

OTTILIE BAADER

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1847-1925

LIKE MANY PEOPLE DURING THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, OTTILIE BAADER (1847-1925) LIVED A LIFE OF WORK. SHE WAS ALSO A LEADER OF MOVEMENTS TO REFORM LABOR, FIRST IN HER OWN COMMUNITY, AND THEN ACROSS THE COUNTRY OF GERMANY.

OTTILIE BAADER WAS BORN IN 1847. HER FATHER WORKED IN A FACTORY.

OTTILIE DID NOT ATTEND SCHOOL UNTIL THE AGE OF 10. SHE LEARNED TO READ, WRITE, AND DO BASIC MATH.

"THE GIRLS THERE WERE EDUCATED ABOVE ALL TO HAVE GOOD MANNERS. THE IDEAL WOMAN OF THE TIME WAS GENTLE, TENDER, AND SWEET."

AUTHOR (TREVOR R. GETZ

ARTIST) LIZ CLARKE

BUT HER MOTHER DIED OF THE FLU, AND SHE HAD TO GO TO WORK AT 13 TO SUPPORT THE FAMILY AS A SEAMSTRESS, WORKING TWELVE HOURS A DAY AND THEN TAKING ON EXTRA SMALL JOBS IN THE EVENING.

"THERE WAS NO NEED FOR ANY BIG FAMILY MEETING TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT JOB FOR ME, BECAUSE THERE WASN'T MUCH CHOICE FOR GIRLS IN THOSE DAYS."

EVENTUALLY, SHE GOT A JOB IN A WOOL FACTORY. CONDITIONS WERE TERRIBLE. THE MACHINES WERE DANGEROUS. THE AIR WAS HEAVILY POLLUTED. FREQUENTLY, AFTER A FULL DAY SHIFT, THEY HAD TO WORK AT NIGHT AS WELL.

"I WAS SO MISERABLE THAT I STOOD AT THE MACHINE HALF LIKE A CORPSE."

AROUND 1871, WAGES WERE CUT. OTTILIE AND OTHER WOMEN REFUSED TO WORK UNTIL THEIR WAGES WENT BACK UP.

NOW A LABOR ORGANIZER, OTTILIE PUT HER BASIC EDUCATION TO GOOD USE. SHE WROTE FOR THE MAGAZINE *EQUALITY* AND LOBBIED FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, AND LABOR RIGHTS.

SHE DIED IN 1925, AFTER A LIFETIME AS AN INDUSTRIAL WORKER.

FROM CHILDHOOD ON MY LIFE HAS BEEN ALL WORK, AND EVERYTHING THAT I RELATE HERE IS BASED ON THIS LIFE OF WORK AND CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD ON THIS BASIS.

THERE IS NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT MY LIFE. THOUSANDS OF WORKING GIRLS OF MY TIME LIVED AND WORKED JUST AS I DID.