

The Leisure Pursuits of North Carolina Upper-Class Women in the Twentieth Century

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Wives and daughters from North Carolina wealthy families in the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries were not exposed to active leisure pursuits because they were socialized to be dependent on their husbands and fathers as well as socialized to be physically weak. Until at least the mid-twentieth century, elite women's clubs, in addition to engaging in educational activities and service projects, offered card parties, pageants, musicals and dances as appropriate leisure pursuits for their class. Yet, the affluent benefitted from country club memberships, private lessons in golf, tennis, and swimming and the freedom to participate in acceptable sports for ladies. The society pages of newspapers reported club tournaments, vacation sports, and other leisure activities of elite women as well as advertised sports clothing and educational opportunities. Upper-class girls educated often at single-gender institutions did not compete in intercollegiate athletics until recently but instead participated in a variety of individual sports on campus, in clubs, or at resorts. Golf predominated as the favorite sport for upper-class women as verified by the fact that three out of four women inductees into the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame were champion golfers.



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