

HABIRSHAW Electric Cable Co.



ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF ORDNANCE DISTRICT CHIEF

1107 BROADWAY  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

TO INSURE PROMPT ATTENTION  
IN REPLYING REFER TO  
FILE No. \_\_\_\_\_

NOV 6 - A.M.

PRODUCTION DIVISION

ATTENTION OF PRODUCTION DIVISION

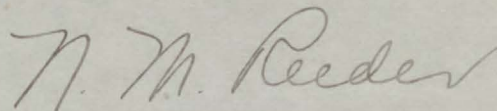
November 2, 1918.

Miss Mary Van Kleeck,  
Chief, Women in Industry Service,  
Dept. of Labor,  
Southern Building,  
15th and H Streets,  
Washington, D.C.

My dear Miss Van Kleeck:

The enclosed letter from the Habirshaw Electric Cable Company, is referred to you for action following the orders of attached telegram which is self-explanatory.

I am also enclosing a very informal memorandum giving you a resume of my telephone conversation with Mr. Quinn of the Habirshaw Electric Company. I know that they are very anxious to have this exemption go thru and although I am not able now to get hold of Mr. Quinn, I am forwarding the material to you for action. I have also sent a duplicate of this material to Miss Nell Swartz.



N. M. REEDER, SUPERVISOR  
WOMEN'S BRANCH.

ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT  
 OFFICE OF ORDNANCE DISTRICT CHIEF  
 1107 BROADWAY  
 NEW YORK, N. Y.

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November 2nd, 1918

N. M. Reeder, Supervisor Women's Branch.

Mr. Quinn, Habirshaw Electric Cable Co.

*102 43rd St. N.Y. City*

This afternoon I received the enclosed telegram from Washington relative to handling exemption case for women. Knowing that you are anxious to have action on this, I have sent your original letter together with the data, which Mr. Marsh gave me this morning, to Miss Mary VanKleeck and to Miss Nell Swartz, Chief, Women in Industry Section, New York Dept. of Labor

I am sorry we did not understand at the outset that this was not a pure Ordnance contract. Otherwise, I could have directed you yesterday to Miss Van Kleeck.

M. N. REEDER  
 WOMEN'S BRANCH.



MNR:ELH

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Dept. of Labor,  
Southern Building,  
15th & H Sts.  
Washington, D. C.

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M. N. REEDER, SUPERVISOR  
WOMEN'S BRANCH.

*Miss Van Kleeck*

cl Od a 55

Od Washington DC 1252 pm Nov 2 '18

Ordinance District Chief,

New York District Ordinance Office.

Attention Miss N M Reeder Womens Branch.

Informed No Ordinance contract at Havirshaw Electric cable Company  
Yonkers NewYork period advise you not handle period Advise you report  
case Van Klèeck Labor Department if firm wishes to make request  
for permit period Tead

Williams 7733 Army Ordinance.



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Williams 7733 Army Ordnance.

November 2, 1918.

MEMORANDUM.

Telephone conversation with Mr. Quinn, Central Office, Habirshaw Electric Cable Co.

Said Mr. Ward of the Otis Elevator Co. had referred him to the Industrial Service Section, to get action on exemption for women.

Said Mr. Struthers was the man to see at the Yonkers factory.

CONTRACT.

Nature - flat rate.

Order #180239) 5000 Miles, begun Octo. 14, no date  
Signal Corps#) of expiration.

Order # 180230)  
Signal Corps #) 5000 Miles, begun Oct. 14, no date  
of expiration.

Order #180375)-30,000 Miles  
Signal Corps #)

To date, November 2nd, 50 miles total amount produced. A schedule production, according to Mr. Marsh, who gave me date on contracts, as follows:-

Nov.	1st Week,	150
"	2nd "	200
"	3rd "	300
"	4th "	300

Month of December,	5000 miles
" " January,	10000 "

Expect to finish the contract about the first of March.

They are taking care of 10,000 miles at a Bridgeport Plant. As nearly as I can make out, this firm is a subsidiary of the American Steel and Machinery Co. If I am wrong in my conclusion, it may be that the American Sttel & Machinery Co. is the Company with the direct contracts. The telephone number of the Central Office, where Mr. Quinn is located, is Vanderbilt 2860. I have made all the arrangements of a visit on Monday with him.

*N. M. Reeder*



HABIRSHAW ELECTRIC CABLE CO., Inc.

YONKERS, NEW YORK

*Miss Reeder*

November 1, 1918.

Industrial Service Section  
Ordinance Department  
1107 Broadway

Gentlemen:

Our plant is at present producing practically 100% government work. Our largest and most important order is Outpost Wire for the American Army in France and we have promised to produce this wire at the rate of 2000 miles per week.

In order that we fulfill this promise it is absolutely necessary that we run our factory to its utmost capacity 24 hours per day. There are a number of operations in the production of this wire that are essentially women's work, particularly the winding and stranding of the fine wire, and application of the cotton braid.

Our production has increased rapidly in the last few weeks and we have now reached a point where it is necessary that the machines operated by women run 24 hours per day and we have been unable to obtain permission from the State Department of Labor to employ them between the hours of 10 P.M. and 6 A.M.

We are now working the women in two shifts of 7½ hours each, the hours being

1st shift	6A.M. to 2P.M.
Lunch period	10A.M. to 10:30 P.M.
2nd shift	2 P.M. to 10 P.M.
Lunch period	5:30 P.M. to 6P.M.

It would be a physical impossibility to turn out the wire required of us by the Signal Corps unless we are able to work a third shift of women between the hours of 10P.M. and 6A.M.

Can you give us or assist us in obtaining the necessary permission to work our female employees during these hours of the night? We are ready and willing to cooperate in every way to make any special



**HABIRSHAW ELECTRIC CABLE CO., Inc.**

YONKERS, NEW YORK

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We have placed some of the new machines engaged in this work in two buildings in the vicinity and of course desire the same working hours for these also.

We trust that you will see the necessity of our obtaining this permission as quickly as possible so that there may be no delgy in the production of this wire which we understand is most urgently needed by the Signal Corp. We are

Very truly your,  
HABIRSHAW ELECTRIC CABLE CO., INC.

BA:R

BY:

*B. Aspinwall*

ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF ORDNANCE DISTRICT CHIEF

1107 BROADWAY

NEW YORK, N. Y.

TO INSURE PROMPT ATTENTION  
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By: (SGD) B. Aspinwall.

BA: %

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By: (SGD) B. Aspinwall.

BA:%

November 4, 1918.

Miss N. M. Reeder,  
New York District Ordnance Office,  
1107 Broadway,  
New York City.

My dear Miss Reeder:

I wish to acknowledge your letter of November 2nd to Miss Van Kleeck, which came during her absence from the city for a few days. It will be brought to her attention upon her return.

Very truly yours,

IMP

Secretary to Miss Van Kleeck.



November 22, 1918.

Miss Nelle Swartz, Chief  
Bureau of Women in Industry,  
New York State Department of Labor,  
230 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

My dear Miss Swartz:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your report on the Habirshaw Electric Cable Company, Yonkers, New York. There will be no need from now on to consider requests for exemptions from night work laws, as I am sure you understand.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Van Kleeck, Director  
Woman in Industry Service.

MVK/L





NOV 21 A.M.

STATE OF NEW YORK  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
OFFICE OF THE STATE INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION  
CAPITOL, ALBANY  
NEW YORK OFFICE, 230 FIFTH AVENUE

BUREAU OF  
WOMEN-IN-INDUSTRY  
NELLE SWARTZ  
CHIEF OF BUREAU

STATE INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION  
JOHN MITCHELL, CHAIRMAN  
EDWARD P. LYON  
LOUIS WIARD  
JAMES M. LYNCH  
HENRY D. SAYER  
WILLIAM S. COFFEY, SECRETARY

NEW YORK, November 19, 1918.

Miss Mary Van Kleeck,  
Department of Labor,  
Women in Industry Service,  
Southern Building,  
Washington, D. C.

*Request for Exemption  
Night Work*

Dear Miss Van Kleeck,

Miss Reeder referred to me the matter of the  
Habirshaw Electric Cable Company, Yonkers, New York, and I  
am enclosing for your information a copy of our investigation,  
that you may know that our recommendation is that such request  
for exemption be denied.

Yours very sincerely,

*Nelle Swartz*

Chief.

NS.MLS  
Enc. - report



HABIRSHAW ELECTRIC CABLE COMPANY

November 7, 1918

Yonkers, New York

REASON FOR VISIT

Application made to Ordnance Department for exemption from night work law prohibiting the employment of women between hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. The question was referred by the Ordnance Department to the Women in Industry Service, U. S. Labor Department, because it was learned that the contract was primarily a Signal Corps one.

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Mr. Struthers, Factory Superintendent  
Mr. Harry Stansfield, Secretary of International Association of Machinists

ACTION TAKEN

DATE OF LAST INSPECTION

March 18, 1918

Inspection made for the BUREAU OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

Margaret T. Hodgen  
Hilda E. Svenson



SUMMARY

The request for permission to employ women on night shifts was made by this firm at least two to four weeks in advance of the time when they would be able to employ them. This "preparedness" was due to the fact that the company has constructed two new buildings which may be ready in several weeks. The only reason given for wishing to employ women at night was that they were able to perform delicate operations of mending broken thread and wire on braiding machines more skillfully than men or boys. Men and boys, however, can be secured in Yonkers with only "ordinary difficulty", according to the factory superintendent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That request for exemption from night work law prohibiting employment of women between hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. be denied inasmuch as

- 1) women do not necessarily excel men or boys in the type of work demanded
- 2) both men and boys can be secured in Yonkers for the night shift with only "ordinary difficulty".



November 7, 1918.

REASON FOR VISIT

Application made to Ordnance Department by the Habirshaw Electric Cable Company for permission to employ women at night between hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. The question was referred by the Ordnance Department to the Women in Industry Division, U. S. Labor Department, because it was learned that the contract was primarily a Signal Corps one.

STATUS OF CONTRACT

Product - wire for carrying electric current. This firm receives the wire and puts on outer coating of rubber and braided thread, which they deliver to the Signal Corps.

EMPLOYMENT

In order to meet contract the management has taken over two new factory buildings in which machines are now being installed, and dressing rooms prepared for women.

Numbers Employed

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1) In Habirshaw Electric Cable Company - Women                         | 120        |
| Men  | 600        |
|  | <u>720</u> |
| 2) In Dock Street plant - number to be employed in from 2 to 4 weeks - | - Women 60 |
| 3) In Armory plant -no. to be employed -                               | " 56       |
| in from 2 to 4 weeks   |            |

If a night shift be put on in all three plants, the total number of women employed will be 236, and on the night shift alone, 103.

Employment Manager

Women are employed by a man employment manager. The firm has recently secured the services of a woman who is now taking up questions involving the employment of women. She has chosen forewomen from among the workers, in accordance with the management's plan.

Labor Turnover

Accurate figures not available, though kept. The turnover is estimated at 200%.

Labor Supply

From the Superintendent of this plant and from other sources it was learned that Yonkers is well supplied with male and female labor; that only "ordinary difficulty" is encountered in getting men, while women can be had for the asking at low wages.



The women employed at the Habirshaw Electric Cable Company's plant live in the immediate neighborhood. Those working on the morning shift are under 21, while those on the afternoon shift are over 21, in order to comply with the law which prohibits employment of women under 21 after 9 o'clock. The women on the morning shift are unmarried, while about 50% of those on the afternoon shift are married.

#### PROCESSES ON WHICH WOMEN ARE WORKING

Women are operating braiding, paper insulating, rubber insulating, cotton winding, wire winding and stranding machines. All the operations are simple, requiring the watching of several machines and occasionally splicing thread or wire. The Superintendent said that the women are much more expert at this fine work than men and that boys are "all thumbs". To the investigators the work seemed to require only the minimum of skill or delicacy. The Superintendent's judgment may have been influenced by the fact that the boys and men demand a higher wage for the work.

#### Training for Women

Any one of these processes can be learned in a few hours.

#### HOURS

Women are employed on two shifts:

- 1) 6 a.m. - 2 p.m. lunch 10:00 - 10:30
- 2) 2 p.m. - 10 p.m. " 5:30 - 6:00

7½ hours a day  
45 " " week

#### WAGES

##### Women

Process	Initial (hourly)	Maximum (hourly)
Braiding	26¢	28¢
Cotton winding	26¢	28¢
For women	30¢	34¢
Wire winding	28¢	34¢
Stranding	28¢	34¢
Paper Insulating	28¢	34¢
Rubber Insulating	28¢	30¢
For women	34¢	40¢

Men are started at 34¢ as against women at 26¢. No man is receiving more than 50¢ an hour, and the majority of them only 38¢-40¢ an hour.

#### PHYSICAL WORKING CONDITIONS

Supervision - by woman, newly employed

Uniforms - girls are required to wear khaki bloomer uniforms which cost the company \$3.75 and are sold to the girls for \$3.00, which is paid out of their wages at the rate of 50¢ a week.

Work Room Conditions - are good

Speeding - none



PHYSICAL WORKING CONDITIONS (continued)

Service Features

1. Sanitary Service

3 floor - toilet room contains 5 toilets, 6 wash basins in a clean condition

Winding Dept. - toilet room contains white vitreous trough with 10 faucets; 3 toilets, clean.

2. Lunch and Rest Room Service

3 floor - large sunny room for rest room with couch, table and provision for heating food. Hats and coats hung about rest room.

POLICY IN REGARD TO TRADE UNIONS

An effort was made to secure information concerning conditions in the plant from the Machinists Union, and the Central Labor Body. Representatives from these organizations knew of no special conditions in the plant.