Article

Surveilling Social Difference: Black Women's "Alley Work" in Industrializing Minneapolis

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Abstract

This article examines the arrest records of black women who worked as sex workers in downtown Minneapolis in the late 19th and early 20th centuries who were referred to as “alley workers.” I demonstrate the ways in which black women’s alley work documents the coming together of photography and surveillance as constitutive of the broader project of the modernization of police work through the procedures of standardization offered by the Bertillon System of Criminal Identification. I draw on women of color feminism, visual cultural studies, and critical race studies to analyze the alley work historical archive as a representational account of black women’s sexual regulation. My argument is that the Bertillon system’s attempts to categorize alley work functions as a strategy of surveillance that regulates black women’s economic and social difference. The police’s efforts to identify alley work as economically transgressive positions black sexual labor as an unruly site of social management in the context of industrializing Minneapolis.

“One of the numerous colored women who infest south Minneapolis, robbing white men in alleys...”
—Minneapolis Police Officer J.P. Jones¹

“The intent of this practice is not to give voice to the slave, but rather to imagine what cannot be verified, a realm of experience which is situated between two zones of death—social and corporeal death—and to reckon with the precarious lives which are visible only in the moment of their disappearance.”
—Saidiya Hartman²

Introduction

The yellowing pages of the Bertillon system record of Ethel Walters who was arrested in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1908 identify her as an “alley worker” and a dark “Brown Skin Negra” who was: “suspected

¹ This quote comes from Frances McRaven’s 1917 Bertillon system record (#4186), ledger 9 (8/31/1916-8/27/1918) housed in the Minneapolis City Hall Tower Archives. Heidi Heller also discusses this record in a post: “Minneapolis ‘Alleywalkers’ and The Campaign to End Prostitution,” published on *The Historyapolis Project* (2014): <http://historyapolis.com/blog/2014/07/01/minneapolis-alleywalkers-and-the-campaign-to-end-prostitution/>.

² See Hartman’s “Venus in Two Acts” (2008: 12).

of having robbed a man of his pocket book and contents.”³ As the record details, the man Walters was “suspected of having robbed” left the city and no official complaint was made. We learn that the charges against her were dismissed. The officer’s description goes on to point out that Walters “had also robbed a man of \$100 last summer” and that case too had been dismissed. The front of the record lists as her occupation: “CoP & Alley Worker.”⁴ In this article, I demonstrate that the Minneapolis Police Department Bertillon System of Criminal Identification’s documentation of alley work renders black women consonant with this category of commodified sexual labor.⁵ I argue that the Bertillon system’s efforts to categorize alley work functions as a strategy of surveillance that regulates black women’s social and economic difference. In the context of industrializing Minneapolis, the police’s efforts to categorize alley work position black sexual labor as a disorderly site of social and economic control.

As the opening epigraph notes, the assessment of Frances McRaven by Minneapolis police officer J.P. Jones as “...One of the numerous colored women who infest south Minneapolis, robbing white men in alleys” offers a prevailing description of alley work with reference to the Bertillon system. Jones’ 1917 reproof describes black women as predatory not only to white men, but to the city as a whole as they are identified as thieves who indiscriminately prey on presumably innocent white heterosexual male victims. McRaven’s Bertillon system record lists “housewife” as her occupation and her crime as “ally worker.” Although McRaven is cited for running a “disorderly house,” a term used to describe a domicile where prostitution occurred, it is actually her designation as an “alley worker” and by extension the alley itself that more fully situate her criminalization within the context of devalued black commodified sexual labor. Further, the intersection of race, gender, and sexual difference congealed in the category of “alley worker” render it meaningful for identification and criminalizing purposes by and through the Bertillon system.⁶

A Minneapolis Vice Commission Report released in 1911 utilizes the categories “alleywalking,” “streetwalking,” and “clandestine prostitution” to register related and often overlapping economic and social marginalities that condition alley work.⁷ The Commission’s description of street and alley walking as the most marginal type of sexual labor economically and with regard to the approximation to physical vulnerability further explicates this category with respect to black women’s position within it. The Vice Commission’s report gives meaning to the delineation of alley work as a devalued category of racialized and gendered sex work. Thus, alley work serves as a site through which to articulate the status of black women’s social difference in so far as it names a transitory or in between social and spatial orientation of sexual labor. If what the officer who arrested McRaven describes is at all a reliable indication of the perception of black women in the city at the time, although their overall population was small, black women constituted a substantial number of women doing alley work. Further, the vulnerability that alley work social difference signals is noted by the Vice Commission’s report specifically regarding: life expectancy, risk, incarceration in the workhouse, and confrontations with the police.

³ The officer’s cursive writing reads as “Walters”—however her name might also be spelled “Walhers.” Ethel Walters’ alias is listed as Ethel Warfield (#2935), Reg No. 558.

⁴ “CoP” appears to be an abbreviation signifying “colored prostitute.” “Co.” is often used as an abbreviation for “colored” to designate black people—sometimes “colored” is spelled out and sometimes it is abbreviated “Co.” in the Bertillon record ledgers by police officers.

⁵ The book *Queer Twin Cities* (Murphy et al. 2010) alerted me to the alley work Bertillon records. Also, Stewart Van Cleve’s book *Land of 10,000 Loves: A History of Queer Minnesota* (2012) strongly shaped my framing of sexual regulation in the Twin Cities. Van Cleve directly assisted me with finding the Bertillon records at Minneapolis City Hall.

⁶ I draw on Crenshaw’s theorization of intersectionality here to consider the ways in which the interlinked dimensions of black women’s social difference structured their vulnerability to regulation (1991).

⁷ See p. 55 of the “Report of the Vice Commission of Minneapolis to His Honor, James C. Haynes, Mayor” (1911). Heidi Heller also uses the term “alley walking” with reference to the commission’s report (2014).

The designation of alley work as a site of black women's sexual labor and social difference in the Twin Cities, the collective name by which Minneapolis and St. Paul are commonly referred, occurred within the categorizing schemas of the Bertillon System of Criminal Identification in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁸ The Bertillon system was adopted first by the St. Paul police in 1891, followed by Minneapolis in 1899.⁹ Devised by Alphonse Bertillon, a French criminologist and forensic documentarian, the system standardized information collected about suspected offenders as it helped realize the categories of modern criminal identification.¹⁰ The Bertillon system's use of categorization within the context of its broader processes of standardization along with its integration of photography through its use of the mugshot aided in the professionalization of policing. Offering access to tools that promised to render identity and deviance measurable, the Bertillon system's use of photography, from the outset, was grounded in producing more accurate identification through criminalization processes (Ellenbogen 2012: 30).

In an expansive six-hundred-page volume that centers on the Minneapolis and St. Paul police and fire departments by Alix J. Muller and Frank J. Mead published in 1899, engravings from photographs taken at Joliet State Prison in Illinois show the Bertillon system measurement processes at work as it visually anchors and instantiates the transition to modern policing in the Twin Cities.¹¹ The inclusion of these images at the beginning of the study signals the adoption of the Bertillon system by Twin Cities police departments as further facilitating the process by which the goals of upholding the law could be realized with more precision through standardized procedures. Muller and Mead's study and the Bertillon system together demonstrate the era's socio-political investment in truths professing to be complete and unmediated:

Although there is no department of the public service so highly interesting to every citizen, yet there is none of which so little is known. The old maxim 'Truth is stranger than fiction,' applies with full force to the experiences of the Police and Fire Departments... (Muller and Mead 1899: 6)

Muller and Mead describe the "early village days" prior to the period of industrialization during the 1880s and 1890s in the Twin Cities as a time when a "vigorous manhood" expressed itself through volunteer police and fire service. In so far as their study seeks to render tangible a history not extensively documented, we might say that the trusted accuracy of the policing procedures offered by the Bertillon system pointed to a moment in which a once unmediated "vigorous manhood" was able to again find a more concrete expression through the practices of the Bertillon system after the shift to paid police and fire departments. In this way, the police department's deployment of the Bertillon system's standardized

⁸ I refer specifically to the use of the term "alley work" by the St. Paul and Minneapolis police in the context of the adoption of the Bertillon system. The term may have also been used in other cities.

⁹ Although the oldest Minneapolis police Bertillon ledger archived at Minneapolis City Hall is from 1907 in an Annual Report from 1899 the Superintendent of Police states that the system was in use that year (see Doyle 1900). I also refer here to "The Bertillon System: Science and Crime in the Global Information Age" by Kirsten Delegard (2014).

¹⁰ See *Reasoned and Unreasoned Images: The Photography of Bertillon, Galton, and Marey* (Ellenbogen 2012). Also see John Tagg's article "Evidence, Truth, and Order: A Means of Surveillance" in *Visual Culture: The Reader* (1999) edited by Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall.

¹¹ See Muller and Mead (13-16) for the engravings of photographs taken by W. G. Thorpe at the Joliet State Prison: <http://www.nleomf.org/museum/news/newsletters/online-insider/november-2011/bertillon-system-criminal-identification.html>.

criminal identification processes bolstered and made palpable a gendered and largely racialized duty to effectively manage and regulate the growing city.¹²

The regulation of black women's alley work through the Bertillon system was part of an ongoing process to order city life. This was a social order orchestrated, following Muller and Mead, first by the "civilization" of the Twin Cities and the Northwest more broadly as a distinct region through the migration and settlement of "good European stock." Muller and Mead articulate white settlement not as a feature of colonial violence and Native American genocide, but rather as an imperative to "improve and adorn the waste places of the west" (Muller and Mead 1899: 25). In this context, black women's alley work sexual labor and robberies lay bare "vigorous manhood" not as a natural byproduct of service and duty, but as socially produced and advanced through the operation of white protectability as a demand bestowed upon the industrializing city's institutions¹³—a protectability cemented by the articulation of modern police and fire departments as "our twin protectors," to invoke Augustine Costello's (1890) earlier study of the Minneapolis police and fire departments.

Figure 1.1. Image from *History of The Fire and Police Departments of Minneapolis* (1890: 254) by Augustine Costello. "The Rogue's Gallery" was located at the Central police station in downtown Minneapolis according to an 1899 Annual Report written by the Superintendent of Police.

In 1877 the Minneapolis police petitioned city council for a small annual appropriation of \$25.00 to fund its efforts to use photography to aid in arrest (see Costello 1890: 256-257). By 1899 the police had instituted a full-fledged "Rogues' Gallery" at the Central Station in downtown. The "Rogues' Gallery" documents the early use of photography in the context of the Bertillon system (see Figure 1.1). As James D. Doyle, Superintendent of Police, explained in an 1899 Annual Report:

¹² Muller and Mead document one black police officer who worked in the Rondo area, a historically black neighborhood in St. Paul.

¹³ My thinking on white male protectability draws on Grace Kyungwon Hong's theorization of "the possessive individual" (2006), Cheryl Harris on "whiteness as property" (1993), and George Lipsitz on "the possessive investment in whiteness" (1998).

The Bertillon system of identification of criminals has been introduced, and although this system has not been in operation here long enough to show its workings in their entirety, I am convinced it is bound to become a most valuable adjunct to the workings of the department. In connection with this system of measurement, a photograph gallery has been arranged at the Central Station, and the photographs of criminals arrested here, and whose pictures are considered desirable for the rogues' gallery, are now taken by a member of the department. This has many times proven a great convenience when necessary to send out numbers of photographs wanted on short notice. It is also found much more convenient to photograph them at the station than to take them through the streets to a public gallery. It has also been much more economical, and will result in a considerable saving in the course of the year. (Doyle 1900: 490)

Therefore, the Rogues' Gallery points to the police force's increased technical integration of photography into the work of the department. Extending the standardization practices of the Bertillon system to the police's attempt to modernize, Superintendent Doyle describes how the patrol wagons had been fitted with covers so as not to expose people, especially girls, who were arrested to the scrutiny of onlookers: "frequently girls and young persons are placed under arrest and carried to the station in the patrol wagon, and are thus protected from the gaze of the public, has given much satisfaction" (Doyle 1900: 490). Following this point, Doyle requests funds to install electric lights in alleyways thereby explicating police surveillance as made technically functional through the use of identification for the purposes of criminalization:

I would recommend that arrangements be made for the placing of electric lights in all the alleys in the downtown districts. This would be a great assistance to the officers and do considerable to prevent crime in this district, there being no more powerful deterrent of crime than well lighted streets and alleys. (Doyle 1900: 490)

Doyle's description contextualizes the Minneapolis Police Department's use of the Bertillon System of Criminal Identification as a surveillance strategy that endeavored to catalogue and control difference through not only standardized documentation, but also through visual identification. Doyle's recommendation that electric lighting be installed in specified alleyways further details modernizing efforts to spatially designate downtown as a target domain of criminality with the intent to concentrate and direct police patrols and resources.

A drawing of the Rogues' Gallery included in Costello's study pictures two white women donning hair styles and dress that indicate racial and class privilege during the Victorian era as they engage in the process of criminal identification assisted by a detective (refer to Figure 1.1). As the three stand in front of a gallery installation of photographs the detective, visually positioned as the formal authority with respect to identification, points his finger at the images of people arrested, directing the gaze of the women. The gendering and racialization of criminalization depicted by the drawing of the Rogues' Gallery serves as a contrast to Doyle's description of forlorn arrested girls riding in the patrol wagon. However, the expressed purpose of the protection of the girls from the "gaze" of onlookers, along with the protective paternal role of the "Rogues' Gallery" detective, mark the racialized and gendered dimensions of protection that in turn articulate the unprotectability of black women as alley workers in the context of their criminalization through Bertillon system identification procedures.

Visualizing Bertillon System Categorization

If, as Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla have asserted: "the power of empirical observation lies primarily in its ability to render information visible" then the visual strategy of the Bertillon System of Criminal Identification is always already concerned with producing standards by which meaning can be rendered

seeable for interpretative purposes irrespective of form—be it descriptive text or image (see Terry and Urla 1995: 10). Almost all of the remaining accessible records of the Minneapolis Bertillon system are descriptive with no images so it is especially critical to account for the system’s investment in empiricism in the first instance as simultaneously an investment in the visualizing of information as a process that shapes interpretation. In this way, the category “measured by” on the front of every Bertillon system record that contains the signature of the officer or law enforcement official tasked with completing the arrest booking process reads as evidence of what Terry and Urla refer to as “watching suspiciously with an eye to control and regulate” (1995: 10). Thus, “watching to regulate” then accounts for surveillance as a process that produces a visual representational account, as representation delineates the process by which meaning is communicated through language (i.e., visual, text, sound, etc.).¹⁴

It is the practice of “watching to regulate” that constitutes the representational visual regime of the Bertillon system establishing measurement and identification as coextensive processes. The Bertillon system record then serves as an index of the encounter between the criminalized, the arresting officer, and the officer or law official at the station who completes the process of identification. Bertillon system identification relies on measurement procedures as expressed through categorization to organize and manage information about the features of persons arrested. Categorization as a tool of identification more directly operates as a tool of social differentiation within processes of surveillance.

The interrogation of alley work as a site that delineates black women’s social difference through Bertillon system categorization speaks to what black lesbian feminist Audre Lorde describes as an institutionalized use of difference that relies on our lack of models for “... relating across our human differences as equals. As a result, those differences have been misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion” (1984: 115). Lorde describes the ways in which the mobilization of difference for the purposes of instituting power hierarchies operates as an “absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people” (1984: 115). Social identification as it is achieved through the categorization of difference creates meaning through the use of representational language both self-occasioned and imposed, to echo Lorde, “misnamed and misused.” Along these lines, the categorization of social difference, through the Bertillon system and more broadly, functions not only as a stage in the surveillance process, but more precisely as an originary mode of surveillance as it recursively functions to justify its own continued utility and relevance through using categorization as a representational mode.

As David Lyon (2003) has argued, surveillance can be defined as a process that utilizes “social sorting” for the purposes of human categorization and regulation. Surveillance as “social sorting” engages in social differentiation to establish the terms by which people are identified and categorized. It is through this process that we might also understand criminalization through surveillance not as social exclusion, but rather inclusion as it produces a condition of social recognition for marginal subjects. Inclusion for marginal subjects then rests on the assumption that difference must be contained through categorical “sorting.” More directly, social sorting articulates surveillance as a practice that regulates social difference through identity categorization.

Simone Browne uses the analytic of “racializing surveillance” to examine U.S. antebellum systems and practices of anti-black punishment.¹⁵ Citing slave patrol strategies as well as the ledger books and journals of slave traders, slave travel passes, and the accounting practices of slave owners, Browne (2012)

¹⁴ Here I draw on Stuart Hall’s discussion of representation in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (1997: 15).

¹⁵ Browne draws on John Fiske’s (1998) understanding of surveillance as a mode of “imposing norms” in the deployment of the term “racializing surveillance.” Racializing surveillance describes the process by which “surveillance practices, policies, and performances concern the production of norms pertaining to race...” (Browne 2012: 72).

examines the ways in which surveillance functioned to regulate everyday cross-racial encounters, as well as to establish the carceral infrastructure of the plantation that slavery and racial capitalism demanded.¹⁶ In *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (2015), Browne draws on Frantz Fanon's theorization of Blackness as constituted in part through the process of epidermalization, or "the imposition of race on the body" as exemplified by Fanon's interrogation of the roots of the epithet "Look a Negro" in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967). Browne details the ways in which Fanon's theorization registers the process by which racial differentiation functions as a practice of surveillance that establishes social hierarchy through difference.

Along these lines, Yasmeen Abu-Laban, extending Laura Mulvey's notion of "the male gaze," uses the term "the surveillant gaze" to designate the activation of power through the "practice of looking" in an effort to decenter electronic and digital technologies as the sole centers of surveillance, and to bring into focus again the human eye as a powerful site of surveillance (Abu-Laban 2015: 49; see also Cartwright and Sturken 2001). "The surveillant gaze" characterizes the process by which policing and carceral regimes can be understood as part of a more extensive process of instituting social difference as a structure of social organization. The Bertillon system's management of alley work's social difference through the categorization of identification can be thought about as an early conjunctural site through which the technology of "the surveillant gaze" worked to racialize, gender, and sexualize surveillance.¹⁷

As mentioned earlier, Bertillon system categorization draws on descriptive accounts, such as the identification of Ethel Walters as a dark-skinned "Negra" as well as Frances McRaven as "one of the numerous colored women infesting the city and robbing white men in alleys" to direct and assign judgement.¹⁸ Despite the common understanding of categorization as a politically neutral process that merely assists with information management and organization, its role in the Bertillon system is principally one of utilizing the language of social difference identification to standardize meaning. The standardization of meaning through categorization, as alley work exemplifies, operates as the structural basis of Bertillon system criminal identification. In this way, categorization serves as the baseline for both the police procedural treatment of information deemed germane to identification, as well as the structural functioning of the system—in this regard, the police department collects information to categorize it.

Bertillon categorization operates as representational in so far as the documentation of alley work produces a set of specific meanings pertaining to black women's social difference. Although the term as it was used in the St. Paul archive was sometimes applied to women who were not black, the term "alley work" came to signify black women in particular in the Minneapolis Bertillon system ledgers as they are the people consistently identified through its use.¹⁹ The Bertillon system's alley work records thus exist as sites through which police conceptions of race, gender, class and other categories of difference interact and reveal common sense understandings of black women. Thus, the act of assigning "alley worker" to a

¹⁶ Browne refers here to passes that slaves were required to have whenever they left the plantation. Any white person could ask that a slave present this pass to prove they had not escaped slavery (see 2012: 73). Also, here I mobilize Cedric Robinson's idea of racial capitalism to account for the way in which what he refers to as racialism served as a process of social differentiation that undergirded and instantiated the emergence of capitalism. See *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983).

¹⁷ For more on the intersection of gender and surveillance refer to *Feminist Surveillance Studies* (2015), edited by Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana Amielle Magnet.

¹⁸ By this I mean that both descriptive and image-based records generate a visual representation whether through record systems that deploy photography or those that do not have a photographic component.

¹⁹ Black women exclusively account for alley workers in the Minneapolis Police Department's Bertillon descriptive ledger book records that have no mugshots. In the Minneapolis Police Department's Bertillon mugshots archive from this period, Mamie Knight, a Latina is referred to as an alley worker. Her record appears to be the only remaining mugshot record for the MPD and is currently housed in the St. Paul police mugshot archive at the Minnesota Historical Society. I discuss Knight's record in more detail later in the article.

person not only functions as a descriptor of an illicit sexualized labor practice, but also operates as a visual strategy insofar as it categorizes to make determinations that register social and economic difference.

In 1908, Carry King was arrested in Minneapolis and logged into the Bertillon system ledger. Her record states her occupation as “alley worker” and her crime as grand larceny, or “G.L. robbery.” King is described as “dk brown” with “black wavy” hair and “maroon” eyes.²⁰ According to the officer’s description, King: “took man in alley and robbed him of \$130.00 after the arrest she dropped some money in alley. Where she and the man had been standing.” The officer’s claim that King “took” the man in the alley along with her identification as an “alley worker” position her as the initiator of the encounter and the alley as the site of her aggressive criminal act.

In the case of King, although the description of the incident does not indicate a struggle (i.e., the use of force, a weapon, nor the occurrence of a physical altercation), in fact it states innocuously that they were “standing,” King’s alley work status further renders her inviolable, the man as vulnerable, and the alley as the site for the perpetuation of violent acts by black women. Black women’s categorization as alley workers then establishes white maleness as a protectable status. The Bertillon ledger protects the identity of the man who is positioned as white through his racially unmarked status—his anonymity acting to secure his white male privilege.²¹ King’s record stands out as one of the few examples, perhaps the only, that I found in which a white man is identified with regard to an alley work arrest, the officer lists the man’s name and address only to make clear his request that any recovered money be returned to him.²² White male protectability as demonstrated by the Bertillon system’s accounts of alley work further underscore black women’s unprotectability even as black women’s encounters in the archive invite us to consider the possibility of their creative strategies of resistance to policing and social regulation.

Figure 1.2. May Moore Bertillon Mugshot #8761 (front). Source: Gale Family Library Minnesota Historical Society

²⁰ King (#3771), Reg No. 384.

²¹ This idea is theorized by David Roediger in *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (1991) and Cheryl Harris in “Whiteness as Property” (1993).

²² Carry King’s record (#3771) is catalogued in the Minneapolis ledger, 1908.

Alley Work Protest

The only archived mugshot photograph taken of a black woman arrested in the Twin Cities during the period of the use of the Bertillon system is of May Moore from Omaha, Nebraska arrested by the St. Paul police on December 11, 1906.²³ In the profile mugshot, Moore affects a smirk barely discernible, and in the frontal mugshot she sports a deep scowl. Moore's facility at expressive contrast operates as a visual mockery and critique of the scientific air of serious and exacting police work vis-à-vis the Bertillon system, as well as the white male power structure that defined the police as an institution. As Josh Ellenbogen reminds us, for Alphonse Bertillon the profile mugshot photograph was more valued in identification procedures because of its ability to render visible the lines of a person's facial features.²⁴ Thus, Moore's smirk poses a challenge to the attempt to achieve scientific accuracy through the profile image, as well as the attempt at resemblance through the standard facial expression of "semi-repose" that Bertillon photographs regularly picture as evidenced by the vast majority of mugshots in the St. Paul archive. As the only visual representation of a black woman in the Twin Cities Bertillon system records, Moore's protest is aligned with the visual strategies deployed by alley workers in the descriptive Minneapolis Bertillon record ledgers.

Figure 1.3. May Moore Bertillon Mugshot #8761 (back). Source: Gale Family Library Minnesota Historical Society

²³ May Moore's record (#8761) is at the Minnesota Historical Society in their collection of St. Paul Police Department Bertillon system "mugshots." See Figures 1.2 and 1.3.

²⁴ In *Reasoned and Unreasoned Images: The Photography of Bertillon, Galton, and Marey* (2012), Ellenbogen explains that the profile for Bertillon was understood to render a more complete scientific account than the frontal mugshot, because it presented measurable lines, while a person's face changed over time, their profile supposedly remained the same. Ellenbogen examines Bertillon's assumption with respect to the profile image (2012: 38-39).

Moore's record is housed in the St. Paul police Bertillon mugshot archive along with the Bertillon arrest records of the only two other women, one Latina and one white. The archive consists of two file boxes, and the three records of women are catalogued in succession at the very end of the second file box, further distinguishing them racially and by gender. The officer who completed Moore's record lists the racialized gendered identification "Negress" in the "Color" category, and "Julia Cunningham" as her alias. Moore's occupation is bluntly stated as "Prostitute," which appears to not have become common practice in the Bertillon system archive until just prior to 1920, while "alley worker" is listed as her crime. The section of the record designated for "Marks, Scars, Moles, Deformities, ETC." states that Moore has a "small blue mole on L. arm," and a "curved scar" in the "outer corner L. eye." Moore's alias "Julia Cunningham" is one complementary strategy mobilized to disrupt police attempts at name and facial recognition in the alley and on the street more extensively.

The use of aliases by many black women arrested for alley work signals their recognition of the power vested in Bertillon system identification. "Mamie" surfaces as the most common name in the Bertillon alley work archive.²⁵ If considered an alias, "Mamie" might be understood as a challenge to the methodical attempt to accurately identify black women to further their criminalization through alley work categorization. It is perhaps paradoxical that the only surviving mugshot record from this period of the Minneapolis police Bertillon system is actually of an alley worker—the record of Mamie Knight. Knight was born in Mexico and worked in the Twin Cities as an alley worker as noted on her record by the abbreviation "A.W." in the occupation category. Two records almost identical in the information collected for Mamie Knight exist: one housed in the Minneapolis City Hall Tower Archive Bertillon ledgers, and the other, a Minneapolis police Bertillon card with a mugshot held in the St. Paul Police Bertillon archive at the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul.²⁶

The positionality of Mamie Knight's records in two archives illuminates a site of disorder within the broader Bertillon system history in the Twin Cities calling to mind Audre Lorde's point about "confusion" with respect to social difference as I described earlier. The St. Paul Police Department is commonly understood to have had integrated photography into the Bertillon system through its use of the mugshot, while the Minneapolis Police Department is understood to have used a descriptive Bertillon ledger that did not include photographic mugshots.²⁷ That Knight's Minneapolis Bertillon "mugshot" card is housed in the St. Paul archive invites questions that concern among many issues archival practice and information accessibility. It also indicates the practice of information sharing between Minneapolis and St. Paul police departments, especially with respect to Knight's previous arrest by the St. Paul police as noted on her Minneapolis record.

Although Mamie Knight's "nativity" is listed as Mexico, her name along with the descriptor "alley worker" racialize her according to the construction of alley work that in Minneapolis occurred on and through the bodies of black women, many of whom share the name "Mamie" in the MPD's Bertillon

²⁵ It is perhaps the case that "Mamie" was a common name for black women during this period, and therefore possible that some women arrested were in fact named Mamie. However, it remains the case that similar or the same name is to some extent disruptive of attempts at differentiation in Bertillon categorization.

²⁶ Knight's mugshot Bertillon card (#8755) is housed in the Bertillon mugshot cards in the St. Paul Bertillon record archive. The other is in the Minneapolis Bertillon ledger book (#3191).

²⁷ This is an anecdotal reference to my experience at various city offices in search of Minneapolis Police Bertillon system mugshots. I was told that there were no Bertillon system photographs for Minneapolis. This was elaborated by the fact that the Minneapolis archive contained only ledger books that were descriptive, and no Bertillon photo records remained in the archive. The existence of Mamie Knight's record serves as material evidence that "mugshots" were in fact taken by the Minneapolis police. Further, the drawing and existence of the Rogues' Gallery as evidenced by the Costello study provides further historical documentation of police use of photography and mugshots, while Knight's Bertillon mugshot is possibly the only remaining Minneapolis Bertillon card with an actual mugshot currently accessible to the public.

ledger.²⁸ Furthermore, we might consider Knight's Minneapolis Bertillon record's location in the St. Paul archive and not in Minneapolis as effectively contributing to the vicissitudinal displacement that is characteristic of alley work as a marginal category of labor, and in this case in the historical record as well. Mamie Knight's two records serve as rare accessible material evidence of the use of a photographic apparatus in this period by the Minneapolis police's Bertillon Criminal Identification Bureau. Knight's record articulates alley work as a site of women of color's marginality and particularly black women's alterity in the city. Through its displacement in a professed system of order, Knight's Bertillon record functions as a visual protest directed at the photographic technology of the Bertillon system that appears to have left few traces in Minneapolis.²⁹

Moreover, the use of aliases and the name "Mamie," a name that was more common than distinguishing for black women in the archive, suggests that women who engaged in alley work may have routinely offered up the same fake name as a practice of naming not themselves, but rather the conditions of their labor that brought them under the purview of the Bertillon system in the first place. If "Mamie" can be potentially thought about as an alias we might then say that it is by exercising a practice of minoritarian critique what José Esteban Muñoz (1999) refers to as disidentification that black women "act on and against" the racialized sexual logics of alley work signaled by "Mamie" as it surfaces in Bertillon system documentation.

Even further, the "Mamie" naming strategy works "on and against" the process of "misnaming" that is rooted in the regulatory impulse of social differentiation as described by Audre Lorde (1984: 115).³⁰ By appropriating the Bertillon system's attempt to misname and misuse their actual names, the women's aliases themselves operate to unsettle the process by appropriating its logic. "Mamie," like the women's use of aliases, might be said to function as a political device that challenges the demand for accuracy in identification, and at the same time serves to reveal the conditions of alley work labor that compel the use of aliases. Accuracy and truth are disarticulated from Bertillon visual identification, and directed toward the forms of social neglect referenced by alley work made apparent by the overrepresentation of black women as alley workers in the archive. In this way, the documentation and categorization of alley work evidences black women's resistance.

Alley Work Categorization and Social Difference

Alley work serves as an index of black women's social difference as it surfaces in the Bertillon system's archive, and simultaneously registers social inclusion by way of neglect and the practices of institutional incorporation that the Bertillon system enables as a structure of surveillance. The implementation of a fine system for brothel owners in Minneapolis during the period of "regulated prostitution" during the 1860s through the 1890s as described by Penny Petersen in *Minneapolis Madams: The Lost History of Prostitution on the Riverfront* (2013) assisted in the surveillance and policing of street and alley work. The fine system during "regulated prostitution" largely targeted madams and required that they regularly appear in court to plead guilty to violating the city's anti-vice ordinance and pay a fine. After appearing in court, madams, as Petersen points out, would often continue conducting business repeating the process when next cited by the police.

²⁸ As indicated by Knight's two records: "Nativity" is a category listed in the Minneapolis Bertillon ledger, and although the Minneapolis Bertillon "mugshot" record uses the category "Born in" instead the logic of "nativity" is used to designate place of birth in addition to racial and ethnic difference.

²⁹ See Bertillon record "Mamie" aliases: Mamie Hall (#3190) and alias Mamie Wheeler (#3190), Mamie Tolsen (#3769), Mamie Jones (#3671), Mamie Knight (#8755), and Mayme Wellington.

³⁰ Here I am also guided by Uri McMillan's (2015) theorization of "mammy-memory" with reference to Joice Heth.

The fine system generated substantial revenue for the city, and further signaled alley work's marginality as it existed largely outside of the madam-run managerial structure that occupationally organized prostitution houses. Whereas madams were the primary targets under the regulated prostitution structure acting to some degree as a buffer between workers, clients, the police, and city officials, alley workers were positioned in a direct one-to-one relation to police and to the conditions through which their labor was regulated. Thus, brothels were regulated by city officials through the fine system. Public health officials screened brothel "inmates"—a term used at the time to categorize sex workers in prostitution houses—as Petersen (2013) describes. The vulnerability to which the structure of "regulated prostitution" contributed is apparent in the ways in which city officials and police distinguish street and alley walking from "disorderly houses" and "houses of ill-fame" used to describe brothels.

Although situated relationally, the alley was managed outside of the regulated system of prostitution due to its spatial organization not in privatized houses and buildings, but rather in public space. The category "alley work" indexes the particularity of its spatial and criminalized constitution. Black women's marginalization in the labor force in the city at the time and their sole identification as alley workers in the Bertillon ledgers is an indication of their positionality within the alley work nexus of identification, regulation, and criminalization.³¹ Alley work social difference then organizes a specific segment of black women's sexual labor positioned outside of legitimized or "regulated" categories of prostitution that the city permitted.

To continue, the Bertillon system categorization of alley work functions as the process by which black gendered and racial difference is regulated. This occurs within the actual visual strategies of categorization deployed by the Bertillon system to account for difference, as well as within the social context that circumscribed Bertillon power. The distillation of black women's personhood as a site of deviance through "alley work" produced not only the language for increased criminalization, but also the interpretive language used by police that was in and of itself culturally mediated. Moreover, the codification of alley work within the Bertillon ledger occurred within the context of black women's labor in the state of Minnesota, and in Minneapolis more specifically. Black women's work in general is largely underdocumented in the state of Minnesota prior to 1920. Significant studies undertaken by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the late 1880s simply did not account for black women as laborers although they account for white and immigrant women.

The early presence of black women in the "free" U.S. labor force is obscured due to statistical data that is limited or too generalized. Susan Carter asserts that census statistics for black people as a group began in 1870, due to the first two census counts referring only to free men in 1850, and free men and women in 1860.³² Therefore, black women's existence in data sets have been based firstly rather than supplementally on estimation, because, in this case, their status as a group was eclipsed by statistics compiled for black people as a group—men, women, and children.

Black women and black people as a group experienced employment and housing discrimination in Minneapolis (Taylor 1919). Black women were included in the census data in 1890 and 1900 in its overall accounting for the rise in women's role in the workforce, however there was no distinct category or separate description of the experiences of black women. This lack of categorical separation itself although structural, systemic, and eviscerating pushes back against state practices aimed at proper categorization for the purposes of regulation.

³¹ Black women and women of color approximated to Blackness appear to be the only women identified as alley workers in the archive. Refer to the discussion of Mamie Knight's arrest record. While black women were arrested for other categories of crimes, I did not find any records of white women arrested specifically for alley work.

³² See "Labor Force for Historical Statistics of the United States, Millennial Edition" (Carter 2003).

In 1910 the black population in Minneapolis was 3,743 out of a total population of 301,408 and there was evidence of employment discrimination as both the 1911 Vice Commission report and later a *Minneapolis Tribune* article detailed (Taylor 1919).³³ Also, the fact that black people's place in the city was regulated by restrictive covenants meant that housing in addition to job opportunities were limited for black Minneapolitans. Scholarly attention to women's labor organizing in Minneapolis demonstrates that black women played a role in challenging the conditions of their labor, but these statistics are only available for 1920 and beyond (Delton 2001-2002).³⁴ That black women as a group were not counted in the early years of the census because many were enslaved, and then later as free black women they were statistically collapsed into the categories "black" or "women" exemplifies the particularity of their social difference.

The positioning of black women as consonant with alley work extends to the systematic practice and process of accounting for and making Blackness apparent in the Bertillon identification system. For example, in the penultimate Bertillon ledger, the only ledger to include a list index of 1,006 total arrests, there are 116 people identified as "colored" and 38 of them are black women, accounting for close to 4 per cent of the total arrests. This means that from August 31, 1916 to August 27, 1918 with specific reference only to this Bertillon ledger, black people accounted for approximately 11.5 per cent of arrest records.³⁵

For instance, Mamie Hall, also known as Mamie Wheeler or Hazel Hall, was "found in a disorderly house" and sentenced to 40 days in the Workhouse on March 1, 1907. She is described as a "laundress" from Kentucky with a "florid," "It octoroon" complexion and the "back seven" of her teeth missing.³⁶ Since terms like "It," "dk," and "florid" are also used to describe white people and European immigrants, in the ledger, the officers often also designate Blackness through the abbreviation "Col" for "colored." The effort to make Blackness apparent conditions its social difference. In the case of Mamie Hall, U.S. racialization and gendering intersect to determine her positionality in the Bertillon record. The work to make Blackness surface in the record archive assists in the consolidation of race as a category that is dispersed rather than concentrated in one category thereby further establishing categorization within Bertillon standardization. The Bertillon system's treatment of alley work points to the societal processes and practices through which race and gender difference are reified.

Black women's presence in the Bertillon system archive almost entirely as alley workers, and the relative anonymity afforded white heterosexual male alley work patrons, (i.e., Ethel Walters: "suspected of having robbed a man") index the Bertillon system's purportedly objective gaze as it rationalizes black women as deviant even as it simultaneously valorizes white male protectability. As I pointed out earlier, the implicit concern for the preservation of white male status in the burgeoning Twin Cities was explicated by Muller and Mead in their 1899 study:

The government of the municipality is largely the work of the Police and Fire Departments...but without a written record or history, which should present tangible evidence of the important duties which he performs, he is almost forgotten in the great drama of life in a large city... In the early days the volunteers were the most important men in the community; they were leaders in business, social and political circles, and now

³³ See also Table 14 of the U.S. Bureau of the Census' "Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1910" (15 Jun 1998). Minneapolis is ranked 18th, and St. Paul is ranked 26th.

³⁴ Delton details the ways in which housing and employment discrimination shaped African American participation in labor organizing. Ryan Tate's (2012) paper "A House Divided: Women's Activism in the Minnesota Labor Movement, 1900-1935" was also helpful. Also, see Costa (2000).

³⁵ From city workhouse records and the arrest and disposition records: See Ledger 14947 (Oct 1916) Minneapolis City Hall Tower Archives. The city kept simultaneous record keeping systems even as they invested in the Bertillon system, a more sustained analysis might cross-reference the Bertillon system records with these others catalogues.

³⁶ Mamie Hall (#3190), Reg. No. 48. Minneapolis City Hall Tower Archives.

in old age they are justly proud of the protection which they afforded the infant cities in days of vigorous manhood. (Muller and Mead 1899: 5-6)³⁷

The “vigorous manhood” of the volunteer police and firefighters of the past secures its own legacy, whereas the evolution of the police and fire department into a paid department requires a historical record to preserve it. The volume’s engravings of officers further legitimize the departmentalization of police and fire service. Engraving after engraving of stern faced and uniformed white men, many sporting distinguishing mustaches, people the pages of the biographical sections of Muller and Mead’s study that detail the men’s personal information regarding their childhood, marital status, children, in addition to their social and political affiliations and their address. While some of the schemas of accounting for the biographical in Muller and Mead’s study of the police are delineated in the categorization processes of the Bertillon system, the Bertillon system’s purpose is to create a criminal profile. The depiction by Muller and Mead of the white masculine service and vigor of the police officers as “steady,” “reliable,” “brave,” and exhibiting “hardy strength” generates an important point of contrast with respect to the descriptions of black women arrested for alley work by Minneapolis police previously discussed.

Black women’s alley work as a category of informal labor contains within it a palpable concern over the security of white men’s place in society and for their physical safety as expressed by officer Jones in his description of Frances McRaven and by extension Muller and Mead. This discourse of security is one that demands a visible recognition and perhaps a reappearance of a once more tactile white male power as “vigorous.” The demand for the historical documentation of a form of power in order that it can be seen and produce a tangible “truthful” record unwittingly upsets the taken for granted assumption of white male supremacy. The Bertillon system anticipates the undoing of the artifice of naturalized notions of white male power that Muller and Mead trace to acts of “vigorous” on the part of police and fireman in particular. It then ameliorates this social anxiety over white masculinity through its attempt to reinstate power through a measurable system of accounting.

Thus, white male protectability endeavors to repair the notion of white male power as natural. Immigration, migration, and economic recession, in tandem with the phenomenon of alley work regulation, direct us to a crisis in white masculinity in the late 19th century that Muller and Mead articulate. That black women working as alley workers were mostly arrested for robbing white men discursively calls into question white masculine superiority as they continue to be “lured into alleys,” robbed, and outsmarted by black women.

The Bertillon system records explicitly identify race with respect to Blackness every time it surfaces, and on a few occasions sex. Gender remains sutured to the categorization of labor and pronoun usage in the police report, while “female,” is used a handful of times to delineate white women.³⁸ In the case of Charles or “Chas” Johnson who was arrested a few weeks prior to Ethel Walters, the officer wrote “Dk Brown (Col)” to describe the complexion of his skin and his racial identity. The use of “Col” to designate a person as “colored” is one way the record produces a visual language to articulate and manage Blackness. All nine ledgers available at Minneapolis City Hall, including the 1908-1909 ledger in which the prior two records discussed are included generate a system for the visual representation of black racial and gendered difference.³⁹ In this way, Blackness as an identifying sign (i.e., Col) bolsters the representation process of the Bertillon system. This perhaps best registers in Bertillon ledger 9 that I

³⁷ On the title page, the authors state that the volume’s purpose lies in: “Describing and illustrating the systems, the officers and the men, and the effectiveness of these powers, including a history of each city with reminiscences of the past and a vast fund of valuable information.”

³⁸ Minneapolis City Hall Tower Archives Bertillon ledger records.

³⁹ See “Minneapolis Police Records: Part I Findings,” Tower Archives, accessed Spring 2015, finding aid compiled by Kate McManus; McManus points out that Ledger 5 is missing from the archive.

have previously referenced. In ledger 9, names are listed in rough alphabetical order according to the date the record was created. This ledger holds records from 1916 to 1918, and each black person is identified by the signifier “Col” in the index notationally. The name of the person arrested and “Col” generate a racialized and gendered representational structure in the first instance of encounter in the ledger. “Col,” like the person’s name, operates as a primary form of identification, rather than as secondary.

While “Swede,” “German,” “Russian Jew,” and state of birth or official residence classifications in the “Nativity” category serve to identify white immigrants and those who “became white” in the 20th century as David Roediger has argued, it also serves to demonstrate the variegated capacious make-up of the Bertillon record’s “Nativity” category that could potentially name a place, ethnicity, or race.⁴⁰ That non-black racially and ethnically marginal people were not identified notationally in the same way that “Col” was used to designate Blackness signals its difference. The twin identification of “Col” and “alley worker” produce the visual language that allow them to function separately in the record—“Col” as a descriptor, while alley worker functions as a designation, both articulating Blackness as a category of social difference through visual representation and categorization.

The Bertillon records’ use of the term “alley worker” speaks to its use of the racialized and gendering terminology of the time that elaborate black women’s social difference also through terms like “colored,” “negra,” “octoroon,” or “mulatto.” The dispersal of social difference characteristics across different categories in the Bertillon system is noted in the case of both race and gender for instance. The Minneapolis Bertillon record collects information categorically with reference to “Forehead (Incln, Hght, Wdth, Pecul), Nose (ridge, base, root, lgth, project, breadth, pecul), Color of Left Eye (circle, periph, pecul), Age, Nativity, Occupation, Weight, Chin, Beard, Hair” and “Comp” for complexion.” The records do not list a separate category for gender, sex, nor a separate ledger book for people of different gender identities. The records instead list a host of physical characteristics that have come to define gender identity: “beard, color of left eye, bridge of nose, hair, shoulders, gate, hair.” None of the Bertillon system records in this archive are complete, which further highlights the information recorded as the information that perhaps seemed most important or made the most sense to the officers to collect.

Moreover, the records do not assume two separate types of gendered subjects—men and women, rather gender classification comes through the process of identification grounded in characteristics determined by social difference. Gender is noted systemically by the person’s name, possibly their line of work, and by their record’s location in the archive. Regarding race, the categories “nativity, hair, left and right eye color,” and “comp.” for complexion operate explicitly as categories of racialization. Also, categories such as “work” and “address” might have also situated subjects within racial categories due to restrictive housing covenants and leasing practices, whereas “Nativity” comes to note state, city, and other places of birth or residence within the United States and abroad. The practice of dispersing social difference across categories unwittingly denaturalizes difference, revealing its social construction. This reveals not that race, gender, and sex were foreclosed as observable characteristics, but rather that the social meaning of race, gender, and sexuality cohere across the listed categories.

Anne Harriss, an alley worker in her late twenties is described as having black “wavy” hair, a dark “brown skin” complexion, “maroon” eyes, and a “deep rooted” nose.⁴¹ Harriss was arrested August 1, 1908 and her charge is “vagrancy first class alley worker.” The officer reports that Harriss held up a man two years earlier, and that this man “had gone” by the time that she was arrested. In the case of Harriss, alley worker, is her occupational designation and vagrancy her crime. Harriss’ is one of the few cases where it appears the actions of the man involved came to bear on the articulation of alley work, his position therefore implicated, although he was not criminalized with respect to alley work. Although the charge of

⁴⁰ See David Roediger’s *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (1991).

⁴¹ Harriss (#3770), Reg. No 446. Minneapolis City Hall Tower Archives.

robbery did not hold up because the man fled, the charge listed on the record functions to articulate the inconsistent renderings of alley work during this period when illicit sexual labor had become increasingly criminalized in the post-regulated prostitution years. The categorization of alley work as vagrancy also makes clear its connection to a spatial politics of regulation that more extensively connected the alley to other outdoor public areas.

The context for the Bertillon system's construction of black women's social difference rests in the city's attitudes toward sexuality, race, and gender difference in its broader regulation of sexual labor. In the same 1911 Minneapolis Vice Commission report in which street and alley walking are deemed the most vulnerable categories of sex work, the commissioners propose the construction of a public carceral institution solely dedicated to reforming "fallen women." The report makes no mention of "colored," "mulatto," or Negro women, racial categorization terminologies used for black and women of color at the time; it instead uses formulations such as the "commingling of classes," "clandestine prostitute," and other terms that together signal black women's social difference—thereby referencing the Bertillon ledger's practice of dispersing the characteristics that reference race and other categories of difference across multiple categories.

Further, the detention facility for "fallen women" that the commissioners recommend would institute a system of entry and discharge organized around "indeterminate" sentencing, thus bestowing reformers with absolute power with respect to release. The commissioners argue that a mandate of "indeterminate sentencing" is the only way that women engaged in sex work can be truly reformed. It is significant that while the Vice Commission understands streetwalking and by extension alley work, and all categories of prostitution for that matter, as signaling the need for reform, they also make clear that this public reform institution would not facilitate the mixing of "social classes" of women. Following their logic, the facility would practice segregation with respect to race and ethnicity at least, and perhaps class as well. This demonstrates the importance of social difference categorization as a dimension of social reform operating coterminous with the Bertillon system.

Further, the 1911 Vice Commission report paints a dismal picture for girls in the city, blaming waged labor as the culprit for their "delinquency." The report identifies Minneapolis as third in the nation for its large population of girls "living out of home." The commissioners express their concern for the "alarming" rise in young single migrant girls "without proper escorts" in the downtown area of the city. They blame wage labor, since through financial independence it made migration a possibility, thereby enticing girls to relocate to the city. Although, the report makes the point that it is not a sound assumption to make that all the migrant women worked as prostitutes, it creates the justification for gendered regulation through its construction of the women and girls as "innocent," in need of protection, and likely to be on the "edge of falling from decency" without the city's supervision. That black women are not explicitly named in the report but instead register through their existence in the Bertillon arrest record ledger suggests that they were among the most regulated due to the increased attention to social reform and the regulation of vice.

According to the Bertillon ledgers, black women were by and large arrested for the same categories of offenses. Most were arrested for petit and grand larceny from white men, reflecting the judgment of the officer who completed the Bertillon card for Frances McRaven. The cultural mediation of alley work representation is grounded in black women's subjection within the paid labor sector more extensively—formal and informal. The migration patterns of black women from the south to Midwest and East coast cities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries contributed to new regional constructions of black work and black sexual labor.

The arrest of Madam Hertogs in 1889 for allowing a black woman to work in a white prostitution house, as Penny Petersen affirms, "Bordellos were strictly segregated" (Petersen 2013: 125), further supports this

claim. Therefore, prostitution and sexual labor more broadly articulated race, gender, and sexual social difference through regulation. An 1888 opinion piece published in the *Western Appeal*, an African American newspaper based in Chicago, St. Paul, and Minneapolis asserts that black men's social difference is conditioned by white supremacy and patriarchy. The writer claims that one indignity that black men experience comes from their exclusion from houses of prostitution that administer a "whites only" policy:

What a difference there is between the feelings of the black man toward the whites, and the white man toward the blacks. The whites boast of their superiority, meaning thereby, that they are superior from a christian, humane, or moral standpoint . . . Their humanity seldom prompts them to accord to their black brothers a free and fair show in the battle of life, and to judge them by their capabilities and worth without regard to the color of their skin. . . They show their interest in the morals of the black men, by shutting their eyes to the fact that gambling is carried on by them, the same as if no law against gambling existed and license houses of prostitution for black women, with a provision that black men are not to be permitted to visit them. In all their institutions of whatever nature, all peoples are made welcome on equal terms excepting the black man. On the other hand, there is absolutely nothing over which the black man has control, that is so high, so sacred or so law, that his white brother will not be accorded an equal chance with himself, in the race for its possession. (Adams 1888)⁴²

The *Western Appeal* writer is decisive in his determination that black men's social difference is produced by the denial of different types of institutional access. For the author, one way that this larger exclusion is manifested is through the coming together of anti-black racism and white supremacist patriarchy to create the conditions for white male sexual access to black women through the ongoing perpetuation of black men's alterity. Social difference emerges here in the categorization of Blackness through the restriction of access to social institutions, specifically prostitution. As a social institution, prostitution designates social difference for men on the basis of race and class, and sexual labor as a site of conferred vulnerability as it facilitates entry into legitimized masculinity through the social differentiation entailed through sexual labor, and a general heteropatriarchal institutionalized commercial and social access to women and women's sexual labor.

Cynthia Blair describes vulnerability with regard to the concentration of black women in street and alley work prostitution economies in her groundbreaking study of black women's sexual labor *I've Got to Make My Livin': Black Women's Sex Work in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (2010). Blair argues:

Yet even if street work did not represent black women's isolation within the sex economy, the necessity of street work did demonstrate the economic vulnerability of individual black women and the financial instability of the black brothels, bawdy saloons, and other leisure establishments supporting black street workers. Streetwalking demonstrates the various ways that black women simultaneously exploited opportunities within the sex trade and worked to redefine the limits that they faced within the Levee's sex economy. (Blair 2010: 55)

Blair's description provides both a counter position to the overdetermined understanding of black women as vulnerable and therefore without agency, while at the same time it accounts for the vulnerability established by alley work. Relatedly, as Minneapolis' brothel and alley work economies elucidate, prostitution designates a form of labor intimately tied to the location of the worksite. As Petersen (2013) describes, working in a brothel or a bordello was more socially valued than street or alley work as is

⁴² Edited by J.Q. Adams; the author is not identified.

reflected in its higher on average rate of remuneration. The spatial location and occupational organization of sex work designates the value of the work performed, and in turn the social value conferred onto those who perform it. The social devaluation of alley and street work, as seen in the Vice Commission report, shapes the overall understanding and construction of the distinction between different categories of sex work. Thus, black women's location in a socially devalued sector of prostitution serves as an example of the way in which alley work as a category both confers and extinguishes social value assigned to black women through the Bertillon system's categorization and surveillance structures.

Dr. George F. Butler of Chicago delivered a strident critique of the 1911 Minneapolis Vice Commission report (Butler 1911). Butler charges that the commission is naive in its proposal of sexual repression as a valid challenge to social problems that are institutional. Butler reasons that the institution of marriage creates a category of men who are left out of sexual intimacy, because they cannot materially afford the financial dependency created by marriage, and therefore have no access to state sanctioned sexual relationships (1911: 897). He goes on to argue that the social compulsion toward marriage also produces the necessity for prostitution—sexual access to women being a material need and a right for men. Although Butler's claim that men's sexual access to women is a civic right is troubling, to say the least, his critique of the social compulsion toward marriage articulates prostitution as an economic institution that reifies social difference through sexual access to women (1911: 898).

The Bertillon record of Ethel Walters, as I discuss in the introduction, serves as an example of identification categorization based from both the information that is collected on the record and that which remains undocumented with regard to the Bertillon system's approach to alley work.⁴³ The record states that Walters is "Suspected of having robbed a man of his pocket book and contents no conviction man had left the city could not get complaint she had also robbed a man of \$110.00 last summer and with the same results at that time." We do not know the name of the person who apparently accused Walters of robbery, but we do know that Walters is a black woman or as the complexion category states a "dk brown skin negra." We also know that her "occupation" is "CP/WP & alley worker," and regarding peculiarities of appearance that her face is "...covered with black dots." We do not know where the robbery took place. Regarding the man that she was "suspected" of robbing, all we know is that he "left the city" and the officer "could not get complaint."

Walters' record fails to legitimize the cause of arrest, and instead presents details that beg the question why she was arrested in the first place. Again, the record states that she was "suspected" of robbing a man, and although the man that she was "suspected" of robbing had already left the city and had not actually filed an official complaint, she was still arrested. The record also states that the case was "dismissed" and that Walters had committed this same crime the previous year with no specific details regarding the previous arrest. That there is no official account from the accuser illustrates that the purpose of Walters' record is not to document criminality, but rather to bolster the process of collecting identifying information to serve in the process of defining criminality and codifying criminalized acts. Walters was not convicted of a crime nor did she have charges pressed against her, yet she has a criminal record.

Further, that Walters' Bertillon record exists at all signals her liminality as an alley worker as it serves the primary purpose of further establishing the Bertillon system as a legitimate mechanism for criminal identification by adding to the ledger's bank of collected information. There is no section included on the Bertillon card where a statement is taken from the person arrested that might describe what occurred from their perspective, thus leaving us to wonder if women arrested for alley work were taking back money they were denied, or if they themselves were in fact being robbed and in that case defending themselves. As a type of feminized sexual labor, "alley work" constitutes a broader designation of black

⁴³ Walters (#2935), Reg. No 558. Minneapolis City Hall Tower Archives.

women's social difference in the Twin Cities during the era of the modernization of policing.

Alley Work: An Archive of Disappeared Difference

Saidiya Hartman's interrogation of the archive of transatlantic slavery offers a critical assessment of the function of the archive of the disappeared. With respect to the examination of historical records of enslavement, Hartman reminds us that her aim

... is not to give voice to the slave, but rather to imagine what cannot be verified, a realm of experience which is situated between two zones of death—social and corporeal death—and to reckon with the precarious lives which are visible only in the moment of their disappearance. (Hartman 2008: 11)

Hartman's assertion regarding engaging with lives and experiences that disappear in the archive speaks to the Bertillon system categorization of alley work. More specifically, Hartman's delineation of the history of violence that the archive of transatlantic slavery enacts, as a violence that in many ways functions through the systematic disappearance of black subjects, registers the visual and categorical particularity of black racial, gendered, and sexual difference or what Hartman, following Orlando Patterson, articulates as "social and corporeal death."

Disappearance as brute obliteration simultaneously manifests in the archival record as it is charged with producing a window into the past. Relatedly, the Bertillon system archive enacts a practice of renarrating the details surrounding arrest, an act that disappears any attempt at a more representative account. Alley work arrests are narrated from the perspective of the police officer, thereby foreclosing space for the women arrested to speak through the record even with the understanding that speech in this context remains a contested site. The Bertillon record does not possess a section where people who are arrested can make a statement, instead the perspective of the officer is privileged, and those of the arrested become discernable in the silences and the interstices of and across archival practice and interpretation. From this place, an account of alley work is always already impossible from the outset as it surfaces from an archive animated by the language and experiences of white male police officers.

Black women's challenges to Bertillon surveillance register through moments where the system's imprecision reveals the racialized, gendered, and sexualized power relations that circumscribe and undergird documentation and categorization. The documentation of alley work as detailed by the Bertillon system arrest records then signals the disappearance of the experiences of women designated as alley workers. For Hartman, reading against the grain of history offers a model to engage the experiences of the oppressed. Reading against the grain of the archive thus offers a lens through which we might trace black women's critical negotiations and challenges to the conditions of their social difference—critical negotiations expressed through May Moore's mugshot smirk, the use of aliases, and alley worker confrontations and encounters with white male power in the alley and at the police station.

Conclusion

The regulation of black women's alley work delineates a site from which to interrogate the history of the Minneapolis Police Department's use of the Bertillon System of Criminal Identification, which is a system credited with ushering in modern policing tactics through the introduction of a standardized process for categorizing information about people arrested. The designation of alley work as a devalued form of gendered and sexual labor that was racialized primarily as black facilitated the further criminalization and categorization of black women's social difference in Minneapolis. The alley work archive, both in its visual and descriptive accounts, indexes the Minneapolis police force's modernizing technical integration

of photography into the work of the department. Even as alley work points to black women's social difference as it emerges in the Bertillon system's archive of surveillance, it also brings into focus the structural social regulation that conditioned the system's incorporation into policing. Black women's social difference is indexed through "alley work" as a category of racialized sexual labor. The Bertillon system mobilizes social difference as a representational mode of surveillance through categorization. Therefore, Bertillon system categorization operates as a representational site that comes to designate black women's social difference through alley work.

The Minneapolis Police Department deployed the Bertillon system as a tool of surveillance tasked with cataloguing and controlling social difference through standardized documentation procedures and visual identification. Black women's resistance to the representational politics of the Bertillon System of Criminal Identification, as expressed through the alley work archive, articulates the ways in which the Bertillon system's imprecision reveals the power relations that circumscribe documentation and categorization. Finally, the policing of black women's alley work through the Bertillon system evidences the racialized, gendered, and sexual dimensions of carceral and state attempts to bring order to industrializing city life.

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