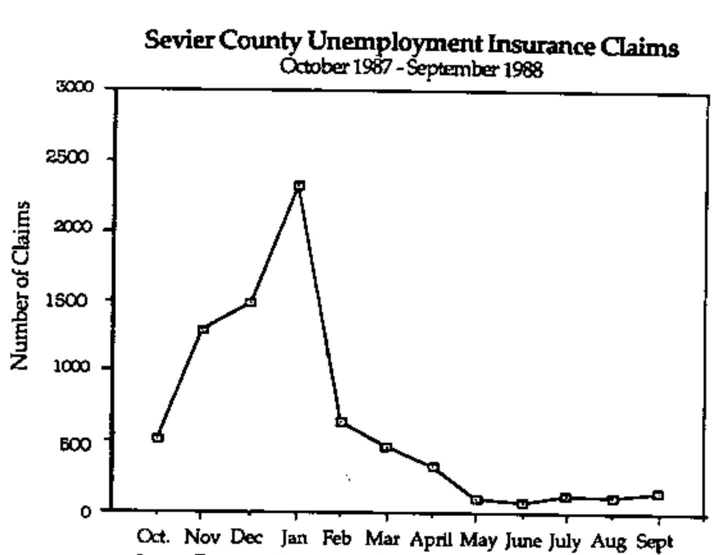
Source: Tennessee Department of Employment Security

1987, the annual rate had declined to 12.6 percent, which is unarguably an unacceptably high rate of unemployment.

High unemployment has persisted in Sevier County over a period of relative economic health throughout most of the rest of the nation. While the recession of 1982 left 16.3 percent of Sevier Countians unemployed, the state of Tennessee registered an overall unemployment rate of 11.8 percent. The average unemployment rate for the nation was significantly lower at 9.7 percent. Similarly, in 1984, while the national unemployment rate had declined to 7.5 percent and Tennessee's to 8.6 percent, the work force of Sevier County experienced unemployment at a rate nearly twice that of the nation's and the state's at 14.9 percent. By 1986, the gap between unemployment at the local level and the state and national levels continued to widen. While the national rate averaged 7.0 percent and unemployment in Tennessee averaged 8.0 percent annually, 15.3 percent of Sevier County workers were unemployed. Clearly, an increased reliance upon the jobs produced by a tourism economy has not produced an antidote to joblessness in Sevier County. In fact, it appears to have contributed to a sustained rise in unemployment.

While the county has experienced a steady decline in the rate of unemployment during peak season months, more than 20 percent of the population continues to be unemployed for at least part of the year. And unemployment rates for the six-month period during which tourist activity is in decline in Sevier County, November through April, have consistently averaged more than double those for the remaining six months. In 1980, for example, Sevier County experienced unemployment at an average rate of 6.3 percent during the peak tourist season months of May through October, but during the off-season months of November through April, unemployment averaged 15.8 percent. By 1984, the peak season average had reached 7.9 percent while the off-season average soared to 20.8 percent. The off-season average remained at 20.8 percent during 1986 while peak season unemployment rose to 8.8 percent.

Though seasonal and annual unemployment averages indicate the gravity of Sevier County's problems with joblessness, month-to-month unemployment patterns reveal its true depths. According to records of the Tennessee Department of Employment Security, which are available back to 1974, Sevier County has consistently experienced dramatic fluctuations in unemployment levels directly tied to the rise and decline of the tourist season. In 1974, for example, county unemployment averages ranged from a low of 3 percent during the month of September to a high of 17.7 percent during the off-season month of February. During the subsequent five years, monthly unemployment averages ranged upward to an off-season high of 22.5 percent in 1975 to a peak season low of 3.1 percent in 1976. During 1980, Sevier County experienced a February unemployment average of 18.5 percent and a Septem-



ber low of 6 percent. By 1984, averages had escalated significantly to a high of 26.2 percent in January and a low of 7.2 percent in July. Off-season monthly unemployment averages continued to range above 20 percent during the slowest off-season months over subsequent years with highs of 25.7 percent in January 1985, 26.3 percent in February 1986, 23.6 in February 1987, and 22.3 percent in January 1988.

Though unemployment and its many attendant problems have plagued the communities of Sevier County for years, women have consistently experienced joblessness at a disproportionately higher rate than men. In 1970, for example, U.S. Census data indicated that 8.9 percent of Sevier County women, versus only 3.6 percent of men, were unemployed. Overall, 58.8 percent of the county's unemployed population was female. By 1980, the female civilian labor force had expanded dramatically, increasing 93.6 percent; however, the disparity between joblessness for women and men remained. While men were unemployed at a rate of 9.3 percent, 14.8 percent of women were jobless as they continued to comprise the majority of the ranks of the unemployed (52 percent). Across the state of Tennessee, this disparity was not characteristic of unemployment patterns for women and men. While 7.2 percent of men were unemployed, women experienced only a slightly higher rate of unemployment (7.7 percent).

Subsequent years of unprecedented economic growth for the nation brought only a worsening employment picture for women in Sevier County. By 1984, the Tennessee Department of Employment Security estimated that 19.9 percent of Sevier County women in the labor force were jobless while 12.8 percent of men were. At the same time, only an estimated 8.3 percent of the county's small minority population reportedly numbered among the unemployed. As in 1980, the ranks of unemployed women across the state were far smaller than those for Sevier County. Tennessee women were unemployed at a rate of 8.9 percent while 8.3 percent of men were unemployed. The state's most recent affirmative action report for 1986 showed that women continued to bear a disproportionate share of the county's unemployment burden. Experiencing almost no change in their plight since 1984, they remained unemployed at the high rate of 19.4 percent while 12.4 percent of men were unemployed. Averages for the state still reflected no such disparity as women were unemployed at a rate of 8.4 percent in 1986 while 7.7 percent of men remained unemployed. Sevier County's tiny minority population continued to experience comparatively low unemployment at 7.7 percent.

Not surprisingly, the feast and famine cylces of employment in Sevier County are, with the exception of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), mirrored in caseloads for local social service agencies. As the tourism industry comes to a veritable halt at the end of every October, traffic in local public assistance offices increases dramatically. Essentially, the public sector – taxpayers – begins filling the economic void left by an inadequate industrial component which is, ironically, both promoted and maintained by tax-supported local and state governments.

Tourism industry employees in Sevier County consistently reported a complete reliance upon employer-financed unemployment insurance for income during the seasonal downturn of the industry. However, unemployment insurance income levels were consistently reported to be but a small fraction of those earned during peak tourist traffic months. Not surprisingly, records of initial claims for unemployment insurance also reflected the dramatic rise in joblessness that parallels the close of Sevier County's tourism season. The most recent data available from the Reports and Compliance Unit of the Tennessee Unemployment Insurance Program revealed that initial claims more than doubled, jumping from 511 claims during the peak season month of October 1987 to 1,299 initial claims in November 1987, representing a 154 percent increase. During the off-season months of November 1987 through April 1988, more than 11 times as many initial unemployment insurance claims (6,544) were received as during the peak season months (574).

The Safety Sieve

Because already inadequate wages translate into minimal unemployment insurance benefits during periods of joblessness, tourism industry employees also must depend upon additional support mechanisms. For example, most of the women interviewed in the course of this study who identified themselves as heads of households reported being dependent upon family members for housing, child care, and financial support. In addition, some indicated that they relied upon the Food Stamp Program during downturns in the local economy in order to supplement their meager incomes. Though the Tennessee Department of Human Services was unable to provide consistent monthly data on Food Stamp applications prior to May 1983, records of applications subsequent to that date indicate that applications for the six-month peak season averaged 1,033 from May 1983 through October 1988. During seasonal downturns from November 1983 through April 1988, applications for food stamps averaged 1,339 a year. Though the fluctuation is not as dramatic as that seen in unemployment insurance claims, it clearly reflects a growing need among families, particularly those single heads of households who are without benefit of the cushion provided by a second income.

In spite of the swelling number of Sevier Countians who are dependent upon public support during seasonal downturns, the Tennessee Hunger Coalition estimates that as many as half those eligible for food stamps in Sevier County are not receiving them. And Tennessee Human Services records indicate that the local Food Stamp Program processes an average of 50 additional applications for food stamps during every month of the tourism economy's seasonal downturn. The increase not only represents an additional strain on the public sector, it reflects the intensity of need among low-income Sevier County residents during those months when the county's dominant industry essentially shuts down.

Over the study period from 1970 to 1980, as documented by U.S. Census data, more poor Sevier County families became dependent upon public assistance. Though the overall participation rate among eligible families remains miniscule, according to the Tennessee Hunger Coalition, a greater percentage of poor Sevier County families became dependent upon public assistance, 25 percent in 1980 as opposed to 13.2 percent in 1970. Over subsequent years, the gradual erosion of work incentives for welfare recipients and the virtual absence of such necessities as health insurance in the minimum wage workplace made marginal employment an unacceptable option for many women. Without such critical benefits as health insurance for dependent children and rent subsidies, it is clear why women, who are the vast majority of welfare recipients, would reject the "opportunity" to join the ranks of the working poor.

Food Stamp Applications
Number of Applicants
October 1987 - September 1988

Source: Tennessee Department of Human Resources

"Seasonal employment has helped in some sense but hurt in others. People work a lot during the summer, then they suddenly don't have a job. It's a while before they qualify for anything," observed Cheryl Seale, human resources administrator of the Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, a Community Action agency. "Effectively, all it does is knock them out of their Medicaid benefits."

Without Medicaid coverage, state health insurance for the indigent, the working poor live in constant jeopardy. Even a brief hospital stay necessitated by a minor illness can translate into insurmountable debt. Statewide, the Tennessee Association of Primary Health Care Centers has begun to document the extent of the problems of the uninsured, those who have no health care coverage, but county-by-county data was not available in the autumn of 1988. Nevertheless, the association cites a 1986 Census Bureau survey as an indicator of the breadth of problems in the state. The survey reportedly found that an estimated 23.3 percent of Tennesseans under the age of 65, who were residents of nonmetropolitan counties, were uninsured. Given this profile, it is reasonable to estimate that more than 11,000 of Sevier County's projected population for 1988, 48,624 people, had no health insurance whatsoever.

"In counties where there is a heavy concentration of tourism, people cannot afford to purchase health insurance," observed Bart Perkey, project director of Health Care for the Uninsured, a Primary Care Centers pilot program now in progress.

And, if Sevier County remains its usual darkly reflected mirror of difficult economic circumstances in Tennessee, a higher percentage of its workers are uninsured. Across the state, the Census Bureau survey also found that 55.4 percent of the uninsured were employed. In Sevier County, where tourism industry jobs which routinely extend no health care coverage to their employees constitute the dominant industry, it is likely that the overwhelming majority of those who are uninsured are among the working poor. And the plight of the uninsured is disproportionately shared by children aged 17 or younger, who make up 35.4 percent of the uninsured population, according to the association. Theirs is a state of considerable vulnerability as too many families cannot afford traditional but costly health care routes. As a result, untreated illnesses often become more severe, creating unnecessary complications that are more difficult and, ironically, more expensive to treat.

Persistent Income Disparities

U.S. Census Bureau data for 1970 and 1980 as compiled for the purpose of this study also suggest that quality of life for the low-income, indigenous people of Sevier County has not substantially improved in spite of the enormous success of local tourism development. The county has consistently lagged behind both the nation and the state of Tennessee in standards that are direct measures of quality of life. In 1970, for example, the median income for U.S. families was $9,596. Like its southern neighbors, most of which rank among the nation's most impoverished states, Tennessee family median income registered well below the national average at only $7,446. In Sevier County, however, families fared even more poorly, earning a median income of only $6,377, 34 percent less than the average American family.

Though overall income levels in Sevier County increased over the subsequent decade of phenomenal tourism industry growth, disparities between quality of life in this rural Tennessee county and that for most Tennesseans, as well as most Americans, persisted while they narrowed. By 1980, the U.S. Census Bureau reported a median family income of $15,208 a year for Sevier County families, representing a 139 percent growth in income over the preceding decade. However, during the same period, the average Tennessee family was able to rely upon a median income of $16,564, 8 percent more than that afforded Sevier County families. The U.S. median family income in 1980 was virtually identical to that of Tennessee families at $16,550, again 8 percent higher than that of Sevier County families.

Data provided by the Tennessee Housing Development Agency show that the number of Sevier County households that have historically fallen within a low-income range have not decreased dramatically, in spite of or perhaps as a result of the successful development of the tourism industry. In 1975, for example, only 6.4 percent of households in the county had incomes above $20,000 a year; by 1980, only 9.3 percent of county households fell within that income range. Similarly, those households with incomes ranging from $15,000 to $19,999 increased only slightly from 11.7 percent in 1975 to 12.3 percent in 1980. Though all incomes below $10,000 a year declined slightly over this five-year period from 67 percent in 1975 to 63.1 percent in 1980, a significant number of households, the clear majority, relied on marginal incomes. Households with incomes ranging from just $5,000 to $7,499, a year, a typical earnings level for many waitresses and other seasonal employees, in fact remained static at 16.5 percent.

Interestingly, the staggering disparity between incomes earned by women in Sevier County and those earned by men remained absolutely static during a period which witnessed a 46 percent growth in the local female labor force. Between 1970 and 1980 the Sevier County female civilian labor force nearly doubled, increasing by 94 percent, while the male labor force increased by only 56 percent. Clearly, increased participation in the labor force by women did not translate into an improvement in wage performance. The median annual income for females in the work force in 1970 stood at just \$2,680, 47 percent less than the \$5,066 recorded for men. In the wake of their dramatic influx into the Sevier County labor force throughout the 1970s, local women were sustained on 1980 incomes that were 58 percent lower than those enjoyed by most Sevier County men, a median income of \$3,882 compared to \$9,195 for men. The growing participation of Sevier County women in the work force was actually paralleled by a widening gap between their wages and the wages of local men.

And during the 1980s, economic circumstances for women and children across the nation worsened. Nationally, it is estimated that the number of poor Americans increased by 4.5 million from 1980 to 1984 alone. During this same time, the poverty rate for women heading households was 34.5 percent, five times that of married couples. Two out of three adults living in poverty were women, and, as a result, dependent children suffered dramatic consequences. An estimated 53.9 percent of children living in female-headed households were reported living in poverty by 1984.[7] The increased "feminization of poverty"[8] throughout the 1980s was most likely paralleled by worsening circumstances for Sevier County women and their children. If the income trends of preceding years persisted, Sevier County women and their children are likely living in poverty in even greater numbers than before and in numbers far greater than those of women around the nation, who have experienced a well-documented, precipitous decline in living standards.

Though the gap between income for Sevier County families and other families around the nation narrowed over the study period, poverty, like unemployment, remained a persistent problem. While an estimated 10.7 percent of all persons in the United States lived below the poverty level in 1970, 18.3 percent of Tennesseans survived on incomes below the poverty level. In Sevier County, however, an estimated 22.8 percent of the population lived in poverty, more than twice the national rate. During the subsequent decade, national, state, and local poverty rates declined, but, while 12.4 percent of individuals around the nation were estimated to be living in poverty, 16.5 percent of Tennesseans subsisted on poverty level incomes. Though Sevier Countians fared slightly better than the average Tennessean in that fewer lived in poverty than across the state, 15.7 percent of the county population continued to exist on incomes thought to be inadequate to meet basic needs. At the same time, Sevier County experienced a dramatic population surge of 47 percent, an increase that undoubtedly reflects the influx of high-wage entrepreneurs, business managers, retirees, seasonal residents, and others. Though it is impossible to determine what income levels were commonplace for the indigenous people of Sevier County, they were likely much lower than the overall profile suggested by 1980 Census data.

Behind the Poverty Line

In spite of the impossibility of determining whether the same community of native Sevier Countians remained among the ranks of the poor over the study period, Census data for 1970 and 1980 reveal that their numbers remained virtually unchanged over the decade. In 1970, 1,525 Sevier County families lived below the poverty level. By 1980, the number of families subsisting on poverty incomes actually rose slightly to 1,572 families, suggesting that the community of poor people in Sevier County remained virtually unchanged. Though this impoverished community represents a smaller percentage of the population, 13.0 percent in 1980 compared to 19.2 percent in 1970, it is clear that economic circumstances remained the same for a segment of the population, 6,410 persons in 1970 and 6,205 persons in 1980. Again, the decline in the percentage of the population living in poverty demands a cautionary note. Sevier County's population surged during the 1970s, reflecting the burgeoning growth of its tourism industry and the resultant influx of a wealthier group of people. The virtual absence of anything beyond marginal jobs and incomes suggests that the county was not a likely attraction for jobless Americans in search of new opportunity. Therefore, it seems likely that the lion's share of the limited benefits the tourism industry has offered Sevier County has actually gone to members of the managerial and leisure classes attracted to the area, rather than to indigenous people.

Lagging Educational Achievement

Census data also reveal that poor education continued to be a problem for Sevier Countians from 1970 to 1980. The county's populace remained undereducated, and, as a result, ill-prepared to take on job roles that require more extensive training and education, such as those offered by management opportunities, which presumably arose in the county as development expanded. Too, in spite of the fact that more women graduated from high school and that women in general consistently completed a slightly higher number of school years, their earnings remained a mere fraction of men's. In 1970, 32.9 percent of Sevier County men and 33.5 percent of women 25 years and older had graduated from high school, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Overall, these statistics suggest that a striking number of adults in Sevier County lacked even the most basic educational tools. By 1980, educational preparation had improved significantly as 50.1 percent of men and 51.7 percent of women aged 25 or older had completed high school. Though the increase represents real improvement, it still suggests that a startling percentage of the Sevier County work force, at an average age of 36.3 years for employed workers, remained undereducated.

More recently, high dropout rates and the attendant problems associated with an undereducated population have persisted in Sevier County. According to Larry Stott, Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services for Sevier County, the dropout rate has steadily declined over recent years with a new emphasis on prevention. A concerted effort to make an accurate determination of the breadth of the problem also began four years ago, according to Stott. While Tennessee's Department of Education attempts to track dropout rates for all of the state's counties, its data, like that in most states, are based upon a comparison of ninth-grade entrances to high school graduation exits. Sevier County's first year of more precise documentation came with the class of 1988 which was carefully monitored from the time of ninth-grade entry for class members. Local officials determined that 28 percent of students who should have been part of the 1988 graduating class opted not to complete their high school education.

Regardless of the method used to determine the percentage of dropouts, it is clear that rates are gradually declining in Sevier County. According to the Tennessee Department of Education, Sevier County's dropout rate for the 1984-85 school year was 34 percent. Though it remained unchanged during the 1985-86 school year, the rate fell to 32 percent during 1986- 87 and to 30 percent during 1987-88. If the actual rate were 28 percent for the 1987-88 school year, as local officials indicate, actual percentages were likely up to 2 percent lower than state estimates in each school year. Nevertheless, the problem of high dropout rates from Sevier County schools remains one of significant dimensions.

According to Larry Stott, local school officials have determined that the majority of dropouts occur prior to or sometime during the 10th year of schooling for Sevier County youth. Various possible explanations, including consistently poor performance and age eligibility (Tennessee youth must have reached the age of 17 in order to leave school) are thought to be contributing factors. Many current tourism industry employees interviewed in the course of preparation for this case study reported entering the local work force at the age of 14 or 15, typical ages for 10th graders. Economics, conceded Stott, are a likely contributing factor to Sevier County's continuing dropout problem.

"The jobs that we have here certainly contribute to kids dropping out of school," observed Mr. Stott. "To some of these kids, $4 an hour is a lot of money, and the jobs are the same thing that mom and dad are doing."

Interestingly, these sustained problems with inadequate educational achievement were paralleled by inadequate levels of local spending. During the 1984-85 school year, for example, Sevier County spent $1,741.60 per pupil based upon average daily attendance, ranking it 90th among the state's then active 143 school districts. Sevier County's local contribution to education, however, stood at 47.4 percent, slightly more than the average Tennessee county managed to contribute to the education of its children (46.5 percent). The extent of this contribution of local revenue is a reflection of the expansive tax base that tourism development has created, but it is worth noting that the state's third most successful tourism development site barely outperformed the average county in its contribution to education. And by the 1985-86 school year, Sevier County's local contribution had dipped to 45 percent, signifying a higher reliance on state and federal funds. Perhaps as a direct result of an infusion of state and federal funds, per pupil expenditures rose to $1,956.99, a 12 percent increase. In spite of this improvement, Sevier County continued to lag behind most Tennessee school districts in its per pupil expenditures, spending 35 percent less than the average state school district.

This significant gap in educational needs has attracted the attention and the generosity of Sevier County native, Dolly Parton, who formed the Dollywood Foundation in early 1988 in part to raise funds for the support of local projects aimed at reducing the dropout rate. Among the foundation's most ambitious projects is the personally backed commitment of Parton to a "buddy contract" program that will award every high school graduate and his or her buddy $500 each upon completion of their secondary education. Upon entering into the program, the students pledge to help each other overcome any problems that might prove obstacles to the completion of their education. Using the leverage of peer pressure, Parton and other foundation supporters believe that the program will garner results.

Quoted in a Dollywood press release, Parton, who was brought up in extreme poverty, put a positive light on what motivates many high school age youth to enter the work force prematurely. "In this part of the country the work ethic is very strong and any child who's old enough to work is encouraged to do so, usually at the expense of an education," Parton reportedly said. What remains unsaid is that many low-income children in Sevier County enter the work force out of sheer necessity. Ironically, their abandonment of a high school education is the first step toward insuring economic entrapment in the ranks of the working poor.

Though Tennessee state child labor laws limiting work hours for school-age youth are stringent compared to the general labor law void that exists for other workers in the state, Sevier County residents interviewed for this study suggested that these laws were being violated routinely. State law restricts the hours during which high-school-age youth can work by age group, imposing strict limitations on 14 and 15-year-old employees, who are not permitted to work more than three hours a day or 18 hours a week. In addition, they cannot work past 7:00 p.m. or prior to 6:00 a.m., according to state law. Employees aged 17 or younger are not permitted to work any hours during which school is in session, but 16- and 17-year-olds are not restricted to a limited number of working hours outside of the in-session range. During summers, even 14- and 15-year-olds are permitted to work a minimum of 40 hours per week, and many Sevier County youth apparently do. Children under the age of 14 are prohibited from working.

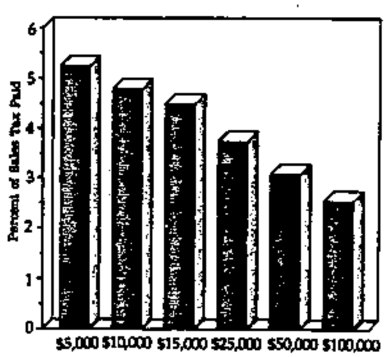
For 17-year-old, low-income youth, the impetus to leave school is likely quite strong. Able to enter the local work force at an earnings level commensurate with what their parents are receiving, employment, marginal though it is, may appear an attractive, viable alternative. Since many low-income families already live in extended-family situations, the ability to finance independent living is not likely viewed as a necessary prerequisite for employment. Furthermore, there are few if any local alternatives to low-wage tourism industry jobs, so low- income youth literally have little reason to believe that their plight will improve with a high school diploma. If their academic performance is poor, as it often is among indigent children who are at distinct social and economic disadvantages throughout their school career, the desire to abandon a situation which often is replete with stigma is likely keen.

Taxing the Poor in Tennessee

Mutiplying economic problems for the poor of Sevier County, as well as for low-income families across the state of Tennessee, is one of the nation's most regressive tax systems. At present, Tennessee collects a greater portion of state and local tax revenues from its general sales tax than any other state in the nation except Washington, according to the Tennessee Tax Project. As a result, those who are least able to afford it – the working poor – assume a disproportionate share of the state's tax burden. And, unlike most states, Tennessee has neglected to remove its sales tax from necessities such as food, increasing the strain on family budgets for the poor. In counties such as Sevier where prices are routinely inflated during the peak months of the tourism season, the burden is made even heavier. Only prescription drugs and utilities remain exempt from state and local sales tax in Tennessee, leaving few necessities tax-free. And, because the state has only a very limited personal income tax and the burden of taxation is being borne by low- and moderate-income taxpayers, the Tennessee Tax Project has found that the Volunteer State collects less money from its citizens, relative to personal income, than any other state except New Hampshire.

Today, Tennessee is one of only seven states in the nation without a general income tax, a system of taxation which virtually exempts some wealthier residents from paying their fair share of state taxes. The state's extremely limited income tax, known as the Hall tax, is levied only on stocks and bonds owned outside of Tennessee and generates only $65 to $70 million annually, less than 1 percent of total state revenues, according to the Tennessee Tax Project. On the other hand, the general sales tax of 5.5 percent, to which some 70 counties have added an additional burden ranging upward to 2.75 percent, generated an estimated 57 percent of the state's revenue in fiscal year 1986-87. Other southern states, by comparison, receive much smaller portions of their revenue pools from sales tax receipts. Relatively prosperous Virginia, for example, nets only 20 percent of its receipts from sales taxes; North Carolina, 22 percent; Alabama, 28 percent. Only

Estimated Sales Tax Burden in Tennessee
Family of four at selected income
Percent of Sales Tax Paid



Source: Tennessee Tax Project

Mississippi, one of the nation's poorest states, approaches a level of dependence on sales tax receipts, 51.3 percent, comparable to Tennessee's.

Tennessee's heavy reliance upon sales tax receipts requires many taxpayers to pay a sales tax as high as 8.25 percent (the maximum allowable combination of state and local sales taxes), one of the highest rates in the nation. Only a handful of the nation's cities have opted to exceed this sales tax rate, and most, the city of New Orleans, for example, do not tax food. The consequences of a policy of continued sales taxation on food are devastating for the poor. Over the course of a year, it is estimated that a family of four with a total income of only $8,000 will spend an estimated 30 percent of its income on food alone. At the maximum possible tax rate of 8.25 percent, the Tennessee Tax Project estimates that, in a year's time, such a family will spend an entire month's food budget in sales taxes. On the other hand, wealthier families barely feel the impact. Those with an annual income of $50,000, for example, pay only 3.08 percent of their income in sales taxes while families who must survive on incomes of $5,000 a year pay 5.25 percent of their income in sales tax.

Most residents of Sevier County pay a sales tax of 7.75 percent, which approaches the maximum combined rate for state (5.5 percent) and local sales taxes (up to 3.25 percent). In the city of Sevierville, the municipal government has enacted an additional .25 percent sales tax, increasing that jurisdiction's overall rate to 8 percent. Since Sevier County's sales tax is only negligibly lower than the maximum, every low-income resident of the county is saddled with an unfair tax burden that is multiplied by peak season pricing.

Unmet Needs, Deficient Public Services

In the municipalities of Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg, public officials have recommended tourism-based taxes, some of which have been endorsed by voters, designed to secure contributions to the support of local infrastucture from those who place the greatest burden upon it – visiting tourists. A corporate excise tax of 6 percent on net earnings, a franchise tax, and a 1 percent gross receipts tax require local businesses to make a larger contribution to the local community than would otherwise be realized. Still, the quality and availability of vital community services in Sevier County generally do not reflect the magnitude of the tourism success story which has taken place there. And some efforts to enhance the community appear to have again disproportionately benefited those least in need. Though community leaders point with some pride to a new community center in Sevierville, for example, its myriad benefits are not cost- free. Prices for the use of meeting rooms, while quite modest, are nonetheless real obstacles to the poor. Visitors to the center are more likely to discover young professionals taking advantage of the modern center's sports facilites than low-income families.

For poor women and children in Sevier County, the needs are obviously great and clearly unmet. Women interviewed in the course of this study repeatedly cited a dire shortage of affordable child care as an obstacle to viable employment for women, and a widely recognized gap in meeting public housing needs has multiplied the difficulties encountered by families in this low-wage economy. In both cases, these critical quality of life factors do not appear to have received adequate attention from local political and community leaders. As in most communities, there is virtually no information available on the actual need for child care beyond the repeated assertions of working women who frequently must rely upon family and friends for care. In the case of public housing, however, the need is well documented as is local unresponsiveness to it.

In the autumn of 1988, Ron Franklin, who directs public housing efforts in Sevierville, reported that 174 families were on a "recently purged" waiting list for public housing. Those families still waiting for public housing had expressed a continued need and met income qualifications for public housing. Sevier County, according to Franklin, has only 105 units of public housing available though an additional 40 units were reportedly in the architectural planning phase in the autumn of 1988. The units, Franklin said, would be fully funded by federal dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

According to data provided by the Tennessee Housing Development Agency, Sevier County has experienced chronic problems with inadequate housing. In 1970, agency data indicated that 26.6 percent or 2,634 of the county's 8,893 occupied housing units had been classified as inadequate. At the same time, 1,171 year-round housing units were reportedly unoccupied in 1970.

By the close of the decade, Sevier County had cut its inadequate housing units dramatically by 39.7 percent, but 1,426 housing units in 1979 were still deemed inadequate.

By 1985, the Tennessee Housing Development Agency estimated Sevier County's cumulative housing need at 9,575 units, up from an estimated 7,135 units in 1980. During the 1970s, unmet housing needs declined from 2,308 households in 1970 to 1,530 households in 1979, but 10.8 percent of the households in the county remained in need of housing. Among those communities experiencing the most pressing need were an estimated 30.9 percent of the county's elderly residents.

Along with the escalation of housing needs in Sevier County came a sharp increase in the cost of housing. According to available data from Tennessee Housing Development, the median sales price of single family homes in Sevier County jumped 34 percent from 1980 to 1985. According to the Tennessee Comptroller, the 1980 median price for a single-family home in Sevier County was nearly $5,000 more than that in any other county in the entire East Tennessee Development District, which is comprised of 16 counties. By 1986, the gap had widened to $10,000.[9] For long-term but low-income homeowners, the increasing cost of housing may ultimately drive property tax rates beyond their reach, destroying the last vestige of security for many families. However, the prevailing local policy on property taxes, according to a long-time local reporter, has been to hold tax rates down. Not surprisingly, those who profit most from such a policy are the local elite, prominent developers and landowners.

Many Sevier Countians interviewed in the course of this case study also expressed concern about both the availability of rental property and the increasing cost. The results of a semi-annual apartment survey conducted by the East Tennessee Development District actually depict considerable price stability for apartments in the county until the fall of 1988. Prior to that time, rental prices for apartments vacillated within a fairly narrow range from a low average of $199 a month in 1980 to an average high of $238 in the fall of 1983. By 1987, the average cost of an apartment, according to the survey, had actually declined to $219 a month, but, just one year later, the average cost of an apartment had risen to $266 a month. At the same time, what had been a consistently low, almost imperceptible vacancy rate increased, suggesting that, though many Sevier County families needed housing, they could not afford prevailing rents, an assertion that was substantiated in interviews. Framing this clear picture of extensive unmet housing needs is the consistent availability of quality rental housing for tourists that generally remains vacant throughout much of the off-season.

While pressing human needs for housing, child and health care, and year-round employment have continued to go unmet for many low-income Sevier County families over the years during which the tourism industry has flourished, future plans clearly include more of the same. The city of Gatlinburg, for example, is now in the process of constructing a $20 million convention center that will offer banquet service for groups of up to 2,000 people. Though the feasibility of the project has been questioned in view of the severe parking and traffic problems in downtown Gatlinburg, city government officials were strongly supportive in spite of open uncertainty about where funds for completion would come from. Overall, part of the project's aim is to lure year-round convention business to the resort town, which would help bridge the economic gap left by the flourishing but primarily seasonal tourism business that Gatlinburg now enjoys. The desire for good weather, however, is not likely reserved only for the vacationer. Conventions are generally designed with recreational value in mind, and, though skiing is available in Gatlinburg, its off-season attractiveness may not prove sufficient to garner scheduled conventions. The new center may only expand peak season business activity and, as a result, benefit only local business owners and local government. Additionally, the presumption that increased off-season tourist traffic will create more year-round work opportunities for Sevier Countians does not address the already inadequate nature of those jobs now in place. Beyond the temporary, male-dominated, high-wage construction jobs associated with the project, it is likely to bring more of the same marginal jobs rather than a foundation for real, improved quality of life.

In addition to the convention center, other future plans for development in Sevierville aim to bring it into the county's fold of attractions. In the autumn of 1988, Terry Morrow, a features editor with the *The Mountain Press* (newspaper) who covers the local tourism industry, reported that a proposed "dude ranch" was on the drawing board. The project, said Morrow, would be aimed at up-scale tourists and part-time residents. Clearly, the jobs created by such a project would offer only more of the same seasonal, low-wage "opportunities," already in abundant supply, that often translate into desperate economic circumstances.

The signs of continued, unchecked commercial development without the necessary advances in human infrastructure needed to effect a positive, broad-based impact on the community are plentiful in Sevier County. Presumably, the status quo is acceptable for those in decision-making capacities. Continuation along the same course, however, will undoubtedly reserve the benefits of this overwhelmingly successful tourism site for those who least need them, commercial developers. Local government too will fare better as a result, given the premier resort status extended to Sevier County by the state of Tennessee, guaranteeing it a larger share of revenue than is received by most counties. But costly infrastucture demands, including county-wide pressures to expand solid waste disposal methods and construction of a court-ordered county jail may consume government benefits. Those most in need in Sevier County are likely to continue being shut out from real, substantive opportunities for economic advancement. As one Sevier County voice from the margin suggested, echoing a timeless American observation, "The rich just get richer, and the poor get poorer."

Chapter Notes

[1]The travel industry, as defined by the U.S. Travel Data Center, includes jobs in air, eating and drinking, hotels/motels, amusement and recreation, services, museums, art galleries, and zoos.

[2]Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, 1986* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1987).

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Bureau of National Affairs, *State Wage and Hour Law* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of National Affairs, 1988).

[7]Ruth Sidel, *Women and Children Last: The Plight of Poor Women in Affluent America* (Ontario: Viking Penguin, 1986).

[8]Diana Pearce, "The Feminization of Poverty: Women, Work and Welfare," *Urban and Social Change Review*, February 1978, and Barbara Ehrenreich and Frances Fox Piven, "The Feminization of Poverty," *Dissent*, Spring 1984.

[9]Comptroller of the Treasury, State of Tennessee, "Performance Audit of Department of Tourist Development," Nashville Department of Audit, April 1989.

Sevier County Families

Living on the Edge

Promoted to visiting tourists as the home of good, clean "family fun," the Gatlinburg-Pigeon Forge area is, ironically, the home of devastating economic problems for many families who have lived in these Tennessee hills all their lives. Though tourism development has enriched state coffers and expanded the wealth of developers, many of them from out of state, it has offered little in return to low-income, indigenous people, particularly to women who head households. Enormously appealing to transient college students, many of whom attend the nearby University of Tennessee, the seasonal employment that predominates in the industry seldom offers a living wage to workers, much less to women who must serve as sole supporters of dependent children. And the vast majority of tourism jobs, most of which are by nature menial and subservient, are female dominated. For these women, life in a tourism economy is marginal at best. The only positive refrain one hears from them about work in a tourism economy is that, before tourism, there was nothing. Now, there is a preponderance of low-paying, physically demanding jobs that generally offer no benefits, no guarantees, and no hope for advancement.

Typically, women who support families on incomes derived from tourism jobs either rely on family members for supplemental financial support or live in extended family households. Technically, these women and their children are homeless. Housing remains out of their economic reach, and the shortage of public housing in Sevier County leaves them with few options. Absent the support of their families, they would likely be confronted with the grim reality of homelessness.

Those women who are fortunate enough to remain part of an intact, married-couple family voice a chilling awareness of their economic vulnerability. Married women who were interviewed in the course of this study realized that they could not hope to support their children on the wages they receive from tourism jobs. Not surprisingly, few single women who head Sevier County households report receiving child support. Instead, they are on their own, attempting to financially support and nurture their families in an economy where low wages predominate and in a larger culture where the once honored concept of a "family wage" has become an ethical castoff. Even those who are fortunate enough to earn adequate wages can seldom expect their income to last beyond the tourist season.

Approximately 35 Sevier County women were interviewed for this study. Some were interviewed at length; others offered their observations about their places of employment and about this tourism economy in general as they performed their jobs. Because Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg remain relatively small, rural communities and the purpose of this study is to illuminate economic realities for women in tourism economies – not to create added difficulties for them, the names of those interviewed have been changed to prevent possible recriminations from their employers. In each case, we have assigned a fictitious first and last name to the person interviewed in an effort to lend a sense of identity to her insights. In many instances, these fictitious identities are far more than employers extend to the women interviewed as they often are expected to wear first-name-only nametags designed to encourage tourists to presume a level of familiarity with or without the woman's consent. In effect, the practice reduces responsible adult women to the demeaning status of girls and servants.

Marie Wheatley, 58, a warm, diminutive woman, has ridden the feast-and-famine employment cycles of Sevier County for more than a decade, working as a hotel maid in Gatlinburg. The work became her only economic option after her husband, a farmer and a park janitor, died suddenly leaving her with six children at home, including then five-year-old twins, Fay and Rene.

"When my daddy died, my mom never had worked. Daddy always took care of everything," Marie's daughter Rene recounted. "We survived two years on Social Security and his life insurance." But the marginal income was insufficient to meet mounting obligations, and, when a son was severely injured, Marie Wheatley took her first job cleaning the rooms where other people slept.

Today, after more than 10 years of experience on the job, nine of them with the same employer, Ms. Wheatley earns $4.05 an hour. But, unlike many women who work as hotel maids in Sevier County, she works 40 hours a week, regardless of the workload. She is lucky. Many hotel/motel managers classify maids as part- time employees, enabling them to routinely send women home after they have cleaned only those rooms occupied during the previous night. As a result, some women who work as maids travel to and from the work site only to work for two hours, or, worse yet, be sent home for lack of work.

"Last week I drawed $105," one divorced mother of dependent children working as a hotel maid for $3.50 an hour said, "and I can't even hardly buy my food with that."

The heartlessness of such marginal employment in the tourism industry is something Marie Wheatley knows only too well. Not only do her wages remain well within the poverty line in spite of years of performing the same job, Ms. Wheatley has made the painful discovery that loyalty and dependability often mean very little to employers whose first concern is profit. After her return to work from a 1985 on-the-job injury, Ms. Wheatley's hours were gradually cut and eventually eliminated by her employer of nine years. In addition, after promising her a good recommendation, Ms. Wheatley was able to confirm that her previous employer had warned prospective employers that she had "a bum leg." Rather than extend their support to an employee injured while in their employ, Ms. Wheatley believes these local hotel owners attempted to discredit her because of her injury. Though she had recovered almost fully from the injury, the injury and the resultant layoff were apparently construed as a blemish on her work record. Because she was branded physically unfit by this employer, Ms. Wheatley did not find work until two months into the tourist season this year, a costly blow in terms of qualifying for unemployment insurance during the off season.

Today, her daughters, Fay and Rene, are second generation tourism industry workers, but they have found no greater opportunity nor reason for hope than did their mother. Rene, who started working when she was 16, is employed as a waitress in a Gatlinburg restaurant owned by a family the young woman regards as "friends." She earns the going hourly rate of $2.01, the barest minimum employers are permitted to pay food servers.

"The highest paycheck I've ever had from there was $94 (for a week)," Rene recalled. "You can make good tips, but you can't make money being a waitress. In the wintertime, you might as well hang it up."

Rene's husband, Gerald Donaldson, who like his wife is a second generation tourism worker, works in a woodcrafting shop that has begun to successfully export its wares to other tourism communities in the South. Gerald earns $4.00 an hour after being with the shop for two years. But he prefers his present work to the fast food sector where he started working for $2.50 an hour at the age of 14. Six years later, he had finally worked up to $3.75 an hour, but, in spite of numerous promises to the contrary, the chance for advancement never came. He gave up. His present employer offers flexible hours, and, unlike many area employers, provides health insurance for Gerald and his family. Still, Gerald and Rene have found that their combined incomes are insufficient for them to live independently.

Rene's twin sister, Fay Wheatley, has followed in her mother's difficult footsteps, working seven days a week during the peak tourist season as a hotel maid in Gatlinburg. In the early autumn of 1988, she anticipated being laid off in November when the wave of visitors ebbed. During slower months, she reported sometimes working only two or three days a week. Fay earns $4.10 an hour. But near the close of the 1988 summer season, she considered herself lucky. Unlike her experience of the preceding year, Fay had worked long enough to qualify for unemployment insurance benefits. And, over the course of the 1988 season, she had earned enough money to save for a VCR, an achievement in which she took genuine pride.

Like many Sevier County women, Fay and Rene cannot afford to live on their own. Were it not for the generosity of their mother, homelessness might well be their lot. For a time, Gerald and Rene attempted to live in Gatlinburg with Rene's two sons, only to find they could not make it. Along with Rene's two small sons, they now live with Ms. Wheatley, Fay, and a retired uncle in the modest but solid ranch brick home that their father's life insurance made possible.

A friendly, open woman clad comfortably in jeans, Marie Wheatley said she had always been determined to have a home after growing up in a cabin that epitomized mountain poverty. Her rustic childhood home was featured in a television film that attempted to dramatize the deprivation of mountain poverty. Later, she and her husband and their eight children shared a similar home of just three rooms, wallpapered with comic strips, as the twins recall. But Marie Wheatley still regrets that she has never been financially able to furnish the home that only her husband's untimely death made possible for her and her children.

Located in an area of Sevier County that, on the surface, seems to have remained untouched by the bustle of tourist traffic just a few miles away, the Wheatley's rural mountainside home is now shared by seven people, three generations of family. Nestled on the side of a mountain along an isolated gravel road, it is easy to forget that millions of visitors travel nearby roads and spend millions at neighboring Dollywood every year. But even the youngest Wheatleys have a keen awareness about what the future holds for them.

"You work all your life for something," remarked Rene, still in her early twenties, "and you never end up with anything."

In spite of their pessimism about the economic future, this family appeared to derive real strength from within, overcoming difficult circumstances through unity, a common scenario for the indigenous poor of Sevier County. In 1987, Rene lost a baby to crib death and a cherished older brother was senselessly murdered. Though the pain of these combined experiences is still evident, it is muted by the bonds of this close-knit family. And, though they jokingly refer to tourists as "tourons," the Wheatley family does not discount the pleasure of meeting people and making friends from diverse cultures and circumstances. But, in spite of their interactions with visitors, Rene and Fay indicated that they could not imagine leaving Sevier County where they live in a remote, isolated area. The Smoky Mountains, they insisted, are a part of them. They cherish the natural beauty around them and the warmth and openness of the people who live there. But both the simple, rural way of life that holds the Wheatley family to this place and this culture and the abundant natural beauty that surrounds them are in jeopardy. The cumulative effect of sustained and seemingly uncontrolled development, as well as cultural and environmental degradation, has begun to take its toll.

And economic strains are expected to worsen as the area becomes increasingly inhospitable to the poor. Property taxes are almost certain to escalate with a coming reassessment, and the punitive nature of Tennessee's and this tourism county's tax structure place an added burden on already strained family budgets. Too, like millions of Americans, Marie and Fay Wheatley live at the mercy of their own bodies. Unable to afford the health insurance their employers neglect to provide, their already fragile economic circumstances are made even more vulnerable. Illness or injury could spell financial disaster.

Like Rene and Fay, Rebecca Gibbs, 30, is a second generation tourism employee. She has been waiting tables in Pigeon Forge "off and on" since she began working at the age of 14, just as her 52-year-old mother has for most of her life. Though her mother's wages have helped supplement the family budget, she has never been faced with going it alone. Rebecca, on the other hand, has. But her earnings have never been sufficient to support her and her 13-year-old son. Without the benefit of child support, something she insists her son's father is incapable of providing, Rebecca has been dependent upon her family for most of her adult life. Her income is typically below $5,000 a year, well beneath the poverty line for an individual, much less for a family of two. She manages only with her family's support and financial help.

"If I didn't have help from my family, I probably wouldn't have a car or a place to live," Rebecca observed. She continues to live in the same trailer that she made her home after marrying at the age of 15. "I thought it would be a fairy tale, that I would live happily ever after," she said of her early marriage. Because she did not complete her sophomore year of high school ("I thought I knew everything."), Rebecca does not qualify for jobs other than the unskilled, low-wage tourism industry jobs that abound in Sevier County.

Though Rebecca seems remarkably serene today in spite of two failed marriages, full financial and parental responsibility for her son, and years of carving an existence out of a marginal income, things were not always so. She recalls being really bitter about "hard times" and credits her current, more positive outlook to a faith in God, without which she says she would long ago have been "in jail or committed," an indication of the level of desperation she has felt in this relatively young life. But Rebecca indicates that she has learned to forgive those who failed her, such as her former husband who has never contributed to the support of his son. Though she states that she does not live "the full Christian life" because she was not "obedient" in marriage, she strives to meet such goals.

"When the industrial park came to Sevierville, all the women went to work, and the women started makin' the money so times started gettin' better," Rebecca observed. "I believe the women made Sevier County. The women are strong and the men aren't.

"I'm kind of old fashioned. I believe the man should support the family," Rebecca added but quickly asserted that she also believed working women should be paid enough to support a family. "The cost of living here is 200 percent what it used to be when mine was a baby."

Work for Rebecca is strictly a seasonal activity, about seven months on and five months off. The more reported income she earns from her $2.10-an-hour wages and the more advance taxes she pays based upon receipts from the tables she serves, the larger her wintertime unemployment insurance checks, she observed. In the busiest of the peak months, she estimates that she earns approximately $6 an hour in wages plus tips, an earnings level that lured her away from a year-round, minimum wage factory job with benefits. But, during the winter of 1987-88, she received only $32 a week in unemployment insurance benefits based upon her earnings from the previous summer. She and her son survived with the help of food stamps and financial assistance from her parents, who provide them with a car, clothes, and automobile, health, and life insurance. In addition, Rebecca's mother assists her with the care of her son. The two women carefully schedule their work hours, enabling one of them to be available to care for her son throughout the peak season. But her "half grown" son will soon be more independent, she observed. "He's just waitin' to go to work."

Since the age of 14, Rebecca has worked a variety of jobs, in a day care center, a candle factory, a delicatessan, but mainly in restaurants. Food service offers the only semblance of "opportunity" in Sevier County for her and the only hope of something better. She dreams of someday opening a small eatery with her mother, specializing in local favorites, though she has no idea where she would get the money to launch such a venture. Rebecca expressed hopes that eventually her mother will be able to finance the venture, and the two of them will then join a long list of local entrepreneurs.

When asked what would most improve the plight of women working in the tourism industry, Rebecca indicated that the absence of available, affordable child care was a formidable obstacle to self-sufficiency. Without the ongoing assistance of family members with child care, women like Rebecca would likely be forced into complete dependence upon public assistance. The prohibitive cost of child care and its reported scarcity in Sevier County are, for those women who lack extended family support systems, roadblocks to work opportunities outside the home, particularly when those opportunities do not offer the hope of economic independence—even when child care is not a factor.

In the meantime, she must settle for less than optimum working conditions. Though Rebecca suggests that the owner/managers of the locally owned restaurant where she works are good people to work for, the demands of peak season are such that it is often necessary for her to work long hours before a break in traffic permits any time to eat or rest. When asked why her employers did not feel obligated to extend regular breaks to employees, Rebecca indicated that she did not know. Scheduled breaks appear to be regarded as luxuries to most women who work in the food industry in Sevier County. A "work-while-you-can" attitude prevails, and, when asked what would improve their plight, some women simply express the desire for more hours of work, rather than better working conditions or improved wages and benefits.

Among Rebecca's co-workers at the locally owned Pigeon Forge restaurant where she worked in 1988 were three older women, only one of whom echoed the sentiment that the restaurant was indeed a good place to work. Interestingly, this particular waitress was married. The other two older waitresses expressed altogether different sentiments. Low wages, pre-taxed tips, and seasonal work patterns made survival a near impossibility, both single women indicated. One woman, who appeared to be in her late fifties or early sixties, said that she lived alone and barely managed during the peak season much less during off season when she received only meager unemployment insurance benefits. "If you get 40 hours, you might get $30 or $40 a week," she said of her wages, from which tax deductions are made in anticipation of tips received. Receipts from tables served are used as indicators of anticipated tips. As a result, if a big ticket table simply neglects to provide the server with a tip, the food server sustains a substantial loss. She pays taxes on a tip she never received.

"You work yourself to death for nothin'," one waitress commented. Living in the extended family household typical to Sevier County, she indicated that she was helping support two small grandchildren whose father had no income and, therefore, was unable to provide financial support for his children.

In the food service industry, local women generally find hundreds of jobs are available during the summer months. The demand for workers permits experienced food servers to move freely from job to job. And, because workers seldom receive workplace benefits beyond civil treatment and minimal pay increases, the impetus for loyalty to an employer is simply absent. When management changed at the establishment where Rebecca had worked for three years, for example, she simply moved on to a new restaurant.

Though sheer demand makes job mobility possible, a surprising number of women reported having stayed with the same employer for a number of years. In an economy fraught with uncertainty, knowing who your employer will be from year to year is perhaps the only semblance of a normal work world. For example, Shirley Mills, who is married to a textile worker, reported having worked as a maid with the same downtown Gatlinburg hotel for 22 years. One of her co-workers, also a maid, had worked 23 years with the establishment, according to Ms. Mills. The impetus in Ms. Mill's case was a pension plan provided by her employer, a member of the Ogle family, a name that dates to the founding settlers of the area. Though Ms. Mills is routinely laid off every fall, pleasant working conditions coupled with the promise of retirement benefits, however limited, have provided sufficient reason for her to remain with her employer. She earns $4 an hour.

"I don't know if I would be able to make it or not," Ms. Mills mused when asked if she felt she could support herself on her wages.

For younger women like Lisa Roberts, 22, who still lives with her mother, work in the tourism industry, though it pays very little, offers an opportunity to have things, a new car, in Lisa's case, that would otherwise simply be out of reach. It does not, however, offer the possibility of independence. Lisa started working at the age of 16 and has been employed by a prominent national fast food restaurant in Pigeon Forge for the past four years. Though she has worked as a waitress, she prefers fast food. "You make more money being a waitress, but in the slow season you won't have no money."

After four years on the job, Lisa now earns $5 an hour as kitchen manager for the restaurant, but she keeps a second job at another chain food establishment during the peak season to increase her income. Her year-round job provides no health care benefits, and employees must work for a full year before receiving one week of paid vacation, an apparent standard in this industry. Lisa's best bet for the future, in her opinion, is a job in one of the local factories where hourly wages range up to $9 an hour, she reported. But, like other women interviewed in Sevier County, she expressed reservations about her ability to capture one of such a limited number of jobs. "It depends on who you know," Lisa observed.

Without options outside the tourism industry, the higher wages and the benefits that ordinarily accompany them remain out of reach for most Sevier County women. Even though the demand for workers has become increasingly strong, particularly in Pigeon Forge, it has not forced local tourism businesses into paying a true living wage. Though competition for workers has pushed the minimum wage upward, it has remained at a fixed national rate for so long that such an upward adjustment is as much the product of necessity as it is of competition. There are simply not enough workers who have access to support structures sufficient to enable them to accept wages that will not finance even the barest necessitites – food, clothing, and shelter. Even the $3.85 to $4.00 an hour wage that appears to prevail in Sevier County cannot compensate for the void in adjustments to the minimum wage, a national benchmark, over nearly a decade.

However, even sufficient earnings, hard earned though they may be, often cannot counter the fundamentally classist nature of the relationship some Sevier County employers have with their employees. When Marge Strait, a Pigeon Forge waitress, agreed to talk about her work for a prominent, mid-priced Southern chain of restaurants, a litany of complaints about the company's apparent disregard for its employees issued forth. Her own access to income sufficient for her and her children's survival was hard earned, she suggested, at a cost that often seemed too dear. When asked how women were treated in a tourism economy such as that which dominates Sevier County, Marge asserted firmly, "We get treated like dirt; you really get discriminated against."

When prodded for further explanation, Ms. Strait was quick with a response. Low wages and grueling, unrewarded, thankless hard work were among her many criticisms of working conditions. Pay scales, she added, in no way reflected the demanding nature of the work. Because of the management's recognition of the difficulty of lifting trays loaded with heavy glass, the dishwasher was paid $6 an hour, according to Marge. However, that level of compensation for heavy work had never been extended to food servers, who often were responsible for clearing tables with trays laden with heavy dishes, but were routinely started at only $2.06 an hour. Too, in this rigidly non-union environment, seniority was simply not regarded as a basis for reward or recognition. As a result, employees who were among the first hired by this flourishing establishment were reportedly the first to be laid off during the slow season. Full-time employees fortunate enough to weather off-season layoffs faced six months of limited hours, limited tips, and an income that generally measured about half that earned during the preceding six months of peak tourist activity. And, though this particular company offered health insurance, employees were given a week's vacation only after a year of employment and then were permitted to take it only during the off-season winter months. During peak months, Jill Simpson, a coworker of Marge's, reported that it was not unusual to work 15-hour shifts with no more than a 30-minute break, taken only when a lull in tourist traffic permitted.

Interestingly, Marge Strait, like many other women interviewed in Sevier County, referred to her manager as "the boss man," a particularly telling appellation that reflected something of the labor-management dynamic which exists in many food service establishments and hotels. While the U.S. manufacturing sector, heavily dominated by male workers who are often organized, has begun to explore paticipatory avenues in labor-management relations, many of those occupations in which women remain segregated continue to employ outdated, authoritarian, even dictatorial management models that are a proven detriment to productivity. Secondly, the most fundamental and perhaps most difficult lessons yet to be learned by U.S. industries seem remote from the mentality that predominates throughout the service industry. In Marge's words, "It doesn't get passed on to the employees."

When Marge's employer, already the leader in the entire Southern chain, logged a record-breaking, six-figure profit for a single week in October, employees were given free turkeys with dressing as a bonus while two managers were apparently rewarded with sizable cash bonuses, enabling both to return to work with new cars. Not surprisingly, the apparent disparity in the rewards engendered considerable hostility among employees, each of whom had contributed to the profits. Though such policies of disproportionately rewarding a few for the efforts of many prevail throughout American industry, they remain ill-advised and insensitive at best. Advanced by the enormously successful Japanese industrial sector, emerging labor-management models, which have generated dramatic increases in productivity and quality, have diminished disparities in rewards – even subtle workplace distinctions – between management and labor. If outdated autocratic and regressive management styles are being employed by the most prominent, high-profile food establishments in the South, one can only speculate about the labor-management dynamic that dominates lesser known establishments where even the most basic wages and benefits are not being provided to workers. However, those Sevier County women who expressed greatest satisfaction with their treatment on the job, though not necessarily with their wages and benefits, worked exclusively for locally owned businesses.

Though Marge indicated that she believed her income would be sufficient to support her and her two children were she not married, it was also clear to her that coworkers, who were sole supporters of children, were having great difficulty doing just that. Though Marge and her coworker, Jill Simpson, reported earning from $17,000 to $18,000 a year in wages and tips, Marge indicated that, unless working conditions changed, she would be seeking other employment.

For Jill, options are far more limited. A divorced mother of two, who reported receiving no child support for several months, Jill will not likely find a suitable income alternative to a workplace where she finds the managers "hateful" and their attitude towards her devoid of respect. Like some hotel maids, Jill is sometimes simply told to go back home if customer traffic does not warrant her being on the job. On these occasions, she must return home without having earned anything in spite of the fact that it is necessary for her to travel an hour each way to and from work. Confronted with the hard reality of meeting all expenses for her family, Jill is not in a position to challenge such treatment received at the hands of managers, even to ask for higher wages as reward for tenure and hard work. Too many other women are searching for the higher wage "opportunity" Jill has. "The money is too good, otherwise a lot of us wouldn't take it (on-the-job treatment)," she observed.

Though both Marge and Jill reported receiving partial unemployment insurance benefits during off-season months when they were placed on temporary layoff, it was clear that even this income combined with partial wages was barely adequate for Jill and her children, in spite of the fact that her overall annual earnings were reportedly triple those of many women in Sevier County. While Jill is fortunate enough to live in HUD subsidized housing, and to be the beneficiary of an above average income with health care benefits, she still expressed real difficulty with the challenge of making ends meet for her and her two children. Her plight was clearly indicative of how wide the gap between minimum wages and economic survival has become.

With the increasing demand for minimum wage workers, the season of 1988 proved one of the most difficult in memory for workers like Phyllis Jones, 31, who is employed at a prominent downtown Gatlinburg restaurant. "This is the worst summer I've ever pulled," Ms. Jones said. "They've been begging for help in Pigeon Forge all summer, but they don't want to pay nothing."

Ms. Jones is fortunate not to be solely dependent upon her income. Married to a union steelworker who travels out of this "right to work" state to work, she is nevertheless quite conscious of her own vulnerability. "We was just talkin' the other day, and I said I couldn't imagine how I'd take care of myself and my daughter on my own. I'd have to go live with my mother."

Though she views the local tourist economy as a situation in which "People are just putting up anything they can to make money," it is clear that waitresses do not number among the local profiteers. While Ms. Jones indicated that her place of employment was "a good place to work," it is her employer's policy to provide health insurance only to employees with two years of service. And, though the restaurant where she works remains open year round with the exception of two weeks at Christmas, the precipitous decline in clientele during the off-season months has a dramatic impact on the incomes of employees. For those who are sole providers for families, self-sufficiency is a virtual impossibility. For single women in this economy, the road is not much easier.

Ann Lockhart, 47, has found that even a management-level job with benefits, including health insurance, profitsharing, and a month's vacation with pay, has not translated into economic self-sufficiency. "If I had to pay rent, I couldn't make it; if I didn't live with my mother, I don't know what I'd do," she remarked. "I'm just right above the welfare level. Most will get on welfare rather than work, particularly if they have kids."

Similarly, waitress Sue Jasper, who has worked at the same Pigeon Forge restaurant for 20 years, finds self-sufficiency out of her reach. Though she has no children and luckily owns the house that belonged to her now deceased parents, she finds it enormously difficult just to meet insurance premiums on the property. The restaurant where she works now provides health insurance though it did not when she first became employed there, but it shuts down every year from November through March. As a result, Ms. Jasper's income is cut drastically for several months. In the autumn of 1988, she expressed the hope that she and her former husband would reconcile.

For mothers of dependent children the economic plight of employment in a tourism economy is far more difficult. Trina Meyers, 38, has found herself reliving a story she once thought was a part of her past. After a decade of struggling to support two children alone in Sevier County, Ms. Meyers again has two small children and a tremendous responsibility. With the recent collapse of her second marriage, she has returned to Sevier County from Cincinnati, Ohio, where she lived with her now estranged husband. Though her older children are grown, she now has two small children by her second marriage, and, again, she finds herself a single mother with full responsibility for them.

Like many local women, Trina lives with her parents, and tenuously makes her way as a waitress. While she is working, her mother keeps her two small children. At the time of the interview, she was receiving no child support in spite of the fact that her former husband earns a comfortable income and receives a disability pension from the military. The scenario is a maddening replay of a former life for Ms. Meyers when her first husband, a successful businessman, failed to provide child support for a decade, forcing her into the difficult position of sole supporter in a tourism economy.

On the job as a cocktail waitress, Ms. Meyers now earns $3 an hour, an exceptionally good hourly wage for a waitress, plus tips, which, on a good night, range up to $85. During the peak season, Ms. Meyers regarded her wages as adequate although she was unable to live independently as yet. Too, she anticipated that the job would diminish to a part-time role as the tourist season wound to a close. Though the job offered no health care benefits, her children were covered by her former husband's health insurance, so she saw no reason for alarm. However, she acknowledged an awareness of her own vulnerability.

On the evening of the interview, Ms. Meyers was working at a new job in one of the few downtown Gatlinburg establishments that might be described as a nightclub. Though she had been back in Sevier County for only a month and a half, she was already on her second job, having just left work as a waitress in a prominent local restaurant. While she expressed optimism about her ability to support herself and her children, it was apparent that the responsibility promised to be a difficult one. Ms. Meyers was working her eighth successive day, covering an estimated 50 tables alone. And the evening shift for which she indicated a preference because it enabled her to spend more time with her children was proving to require her presence until the early morning hours.

Like other residents, Ms. Meyers has detected a change in Gatlinburg's atmosphere in the form of what she and others described as a growing "Mafia" presence and increased drug trafficking. Nonetheless, Ms. Meyers, originally from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, said she found Gatlinburg "a fun town" for single women. "You get to meet people from all walks of life . . .a lot of rich guys and a lot of sugar daddies."

In Ms. Meyers' view, recent intrusions from the outside world have not fundamentally altered the wholesomeness Sevier County trades upon. "With the local people, it's like Peyton Place, like a big family. Everybody really takes care of each other."

Single mother Fran Potts, 31, has not found generosity to be the watchword for life in Sevier

County. Since she began working "off the books" at the age of 13, she has found only deadend, low-paying jobs. Her work history has covered the full range of marginal, minimum wage jobs: dishwasher, retail sales clerk, cook, and health care worker. None has ever offered income adequate to finance real independence. Only her considerable resourcefulness has enabled Fran to survive.

"There's no way you can live by yourself. I could pay my bills cause I always worked two jobs. And I can (preserve) in the summer; I've always put back. I was raised poor, so I'm sort of used to doin' things like this," Fran described her own circumstances, but cautioned that such independence is anything but the rule in Sevier County. "There are a lot of two, three, and four family living situations. You go from $300, $400, to $500 a week to $40, $50, or $60 a week in the winter. One week, you'll be making $200 or $300 in tips; the next week it won't pay you to go to work by the time you pay gas and a babysitter. You won't make $6 in tips. It drops off that fast."

By Christmastime, the indigenous poor are panicked, according to Fran. Extensive requirements of documentation to establish poverty keep many families off public assistance and food stamp rolls for months, Fran charged. Families literally give up and subsist with the help of family and friends.

"It's always been like this, and it just keeps gettin' worse every year. The cost of living keeps going up; they keep raisin' our taxes, but then the minimum wage is not going up," Fran observed. And circumstances are not much better for many local factory workers, she charged. "You get a dime a year or a dime every six months raise.

"They come up with this hotel/motel tax. Oh, it would just benefit the whole county, they said. Everybody voted for it, but guess who gets it all? It goes into the tourism industry for advertisement. That's all the money went for. No poor people got it nowhere," Fran observed. "That was a little thing they played on the people.

"Dollywood got most of it," she charged. "I've counted eight or ten signs for Dollywood out here (Fran resides outside of Sevierville, through which tourists entering from the Tennessee side must pass before reaching Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg). By the time they get to Sevierville, how can they not know where Dollywood is."

Fran also offered a unique, insider's perspective on markets for local artisans and craftspersons. As a maker of crafts selling her wares at a prominent Gatlinburg ski resort, Fran observed that locals were vastly outnumbered by people from out of state. "They go home in the winter; they live somewhere else; they don't even have to pay taxes here."

Over the past two years, Fran has struggled to care for her son, Peter, who was born prematurely and has experienced continual health problems as a result. Now on welfare, Fran is attending the University of Tennessee in hopes of building a career in the field of child care. But the obstacles to getting off welfare and escaping deadend minimum wage work are plentiful.

In the fall of 1988, the Sevier County human services office had informed Fran that it would expect her to count already spent Pell Grant monies, designed to assist low-income students, as income against her welfare check. As a result, Medicaid coverage for her son was in jeopardy because of her added "income," raising the possibility of cutting off support for critically important and expensive eye examinations designed to monitor the consequences of Peter's long-term oxygen use. And, though she reported having informed the local welfare office of the identity of her child's father, she had received no child support from him in spite of his employment at a high-paying job in neighboring Knox County. Though the conflict over welfare benefits was eventually resolved in her favor, it was indicative of the punitive nature of the overall system and the generalized attitude that apparently prevails in public agency dealings with dependent women.

Women on welfare in Sevier County, Fran Potts has discovered, have a doubly difficult plight. This overwhelmingly conservative, Republican community strongly values the work ethic and apparently views welfare with traditional southern disdain. "There's so much pride here that people think it's a sin to be gettin' food stamps," Fran observed.

According to Charlie Blair with the Tennessee Hunger Coalition, only about half of those eligible for benefits in Sevier County are actually receiving them. "Traditionally, they are an independent people who are really good at getting by," Blair observed. "Pride is a huge barrier, but, on the other end, respect for the people involved is another huge barrier."

Those who cannot manage to eke out an existence in Sevier County without dependence on public assistance are met with a less than hospitable reception. "If I have a food stamp problem in the Department for Human Services, I continually have to fight with someone on a lower level to get the problem resolved," Blair commented on his work as an advocate for the poor. Though not an uncommon scenario, Blair observed that rules were arbitrarily employed and caseworkers were routinely insensitive to the plight of the poor in Sevier County. As with many social service agencies, Sevier County's are overextended. Caseworkers manage as many as 300 food stamp cases, according to Blair, while just over 100 cases is the state average. Whether the product of bureaucratic insensitivity or cultural pride, many Sevier Countians are not getting the help they need. While food stamp participation has increased 1.9 percent nationally over the past eight years, it has declined 19 percent in Sevier County, according to the Tennessee Hunger Coalition.

Similarly, only a small number of local physicians reportedly accept Medicaid cards, and the reception for their holders at the local hospital is less than warm, Fran Potts suggested. "If you go up there with a Medicaid card, I guarantee someone will go before you."

But Fran's frustrations with local indifference to the plight of the poor have moved her to act rather than immobilized her. Together with her fellow tenants at a local low-income housing project, Fran helped form a fledgling group that began its life with a push to resolve tenants' complaints at the public housing complex where she then lived. The group moved from housing issues to an attempt to bring attention to the failure of a local hospital to provide previously agreed upon indigent care in return for government contributions to its building fund. Instead of making local residents aware of the availability of indigent care funds, the group charged that the hospital had been using the funds to write off bad debts, picking and choosing who would receive the much-needed assistance. To determine how many low-income Sevier County residents were aware of the funds, Fran and fellow activists interviewed more than 400 people in a "cheese line" survey but found only five people who were aware of the availability of funds for indigent health care.

The members of the group were also the originators of the title "Behind the Glitter," an idea they had for an expose that would call attention to the substandard housing in which many local residents live just behind the "strip" in Pigeon Forge. One of the county's wealthier business leaders, Fran charged, routinely rents houses without insulation or water to low-income families who are desperate for housing. "These houses are just boards on both sides with naked wires between them," Fran said of one such low-rent house where a friend had once resided. Throughout the county, there is a critical shortage of low-income housing that even public housing construction now in the planning phase is not expected to alleviate. And, according to Fran, who now rents a HUD subsidized trailer, substandard mobile homes in congested, ghetto trailer parks, are becoming ubiquitous rental offerings, property that its owners will not rent through HUD because of stringent maintenance requirements. At the same time, hundreds of houses stand empty during the off season while the indigenous people search for affordable housing.

"They'd rather rent them to tourists for $500 a week," Fran concluded. "They know they don't have to rent to local people.

"Right now is crisis time in Sevierville," Fran Potts said of the county seat in the autumn of 1988. "The churches are getting mad so many people are asking for dollars. They need a bookkeeper just to account for the dollars spent. All the agencies are swamped at Christmas."

This tourism economy, Fran observed, is equally cruel to both men and women. "There's not much difference in what it's doing to women or men, but the men can get jobs out of town, while the women are more worried about being here with their children." At the same time, she suggested, as did other women interviewed in the course of preparing this case study, that, in spite of the homespun image it trades upon, Sevier County is not what it seems. Women who had worked as maids in local hotels reported observing apparent cases of prostitution, and drug trafficking, particularly the cultivation of marijuana, is thought to be widespread.

Like Fran Potts, Jill Patterson, 36, started working summers in Sevier County at the age of 13, cleaning rooms in a local motel. Her most recent job was in a pancake house in Gatlinburg, where she earned $2.10 an hour plus tips. Now she is unemployed. She and her 16- and 19-year-old sons live with her mother and father in a rural area outside of Sevierville. Though she has a high school education and considerable work experience, her prospects for employment at a living wage in Sevier County are minimal. Hers is a pattern of marginalized employment that is all too familiar to her mother, Lily Dodd, 58.

"You can't make ends meet on what they pay unless you have help," said Ms. Dodd, who has held jobs as a cook, a maid, a store clerk, a factory worker, and now works as an attendant in a local laundromat. She earns $4 an hour. "You take $2.10 an hour (wages for food servers), you'd have to work a week to buy a gallon of milk and a loaf of bread. You might make your tips, but, good gosh, they ain't that great.

"Seniority in these restaurants doesn't mean nothin', and there's not very many people that are nice to you. People don't care about you just as long as they make their big money.

"Tourism hasn't done the people that live here a bit of good. This one lady told me her boss man pays her $3.85 an hour. He just went and bought himself a Lamborghini and his wife a Porche. Most everybody around here works two or three jobs. They ain't no way a person can make anything; that's why everybody here lives off welfare."

And dependency upon welfare is rife with indignities that this proud culture does not easily suffer, according to both women. "We've got a bad system set up in Sevierville," Pat suggested. "They're so smart with them at the welfare office that they're afraid to go up there and ask them for it. They don't understand it."

Even the task of qualifying for unemployment insurance benefits to which she was entitled during a single bout of unemployment proved a demeaning experience for Ms. Dodd. "You go up there and they treat you like you're dirt under their feet. I drawed one time and I haven't been treated as nasty as I was in them offices."

Like many other women interviewed in Sevier County, Jill has identified the father of her children to local welfare authorities and informed them of his specific whereabouts and place of employment, only to be met with no results. She has never received any child support. "If he missed child support, he was supposed to be picked up," Jill recalled the court order. "They never even tried."

Because her daughter has not been able to survive independently since her early divorce, Ms. Dodd has been parenting virtually all her adult life, first her own five children and then her daughter's two children, as well as intermittent episodes of caring for other grandchildren. "We've got one 17 and one seven, and between the two of us, we've raised them. And, of course, her daddy helps when he can but, gosh, we don't have that much either."

The plight for children of the poor is an especially difficult one, both mother and daughter suggested. "Around here, most kids have to work if they want any money," observed Jill Patterson. "There are a lot of one-parent families without any support." But the treatment they often receive in local workplaces, both women suggested, is less than acceptable. Ms. Dodd recounted an instance of witnessing what she considered maltreatment of teenage employees in a local fast food restaurant. "They treated them like they was dirt, and they was kids that needed to work." And the stresses that are added to the lives of young people who are attempting to complete their high school education and work at the same time are also considerable. As Jill observed, "They're so short of help they work the kids till 12:00 or 1:00 at night."

There is a viable escape route from poverty for low-income children, suggested Ms. Dodd, but it remains economically out of reach for the poor. "Now kids got to have an education, but how you goin' to afford it?" Ms. Dodd asked rhetorically.

The only hope for those among the working poor today, in the view of both women, is the formation of a hotel/restaurant union, a realization the workers in this strongly anti-union county and state are unlikely to reach easily. As it is, Ms. Dodd believes many visitors think, "We owe them for being here."

In the early autumn of 1988, Jill Patterson and her mother believed they saw some promise of rising wages and opportunity with the construction of a new mall in Pigeon Forge. Widely advertised, some jobs were reportedly offering $6 an hour and $4.75 seemed to be an average entry-level wage, Ms. Johnson observed. A Pigeon Forge McDonald's boldly advertised "Help Wanted, Full-Time Jobs Available," a rare opportunity in this economy. But interviews with women working at the new mall revealed that few, if any, were earning $6 an hour; part-time work continued to be the rule; and many management jobs were being held by women who had been transferred from out of state to manage the newly opened stores.

As they began to open their doors in early October 1988, many of the stores in the newest of Pigeon Forge's factory outlet malls were being managed by women from Boaz, Alabama, another regional outlet mall capitol. The manager of a New Orleans chain store which had just opened in the new mall reported that jobs were "strictly part-time" at starting wage of $5.25 an hour. She also volunteered that the local unemployment insurance office had warned store managers about the difficulty of finding a sufficient number of employees locally. The shortage of available workers and the resultant strain on those working in the industry was a familiar refrain among all those women interviewed.

But most women working in the new mall expressed pleasure with the opportunity being extended to them. "Now the jobs are starting out at $4.35 or $4.50 an hour," Willa Debord, a sales clerk in one of the factory outlet stores, observed with approval. In addition, her full-time job with the outlet store offered health care benefits and vacation leave. Fortunately, this mother of two small children was a member of a two-paycheck family and, therefore, not solely dependent upon her limited income for their support.

Karen Zornes, 20, a retail clerk in the new outlet mall at Pigeon Forge, also regarded the opportunities there as a cut above those generally available to women in the Sevier County economy. Married to a native Sevier Countian, Ms. Zorne's perspective was uncharacteristically outspoken and articulate about the area and the social and economic plight of women who live there. "Every place you go to, the presidents and vice presidents are all male," observed Ms. Zornes, who had worked in a number of local businesses, including more than one hotel and a local bank. "There is a male-dominated hierarchy, and, if you don't agree with their philosophies, you are ostracized.

"I've met many women who are scared to death to go on a job interview," Ms. Zornes added. "The women do the work and the men reap the rewards. Unless they are born into a family of wealth, they are restricted. There's no way they'll ever excel to their full potential."

Harriet Giles, on the other hand, was bright with optimism about her new job at the outlet mall. The 23-year-old married mother of two children expressed the belief that her new job offered better opportunities than were previously available. "There's a good chance to move up, and they will help with college if you want to go."

Previously, Ms. Giles had worked at another local outlet mall, an older, sprawling series of outlet stores nearby where she said she was routinely expected to work 50 to 60 hours a week while still being designated as a part-time employee. When she took her present retail job, it was at an hourly wage that nearly matched what she had worked years to achieve. In spite of her genuine optimism, Ms. Giles was earning less than $5 an hour, a wage insufficient to support a family were it necessary for her to provide for her children.

Ms. Giles's experience at the older mall was cited as typical by a woman who had managed one of the outlet stores since its opening. Usually, full-time work at mall stores is limited to the manager and the assistant manager, she observed, and augmented by part-time staff which is cut dramatically during the off season. This particular store relied upon the support of a staff of six part-time employees during the peak season but engaged only two part-time employees in the off season. Though managers for this particular outlet store received competitive benefit packages, including sick and bereavement leave, health insurance, and paid vacations, entry-level, part-time employees received no benefits and usually started work at only $4 an hour.

When asked about the effects of such cyclical patterns of unemployment, minimal wages, and no benefits, the manager observed cynically, "They know what it's going to be when they take the job."

Though many women working in the tourism industry were unable to articulate an awareness of the oppressive nature of the culture in which they live, there were notable exceptions, such as Karen Zornes, who is not a native of the region, and Carey White, a 21-year-old sales clerk in a designer outlet store and a lifelong resident of the county. A student at the University of Tennessee, Carey described local culture as "very Southern" and observed that only "as long as they are quiet" could women be expected to prosper in Sevier County. "Only the man can bring home the bacon," she added. "But, if you're black and a woman, you might as well forget it."

The virtually invisible black community, Carey observed, is rigidly segregated in low-income communities and in public housing, excluded from job opportunities in the tourism industry, and subjected to widespread discrimination. Gatlinburg schools, she suggested, had, in the past, subtly forced young blacks out. But discrimination does not end with racism, in this young native's eyes.

"Older women really have it rough," Carey observed. Because they lacked "glamour," she believed they were routinely excluded from high visibility jobs in the booming local retail industry. The jobs, Carey suggested knowingly, are much more likely to go to young college students. Observations of the personnel in local retail establishments appeared to verify the assertion that few older women were being employed in retail sales. On the other hand, older women were not uncommon presences in locally owned restaurants where they were frequently observed working as waitresses. But only at Dollywood, Carey suggested, were older women welcomed, even encouraged to seek employment. These observations were verified by Pat Drummond, a spokesperson for Dollywood, who reported that 200 of the theme park's 1,500 employees in 1987 were retirement age or older.

One graying Sevierville woman working in a chain fast food restaurant during the off season indicated that she could not wait to return to Dollywood. When asked why, she suggested wistfully, "It's like going back in time." And in spite of the seasonal nature of the work, her work in a Dollywood restaurant offered access to generous tips and what she regarded as a good peak season income. She also indicated that employees who worked a sufficient number of hours during the peak season were also entitled to profit-sharing after a requisite number of seasons with the theme park. Other women interviewed also expressed the general belief that Dollywood was indeed a good place to work in Sevier County. Jill Patterson and her mother indicated that a family member worked there and enjoyed the work.

In spite of the hint of improving economic opportunity, local women like Linda Karnes, 34, a San Diego native who has lived with her family in Sevier County for 19 years, suggest that the sting of protracted sex discrimination in Sevier County has left its scars. In Linda's case, it has left a legacy of real bitterness. A veteran of the hotel and restaurant business, she now works as a waitress and, as an entrepreneur of sorts, performing cleaning services for local businesses. But her encounters with employers in the tourism industry have been consistently negative.

"There's nothing wrong with the people who come here. They're nice. But the businesses don't want to pay their help anything," she observed. "I worked for one hotel for three years and did six people's jobs for $2.50 an hour. That's the way all these employers treat their help. I left when they told me to come in at 2:00 but not to clock in until 4:00.

"These owners are just out for themselves; they make a lot of money, then they go to Florida for the winter and let everybody else starve," Linda observed. "They don't treat women right here; the women support the men most of the time. That's why I'm not married. I'll be darned if I'll support a man."

Like most of the women interviewed, Linda began working as a waitress when she was in high school, for $6 a day plus tips. She lost that first job, she recalled, "because I smiled too much."

When she was 16, she reported losing another job when a restaurant owner opted to replace her with the daughter of a prominent local businessman. Linda's Sevier County career became a succession of low-paying, demeaning jobs where labor laws were routinely violated, employees were often victimized by capricious, arbitrary decisions, and the hope of betterment became a diminishing light.

Today, Linda works as a food server at a downtown Gatlinburg steak house, for a manager whom she describes as "more decent than most." The years of hard work without reward have steeled her. When she asked for her current job, she flatly told the manager that, if they wanted good help, they would have to pay her. She earns $5 an hour, an unusually high wage for a food server, but, given her living situation, full responsibility for her frail and ailing mother as well as an institutionalized sister, the wage remains far from adequate. Her angry defiance has helped her to atain a work situation that is only marginally better than most in Sevier County, and, unfortunately, there is absolutely no guarantee that it will last. Like thousands of women in this rural Tennessee county, Linda likely faces an employment future in which her only economic certainty is more of the same.

"The rich get richer . . . ," one unemployed Sevier County woman remarked on the state of affairs in this tourism community. An elderly woman living in a predominantly low-income Sevierville community where dozens of substandard houses and pockets of devastating poverty stand as testaments to the persistence of poverty, echoed the sentiment, "This used to be a good place to live. Now they're turnin' their noses up at you."

Conclusion

Towards Real Economic Development

The experiences recounted by women working in the tourism industry of Sevier County, Tennessee, suggest that there is little room for industry employees to hope, that indeed the rich will continue to get richer at the expense of the poor. Tourism is, after all, often constructed on a foundation of exploitation. From the workers who form the real backbone of the industry, to the natural beauty which lures visitors to rural areas, to unique, irreplaceable cultures, tourist activity rapidly devours valued resources. Local and state revenues realized through tourist dollars can in no way replace the quality of life lost when many areas "succeed" as a tourist attraction. But a careful redefinition of successful economic development by the appropriate government entities could alter the destructive scenario that too often follows tourism development.

This redefinition must begin with a thorough reassessment of priorities. Economic development for the sake of generating investment without real return is essentially a charade. Expanding revenue bases cannot be justified when no evidence of economic opportunity can be witnessed at the grass roots level. In such cases, the public sector has merely engaged in promoting development at the expense of those people whom it is charged with serving.

Public good–not private gain–must again become the primary focus of government efforts to promote economic development. This once understood expectation has become lost in an era of institutionalized indifference to the plight of the disadvantaged. But it is clear that real economic development does not occur in a climate of exploitation. The consequences of poverty are well documented, and they eventually cost every member of a society. Instead of the passive posture of acquiescence which so many government entities appear to have assumed over the past decade in their dealings with would-be developers and industrialists, the real world consequences of such public sector indifference must be addressed. Government must assume a visionary, proactive posture if it is to engender genuine economic opportunity for all citizens, rather than pave the way for their exploitation.

State and local government entities created for the promotion and development of the tourism industry can begin to redefine economic development by replacing their surface analysis of dollars in and dollars out with substantive assessments of the real consequences of tourism development. They need to plan carefully for all tourism development and monitor its ongoing impact on quality of life in the communities they are charged with serving. The people of these communities – not the narrow interests of the private sector – should become the first and foremost consideration of all government entities dedicated to tourism development. Today, it appears that those who must live with tourism are merely an afterthought.

Too often, the public sector assumes a degrading posture of accomodating the private sector at virtually any cost, pandering to its demands, bidding away tax dollars to lure businesses and industries which often return very little to the communities where they locate. Certainly in the case of an industry such as tourism, which rapidly devours the resources it trades upon, it is not unreasonable for the public sector to expect and demand contributions to host communities from the private sector – rather than the reverse. It is a contribution which this industry can well afford to make. In 1988, according to Dean Witter Reynolds Inc., such ubiquitous tourism businesses as McDonald's earned $645 million on sales of $5.5 billion; the southern chain of Cracker Barrell Restaurants earned $7.2 million from sales of $125 million; and Holiday Inn earned $117 million on $1.5 billion in sales. Instead of expecting substantive contributions to host communities in return for the privilege of doing business there, taxpayer supported tourism offices are now in the business of generating customers for such highly profitable, often multi-national corporations.

Though taxes tied to the tourism industry are used to finance costly infrastructure development in such areas as water, sewage, solid waste, and highways, these changes only become necessary because the existent infrastructure is being overburdened by the visiting tourist population. In effect, tourists are merely paying their own utility bills. But tourism industry contributions need not begin or end with tourist-based taxes, which place much of the burden of contribution on the visitor. Developers who stand to reap enormous profits in a community which successfully lures tourists must be expected to make a fair and just return to that community. Beyond property taxes, some urban areas are now requiring developers to help fund public works through so-called "linkage laws." Based upon the expanse of a development, funds are paid up front for the purpose of rebuilding a community's "human infrastructure" through such programs as low-income husing development, job training, and assistance to the homeless. Rural communities, which often have a weak revenue base, should follow this urban model and place similar demands on developers, requiring them to invest in quality of life rather than rob the community of it. In tourism communities, which rely heavily upon a female work force, funds for this vital "human infrasture" must be dedicated to the critically important services of child and health care, which rank among the most formidable obstacles to economic independence for women.

In addition to requiring developers to contribute to a community's "human infrasturcture," state and local governments must act responsibly to control development. Unchecked expansion such as that witnessed in Sevier County, Tennessee, literally robs a community of the aesthetic appeal that figured largely in its initial attraction to visitors. More parasitic, marginal businesses usually translate into a lower quality of life for those people who must live and work in a community year round. Secondly, such out-of-control expansion only occurs when a community permits itself to become easy prey to developers, rather than controlling its pace of growth in order to preserve appeal and maximize public resources.

At the state and national level, a re-evaluation of the economic impacts of tourism development are also in order. Instead of channeling research capabilities into initiatives designed to justify the continued existence of promotional programs, publicly financed tourism development entities should invest in real planning exercises that address such critical issues as maximizing quality of life, minimizing environmental degradation, preserving fragile cultures, and building a stable, productive economy. Countering the inevitably cyclical nature of tourism economies should be an immediate focus of such research efforts. Counting tourists and the dollars they spend will not resolve the many dilemmas that tourism development inevitably generates.

At present, the most visible efforts to control the tourism industry are being witnessed in citizen campaigns waged against proposed developments. Oftentimes, it is too late to stop the wheels of "progress," which frequently turn in board rooms remote from the communities they affect. In many cases, these same communities are destroyed as indigenous peoples are displaced and disenfranchised by tourism development. But, in a mountain region known as Tierra Amarilla in New Mexico, the community-based rural development corporation Ganados del Valle countered plans by developers to locate a ski resort in their community. With the help of activist Maria Varela, the group has sought to rebuild its homeland from within, nourishing the rich culture of its Mexican-descended people and establishing community owned, agriculturally supported businesses. With the support of funds from the Ford Foundation and The Aspen Institute, Varela is presently developing a socio-economic profile and a distributional impact analysis of the Taos Valley, a neighboring tourist destination site, and the rural valley where Ganados del Valle is located. The study will quantify the real impact of development on the indigenous people of the region.

In the tiny coastal town of Hollywood, South Carolina, activist Idell "Jean" Smalls has attempted to counter the encroaching forces of tourism development through the formation of a youth theatre group. The Sea Island Players not only enstill an appreciation of the indigenous culture among local youth, the troup also provides young people with a vital social and educational outlet and actively preserves local culture in its performances. Farther South, on the outskirts of the popular resort of Hilton Head Island, the Community Institute for Education and Training lends assistance to indigenous blacks who have been displaced by development. At the Institute, they receive training in job skills, self-sufficiency, and motivation, and participate in other empowering activities. Among this large community of service industry workers who work as maids, waitresses, and domestic servants in Hilton Head resorts, the Institute also seeks to enstill workers with pride in their work and inform them of their rights as employees.

These efforts to hold tourism development at bay or peacefully coexist with it have each come from the grassroots level where people must live with the consequences of tourism. The public sector also must look beyond its blind promotion of such development to the people who are forced to live with it. From them, a means to real economic development can be discovered and transformed into public policy that is reasoned and humane.

Redefining the Tourist Experience

As we move rapidly toward an economy dominated by service-based industries, it is vitally important that the businesses which dominate this vast employment sector re-examine the ethical foundation on which it is being constructed. As discussed in the introduction to this study, service sector workers are increasingly expected to give more on the job in order to create a higher quality worker-client experience. The customer demands it. But the service sector has neglected to meet this higher level of expectation with a higher level of compensation. While the manufacturing sector has responded to intensive global competition by adopting participatory management techniques and institutionalizing methods of sharing profits, the service sector, which literally lives and dies by the quality of the customer experience, has remained in an authoritarian management posture that is a proven failure.

The low-wage end of the service sector clearly must abandon its fundamentally unethical, exploitative approach to workers. For small businesses that essentially compete on a narrow domestic front, a distinct competitive edge can be gained through the adoption of progressive, participatory management techniques. Higher wages, better benefits, real opportunities for advancement, and profit sharing incentives must be instituted if this industry is to secure the services of a stable work force.

Within the tourism industry, raising the quality of the worker experience will, in turn, raise the quality of the tourist experience. A higher quality experience for the tourist will eventually translate into higher profits for the business which wisely recognizes that its employees are its most important resource, rather than disposable tools. Ultimately, maximizing the quality of the interaction between the worker and the customer could result in a more participatory experience for the tourist. Rather than spending his or her leisure time in a depersonalized, clinical environment defined by corporate notions of luxury, the visitor could experience a different culture, a diverse people – the originial motives for travel. Perhaps eventually the tourist experience could be redefined and elevated from its present, oftentimes parasitic form. The benefits to both visiting tourists and host communities would be virtually immeasurable.

Worker-owned enterprises ultimately may offer a community the greatest benefits. By empowering those individuals who personally interact with the tourist through real job ownership, communities make an important, long-term investment in the quality of the tourist experience. In rural communities where closely knit extended families remain a strong presence, government entities should explore ways of financing this proven model for success. When a family or an individual is an owner of a business rather than a mere instrument, the level of personal investment increases as does the quality of the worker-customer contact. In a tourism economy, these are make-or-break assets.

Though worker ownership strategies necessarily challenge an existent power structure which concentrates economic control in the hands of a few white men, particularly in the South, the long-term benefits are clear. The empowerment of citizens who live and work in a tourism community will ultimately increase the value of its most important resource – the people who routinely meet, greet, and serve tourists. By financing worker ownership through state bond backing or capital accumulation, the creation of seed and venture capital funds, and the formation of development authorities dedicated to expanding ownership and participation to all income levels, local and state governments can make a real contribution to economic development. When women, minorities, and the low-income families who have so long served as the backbone of this industry are given an opportunity to share its profits – a real stake in its future – quality of work life, community life, and the tourism experience will be dramatically enhanced.

The public sector can also help spawn the development of locally owned businesses by requiring certain developers to acquire a given percentage of services and goods locally. When a hotel must look to the communities surrounding it for bakery goods, fresh produce, flowers, linen services, and other support services, the possibilities for small businesses become infinite. And, when government understands the necessity of expanding ownership of these businesses beyond a narrow clique, the possibility of creating genuine economic opportunity expands proportionately.

Outside of outright ownership, a simple move toward good corporate citizenship could achieve similar positive results. Enterprises built upon a foundation of exploitation cannot justly expect loyalty or performance from an employee. Corporations which dominate the tourism industry in booming communities must address their severe shortcomings in a number of employee relations areas and adopt a series of actions that raise the quality of the worker experience. The returns on living wages, decent benefits, adherence to labor laws, progressive management styles, and opportunities to participate in a business's success have been amply demonstrated by the Japanese and now throughout the once reluctant U.S. manufacturing sector.

The Minimum is Not Enough

Though sweeping change on a grand scale offers the promise of long-term, institutionalized human progress, immediate, gross inequities must be addressed. The fundamental inadequacies of wages, benefits, and worker protections in tourism economies must be rectified immediately. Whether or not sufficient competition exists to force the federal minimum wage upward in a local economy, it remains a pathetic and woefully inadequate benchmark throughout the tourism industry. Today, full-time work at the federal minimum wage of $3.35 an hour translates into poverty. It is simply impermissable for an enlightened society to condone the compensation of full-time employment at wages that will not sustain a quality of life beyond impoverishment, no matter the worker's age or occupation.

Secondly, the concept of a training wage, designed to assist businesses as they absorb the cost of higher wages, is unacceptable. It disregards the volatility of the entire service sector, where the minimum wage and minimal protections for workers predominate. The enactment of a training wage would, in effect, serve as an incentive for employers to dismiss employees who work beyond their training, and, in an employment sector where workers are routinely regarded as disposable, this would likely happen on a wide scale. Six states extend absolutely no protection to employees who are dismissed without just cause, and the burden of proof in any state rests with the employee. Given the economic vulnerability of these wage earners, the enactment of a training wage would only make way for their further victimization. In essence, such a provision would simply extend more power to an industrial sector that has already demonstrated its institutional indifference to the well-being of the employee.

The minimum also once included health care provisions for U.S. workers, but many service sector employers have moved to part-time employment to cut labor costs and avoid the skyrocketing costs of health care benefits. But remedies must be sought. Whether employers develop cooperative arrangements in order to secure group plans for their employees or provide pro-rated benefits based upon hours or longevity, U.S. workers – and citizens – must be given access to affordable health care. Perhaps most vulnerable are women who head households. For them, the option is welfare and medical care or gainful employment and no medical care for them and their children. Again, it is incumbent upon the public sector to create a policy framework which addresses the gross inadequacies of our present system of health care.

Finally, a public policy framework must be created to address the increasing need for affordable, quality child care in communities throughout the United States. In tourism economies, particularly rural economies such as those examined in this study, the need is often pressing. As a result, reliance upon extended families for child care is the only hedge women who head household have against economic ruin. Local governments either must invest funds they require from developers in this critically important facet of the "human infrastructure" or they must simply require businesses and industries to make child care provisions now. Certainly, no new developer should be permitted to locate in a successful, booming tourism community without providing child care to his or her employees. It is the expense of child care, coupled with health care, that literally stands in the path of economic independence for millions of American women. Only the public sector, working cooperatively with the private sector to create imaginative alternatives to the void which now exists, can remove these obstacles.

In conclusion, tourism need not be the bane of the rural Southeast or of rural America. But it will only become a means to increased prosperity when the people whose energies drive this vast, teeming industry once again become the focus of public policy. The public good must replace private profit as the goal of government efforts to promote and develop tourism. A reasoned, humane assessment of tourism development and its impact on low-income and indigenous peoples will yield important avenues for change. These changes must include the purposeful planning of developments that enhance quality of life – rather than rob communities of it. And existent developments must be challenged to lend real economic opportunity to all – not just a few. Government entities have the power to make such changes, and, in the process, fulfill their only true charge, that of service to the public. When this fundamental truth again assumes its rightful place in the public sector psyche, true economic development will ensue.

Southeast Women's Employment Coalition is a non-profit regional organization of individuals working to: create opportunities for grass roots working women and women who want to work in the southeast region; empower women in their communities around employment and workplace issues; and create activists who address systemic oppression and work for fair and safe employment in the workplace of choice.

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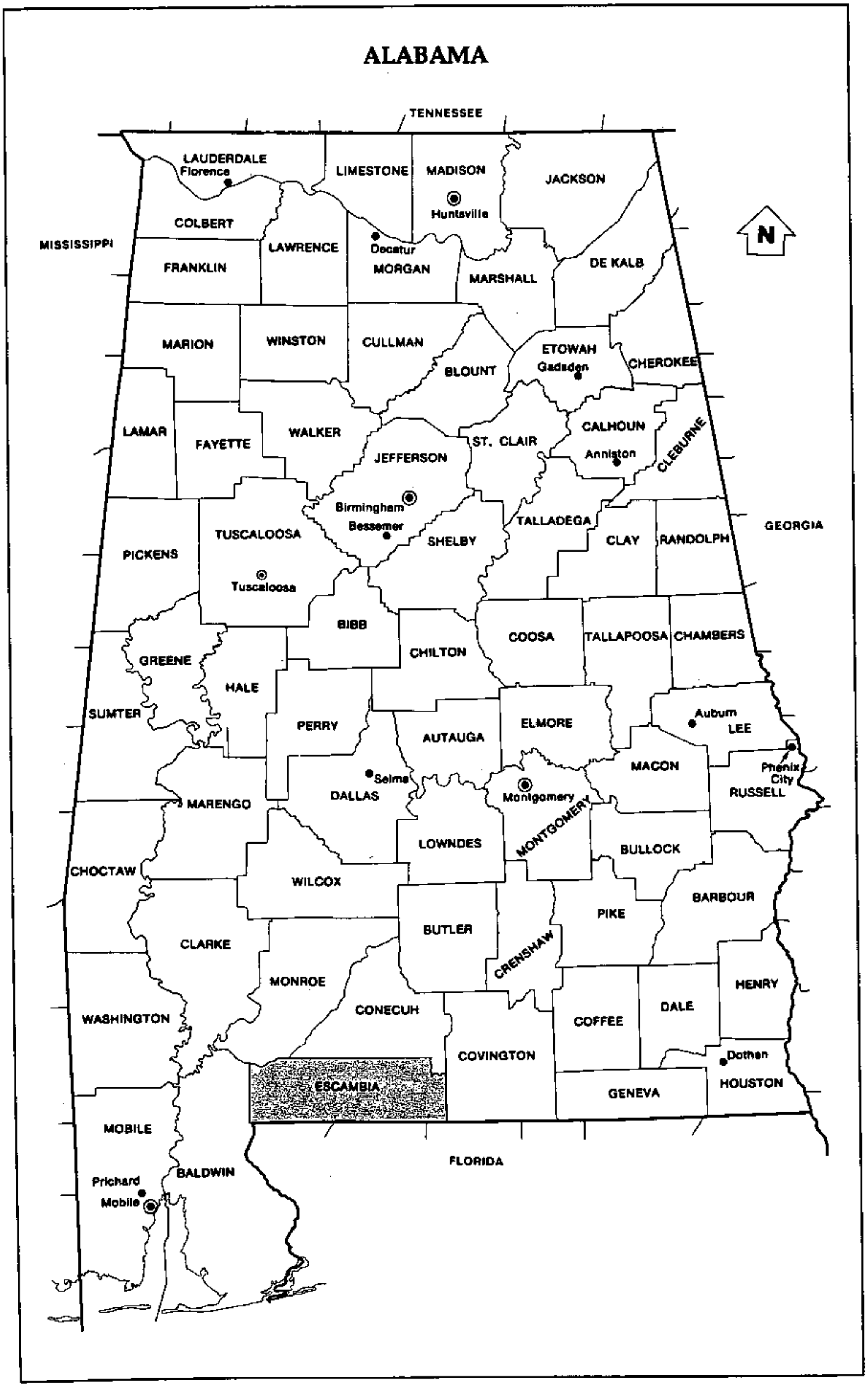
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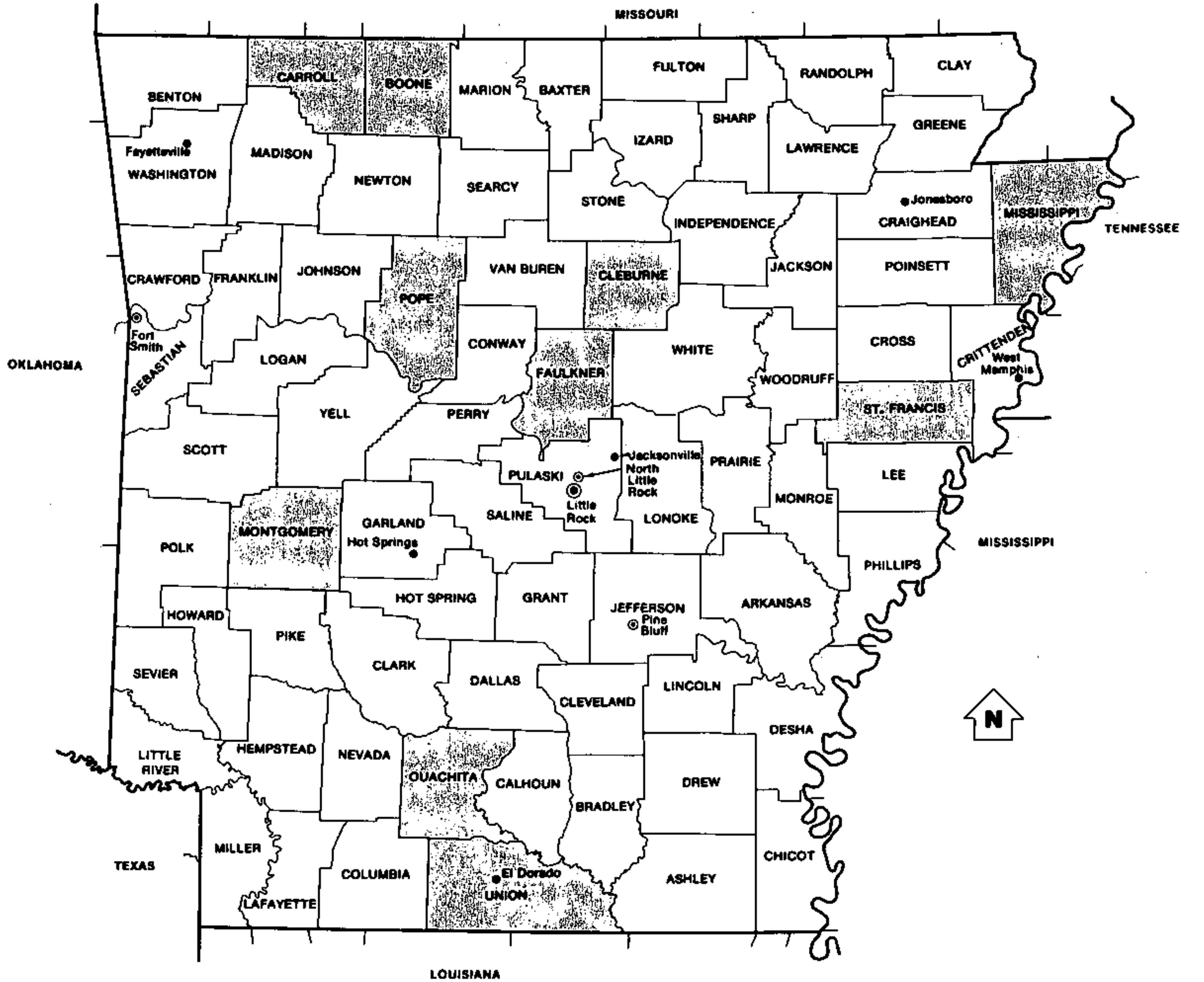
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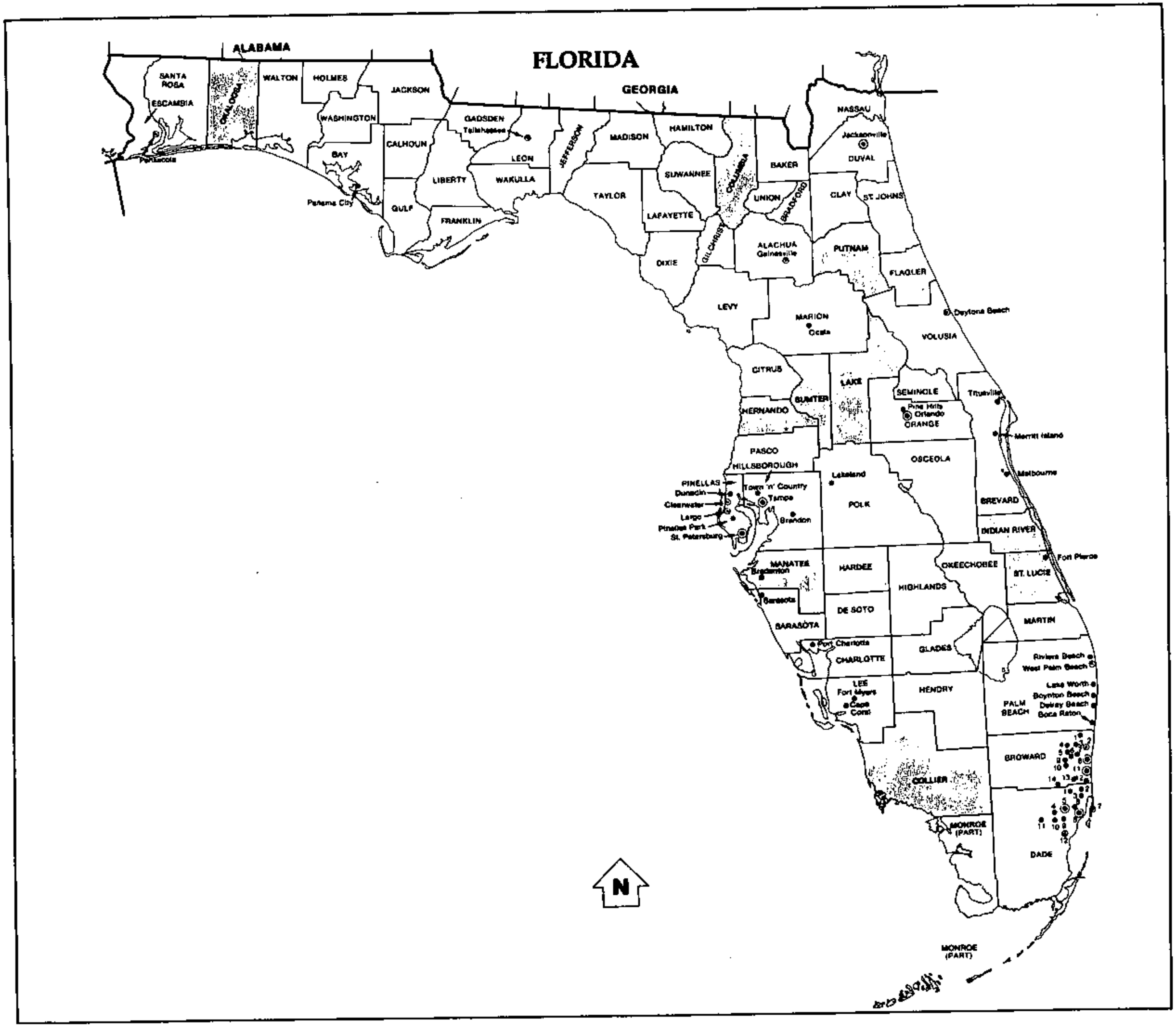
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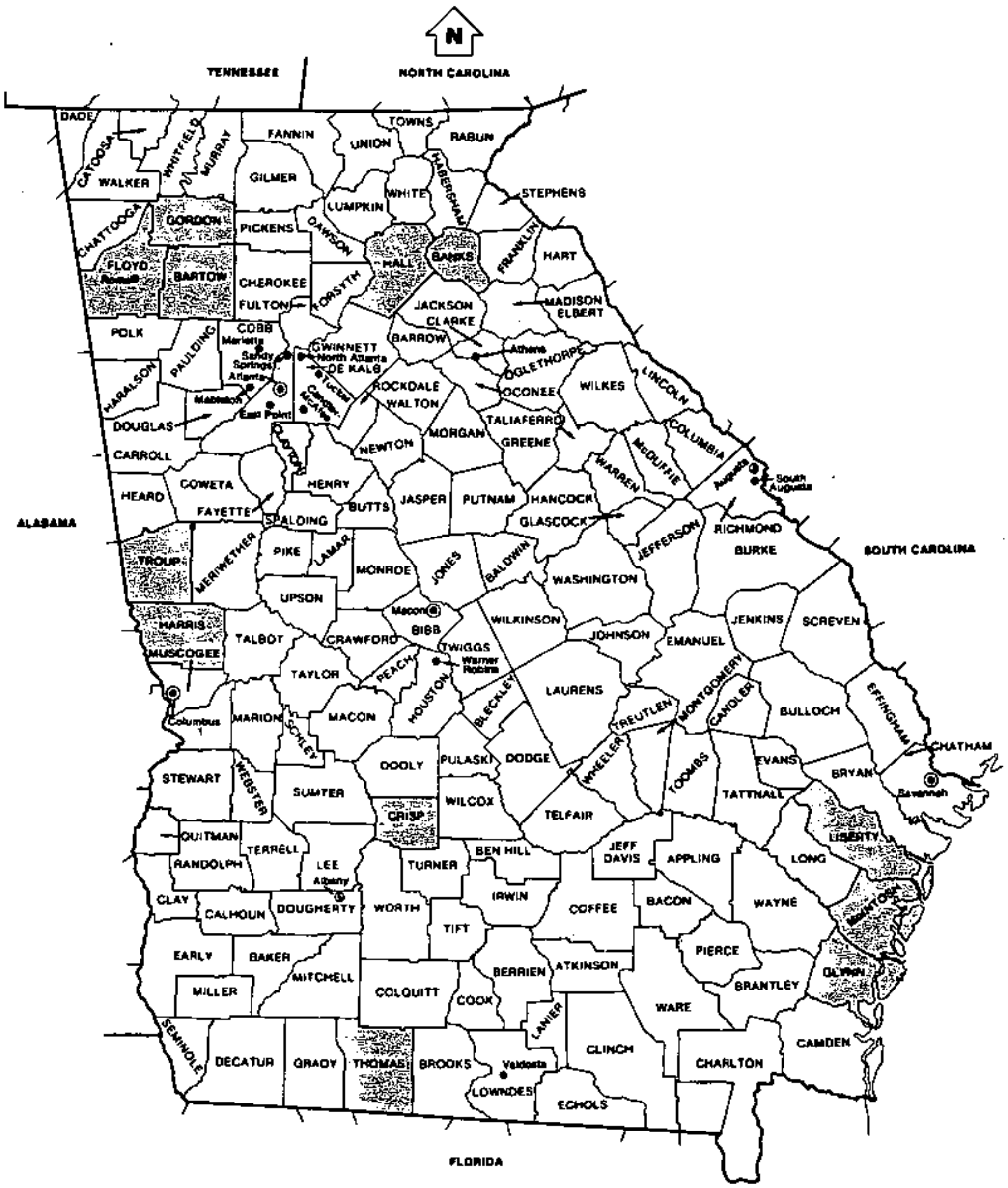
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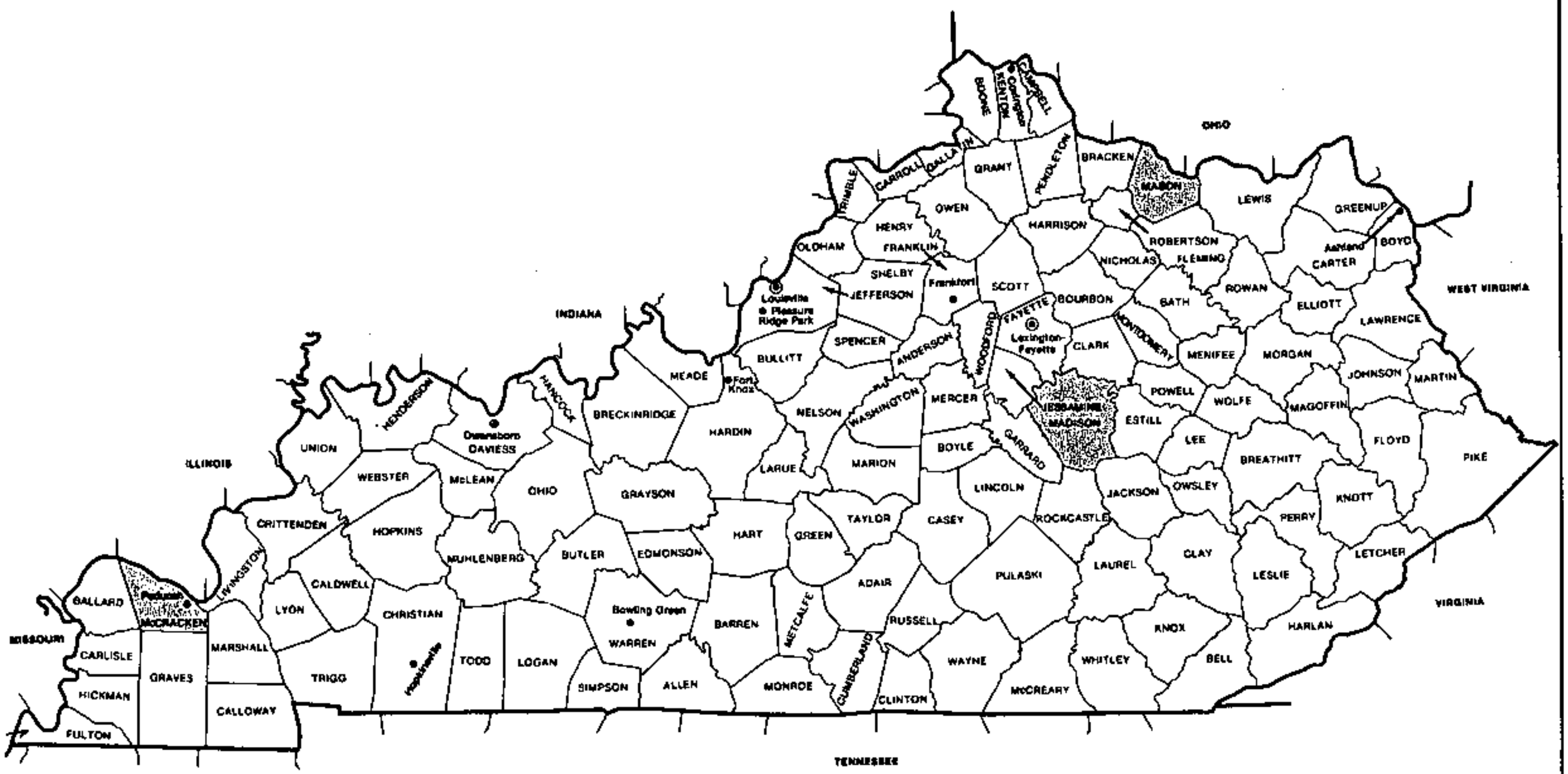
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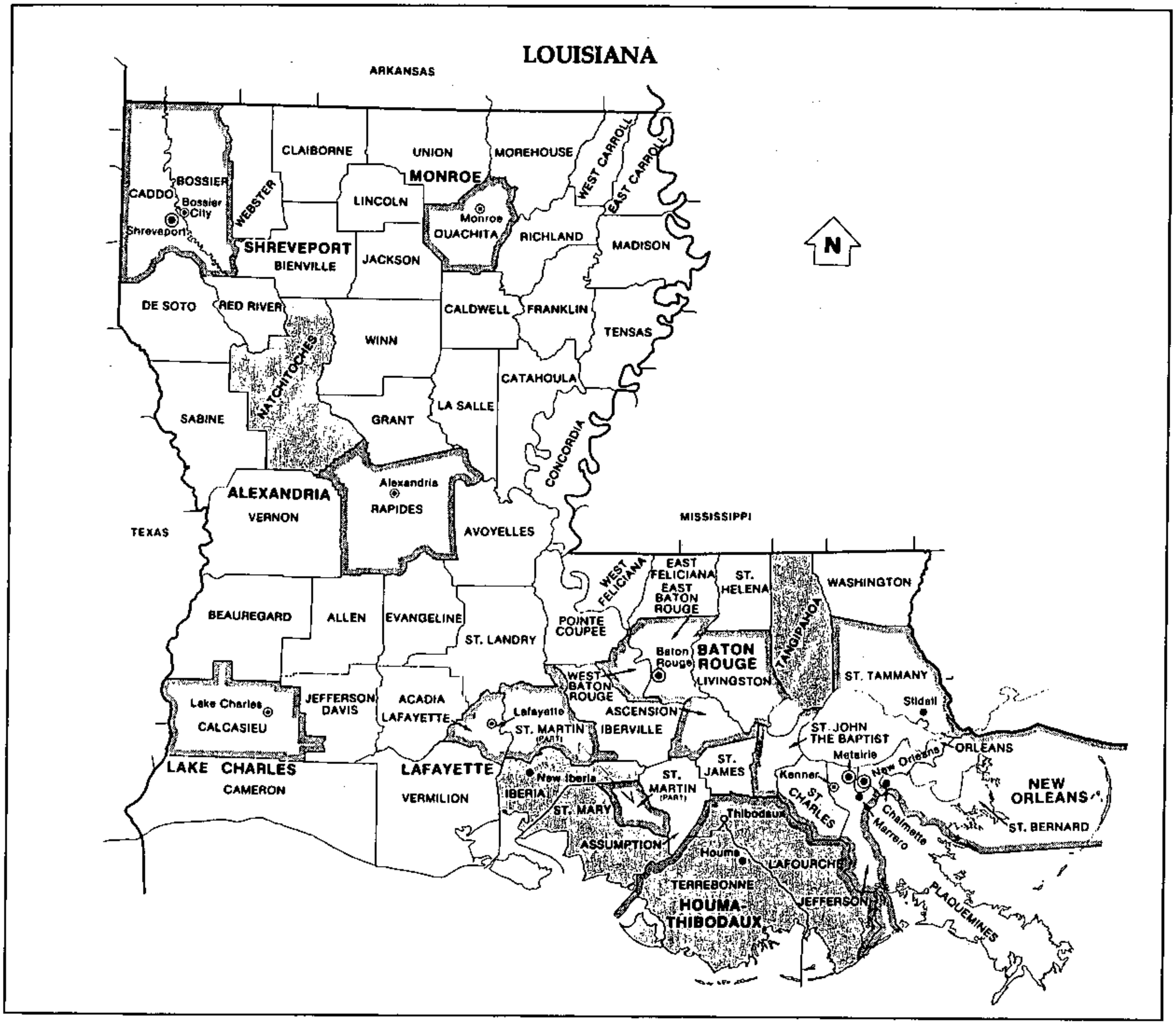
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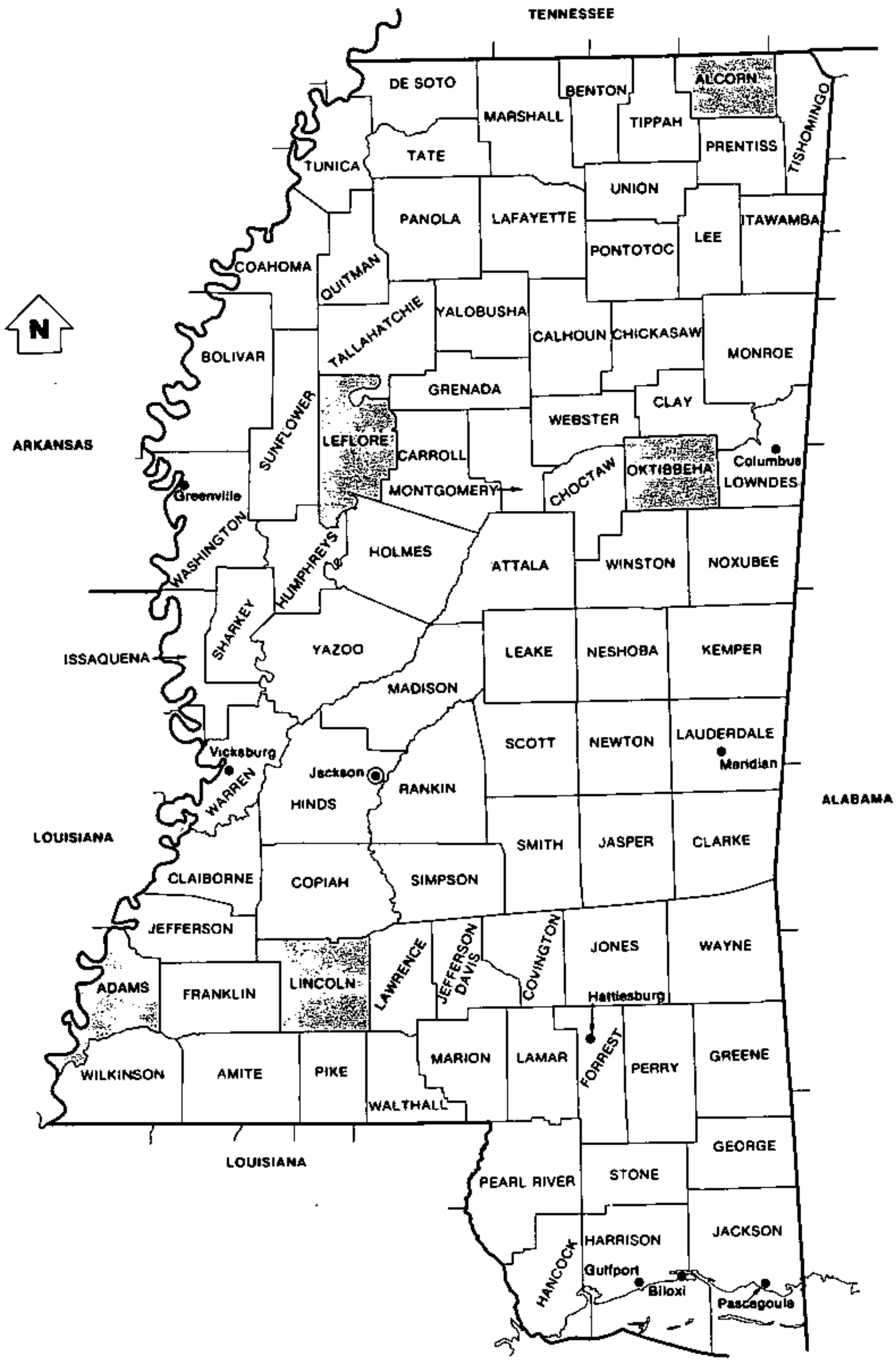

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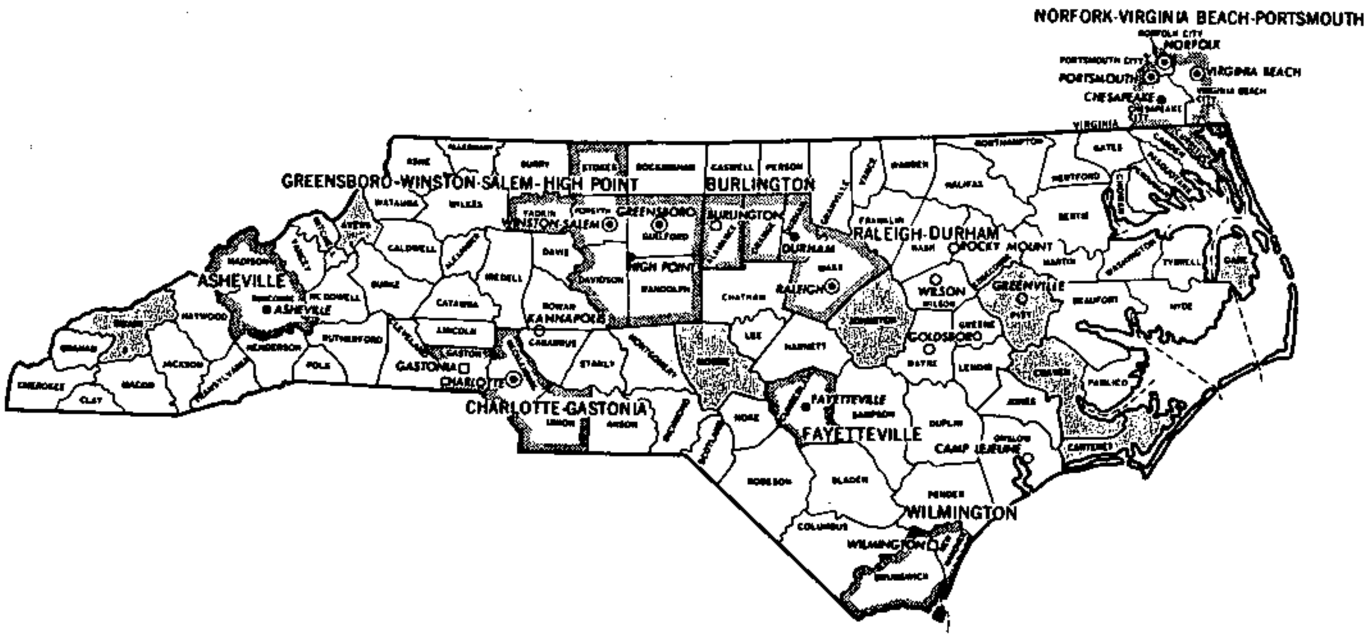

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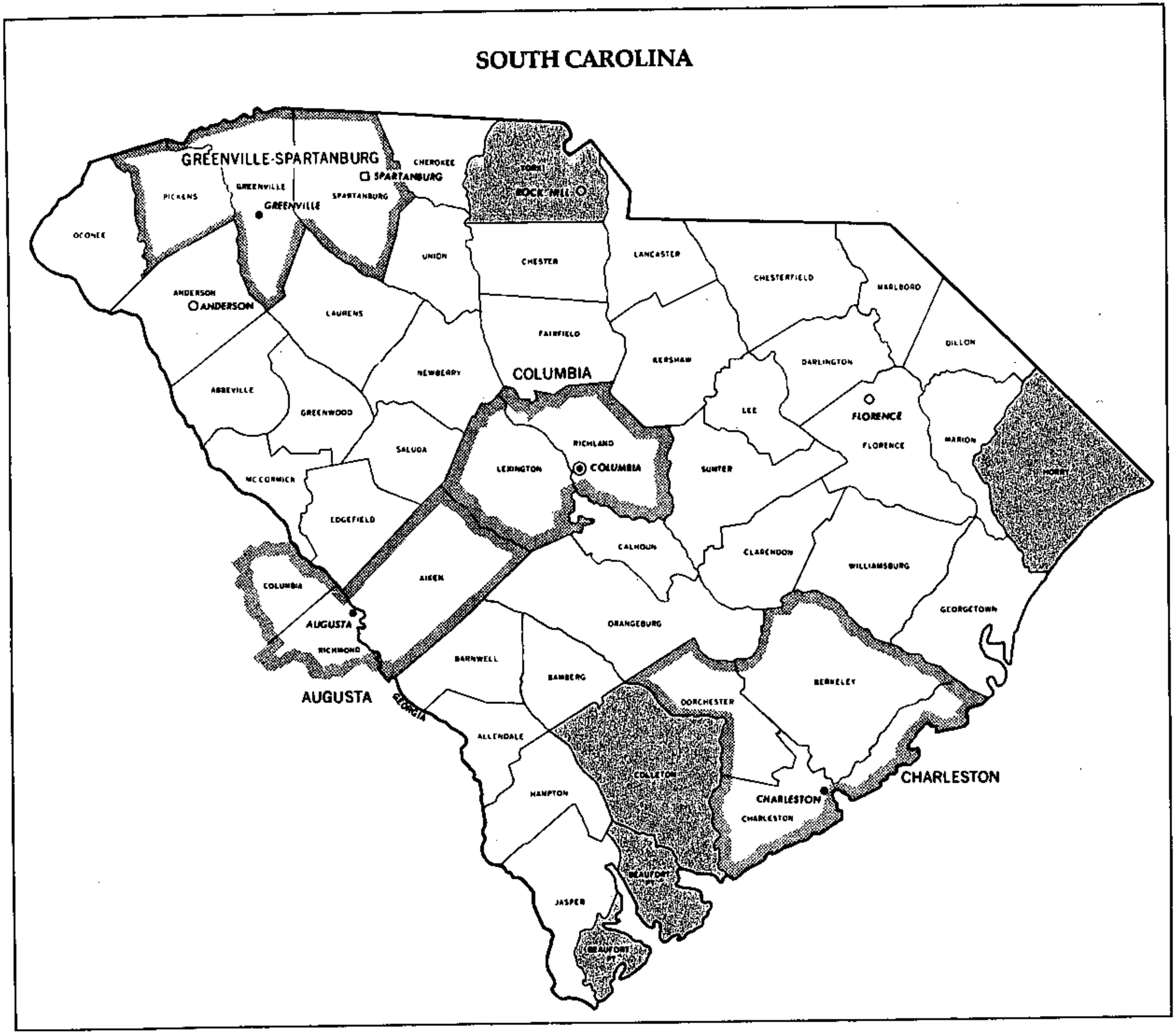

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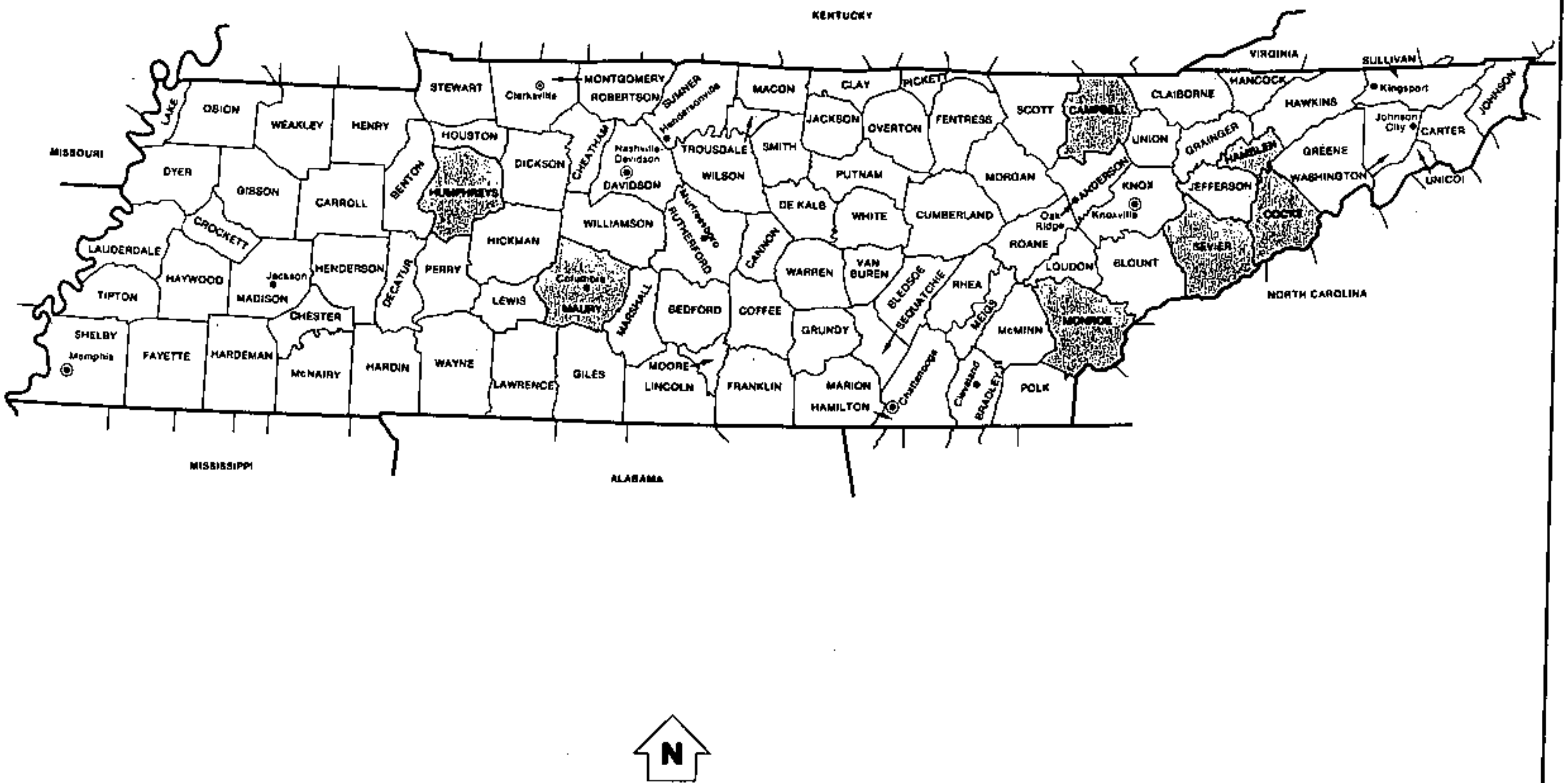

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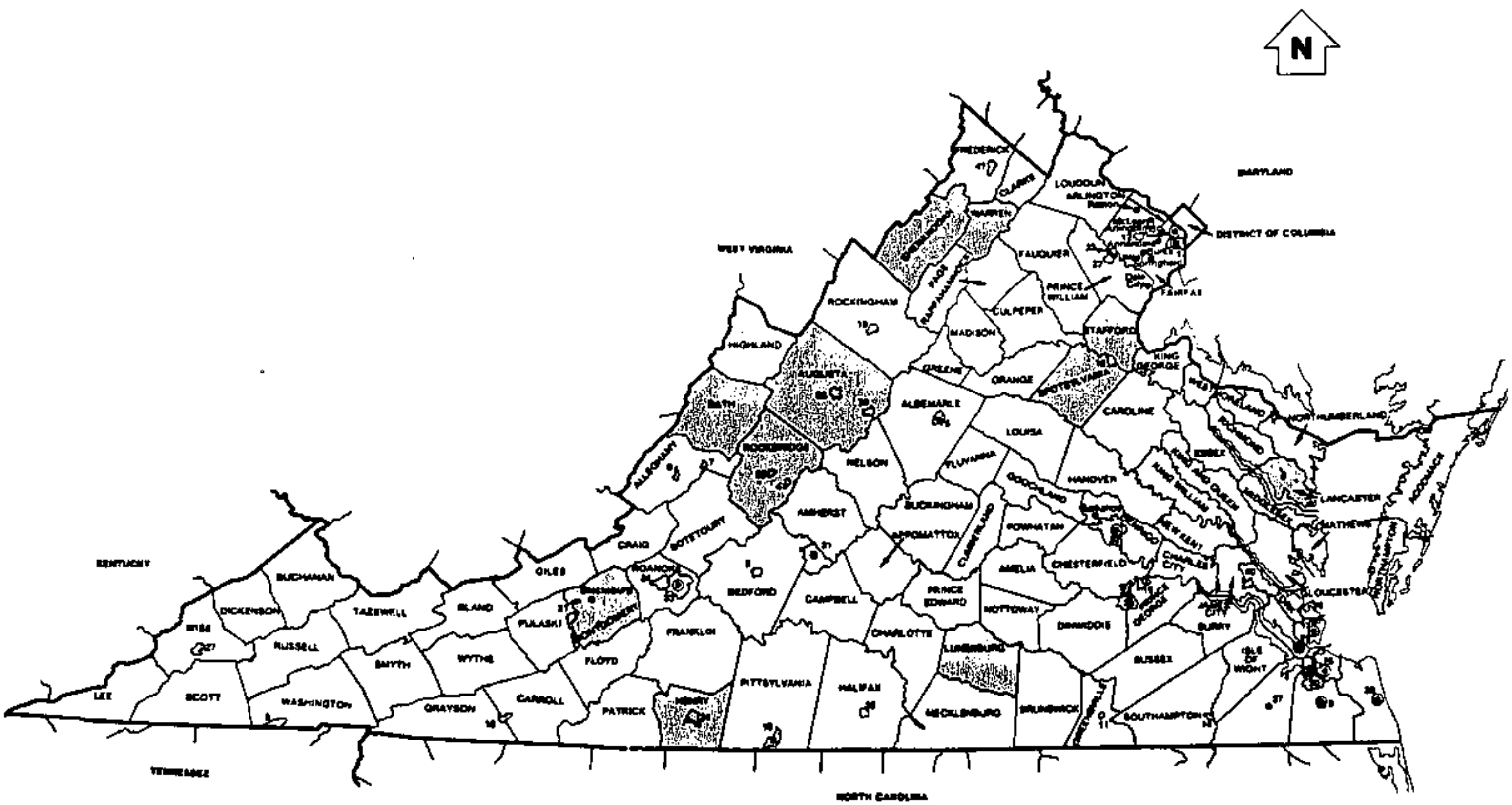

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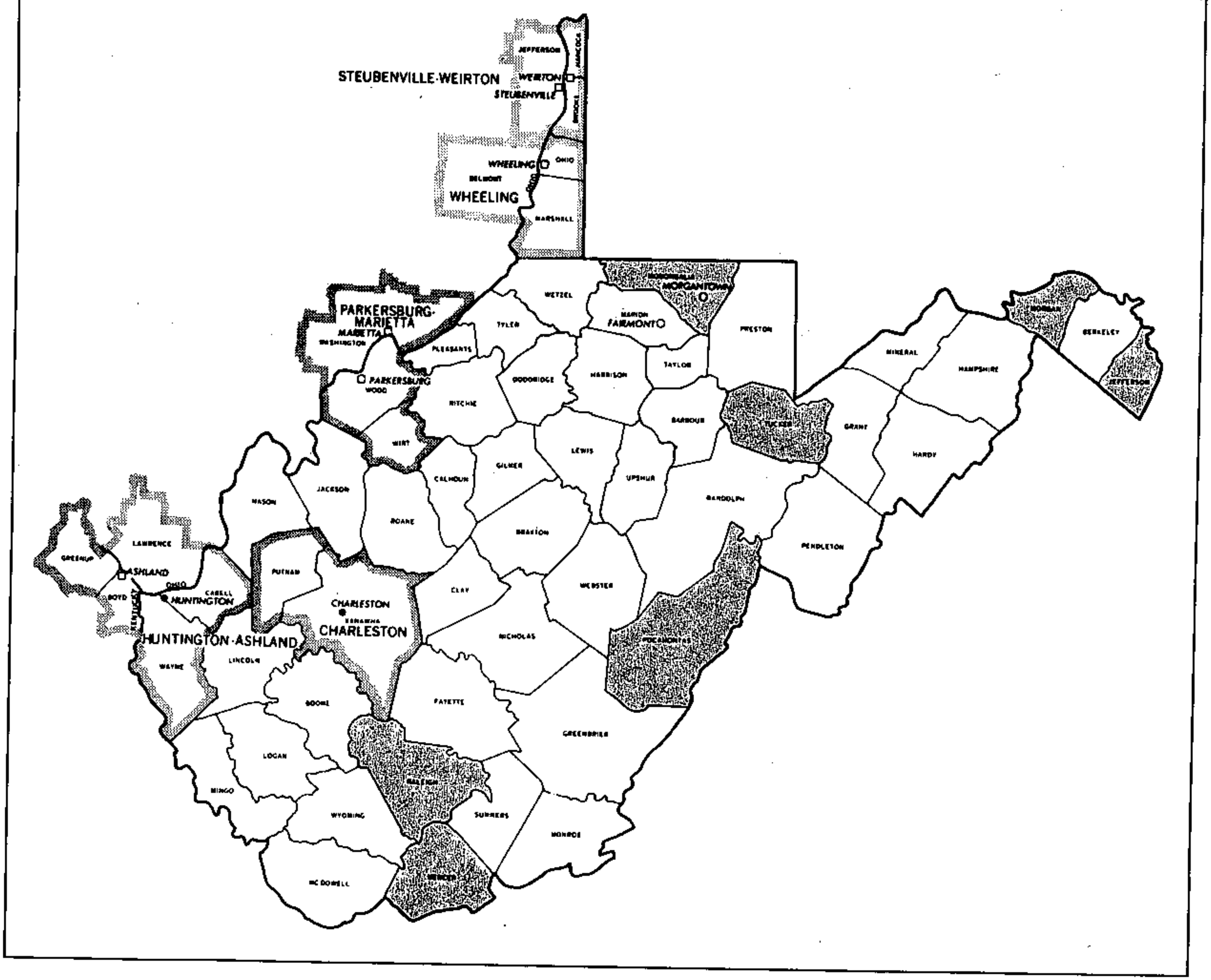

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