

SHIRTS, Army

WAR DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ORDNANCE  
**INTRAOFFICE MEMORANDUM**

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DATE 10/11/18

FROM: Mrs. Clara M. Tead, Director, Industrial S.S.  
NAME BUREAU OR DIV. SECTION

TO: Miss Mary Van Kleeck, Labor  
NAME BUREAU OR DIV. SECTION

SUBJECT:

1. The attached papers were found in this office and seem to be of interest to you.

CLARA M. TEAD, DIRECTOR,  
Industrial Service Section

By: V. E. Dillon

Report on Manufacture  
of Army Shirts at Home  
— Jeffersonville, Ind



ADVISORY COMMISSION  
OF THE  
COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

MRS. BORDEN HARRIMAN, CHAIRMAN

Washington, May 14, 1918.

Miss Mary Van Kleeck,  
Room B-3-113 New Ordnance Bldg.,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Miss Van Kleeck:

Following our discussion at the  
Executive meeting on Monday, I am sending to  
you a copy of the Jeffersonville report with  
a few suggested deletions and changes which  
perhaps might be wise if this is to be published.

I shall appreciate it if you will  
make any additional suggestions. I have  
written to Mrs. Halleck asking her if she can  
make final inspection to bring this report up  
to date. If not, I shall attempt to get the  
necessary information myself.

To save your time and to speed the  
report along, may I ask that if I do not have  
any suggestions from you by Monday, May 20th,  
I may assume that you have no changes or sug-  
gestions to make and proceed with taking up the  
report with Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Gompers for  
final approval?

Yours very sincerely,

*Mary Allison*  
Executive Secretary.

MA-AB.

*Answer, Mrs. Van Kleeck (old material)*

7139

Committee on Women in Industry  
of the  
Advisory Commission  
of the  
Council of National Defense  
Bulletin No. 1

PRELIMINARY REPORT under  
ON THE MANUFACTURE OF ARMY SHIRTS AND OTHER ARTICLES  
WITH A SURVEY OF THE HOME WORK SYSTEM  
AT THE QUARTERMASTER'S DEPOT in  
JEFFERSONVILLE, IND.

by  
Amy Hewes Ph.D.

May 1918.



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PRELIMINARY REPORT  
ON THE MANUFACTURE OF ARMY SHIRTS AND OTHER ARTICLES  
WITH A SURVEY OF THE HOME WORK SYSTEM  
AT THE QUARTERMASTER'S DEPOT  
JEFFERSONVILLE, IND. 1914

( Col. Winthrop S. Wood in command ) *h*  
*Chapter I*

INTRODUCTION. ————— ]

Scope. This report is principally concerned with the manufacture of army shirts out and given out at the Quartermaster's Depot in Jeffersonville, Indiana, and made up by women in their homes. It includes also information relative to the clothing factory in the Depot.

Sources of Information. The data were secured (1) from conferences with (Colonels Wood and Hart) at the Depot on January 8th and February 4th; (2) from inspections of the Depot on the same dates in company with (Captain Biggard); (3) from visits to the sub-stations in Louisville and Frankfort; (4) from individuals in Louisville, including clothing manufacturers, a public health nurse, and the President of the Kentucky Consumers' League; and (5)

*one of the officers)?*

from visits to the homes of 193 women engaged in stitching the shirts, located as follows:

In Louisville, Ky.	164
In Frankfort, Ky.	10
In Pewee Valley, Ky.	19

The addresses for these visits were for the most part taken at random from the Government lists. In addition, some workers were visited at the suggestion of social agencies in Louisville or of other women shirt-workers.

Location and Numbers Employed. The Jeffersonville Depot was established in the seventies. Since the beginning of the present war a large amount of land and many buildings have been added. The production of army shirts by women working at home has very rapidly increased until in January, 1918, ~~it was~~ <sup>the</sup> stated by officials at the Depot that shirts were being given out to a list of approximately 21,000 women. Ordinarily about 15,000 of these women receive work from the sub-station located in Louisville. The number of active operatives varies



from week to week. During the week of February 4th, at which time a cloth shortage prevailed, the number of active operatives was stated to be 20,700, distributed as follows:

Louisville	10,000
New Albany	3,500
Jeffersonville	2,500
Frankfort	2,000
Madison	1,500
Scottsburg	1,200

The practice obtained of allowing to each woman only one bundle (10 shirts) a week in order to distribute the work as widely as possible, and give employment to a large number. This method, which increases the time necessary for transportation and the chances of delay, obviously impedes production.

When the demand came for increased production and storage, at the beginning of the war, the available labor in Jeffersonville, which had a population of 10,412 at the time of the 13th census, *spelled out* became wholly inadequate. Men and women were drawn from surrounding towns, including Louisville, in numbers sufficient to put a strain upon train and

trolley facilities which made regular service almost impossible. Partly in order to relieve the congestion, the sub-station was opened in the Armory in Louisville, and this, according to Major Clay, "at one stroke took 9000 women off the crowded cars."

to the officers  
in charge of  
the substation

Growth of the Home Work System. Both Colonel Wood and Colonel Hart expressed satisfaction with the homework system of manufacture because it offers an almost inexhaustible source of labor supply for the Depot and at the same time furnishes employment for many women whose family income is insufficient. Both (Colonel Wood and Major Clay, who was in charge at the Louisville sub-station,) expressed the belief that the work should be so given out as to relieve the poor. (This philanthropic opportunity appeared so important to them that the existence of poverty, rather than the cleanliness of the homes or the ability of the workers, determined the distribution.

officers in charge  
of the depot

Home work has [therefore been resorted



to and <sup>been</sup> steadily extended, in spite of the serious wastes inherent in production carried on in that way, (in spite of unemployment existing in the real clothing centers of the country,) and contrary to the recommendations of the Quartermaster General

[specifically stated as follows] in Standards of Employment in War Work, [Summary of Recommendations to Employers,] dated October 15, 1917:

"No work shall be given out to be done in rooms used for living purposes or in rooms directly connected with living rooms in any dwelling or tenement."

The first objection to home-work of this nature is that of its wastefulness at a time in the country's affairs when the most efficient production is imperative. This has to do specifically with the loss of time in transporting material, particularly when an effort is made to give only small amounts of work to each woman; with the inevitable delays and losses on account of the separation of the workers from the inspectors and supervisors of the work such as those which occur when women have to travel back and forth from the factory several times in order to rectify minor errors in the make-

up of a bundle of pieces; and with the great opportunity for poor workmanship and injury to the materials. In the second place, the employment of unskilled clothing workers drawn from an extended rural district is expensive, when, in the clothing centers of the country, experienced workers who could doubtless perform the work far more quickly and efficiently, are idle. \*

The recommendations of the Quartermaster General were undoubtedly made, not only with these facts in mind, but also in view of the danger of spreading diseases which is inherent in dwelling or tenement-house manufacture.

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\* The chief men's clothing centers of the country, according to the 1914 Census of Manufactures, (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Abstract of Census of Manufactures, 1914, p. 269,) are New York, Chicago, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Rochester. In New York, which in 1914 produced more than one-third of the value of the country's product, the garment trades were reported by the Federal Employment Service to be laying off workers during the winter of 1917-18. (Official Bulletin January 11, 1918, p. 4.) Early in January, 1918, an official of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor stated that it had been reported to him that about 3,000 garment workers in Philadelphia were idle on account of lack of work. (Correspondence with H. M. Semple, Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry.)



unless such manufacture is under more complete supervision than has yet been devised.

So great an extension of the home work system undoubtedly is a disorganizing factor in the clothing trade of the country. The output of the Louisville Sub-station alone was stated to be 17,000 to 20,000 shirts a day. In the long run the clothing trade in civilian shirts probably suffers a loss equivalent to such important increases in the manufacture of army shirts. Meanwhile the corresponding work, instead of going to the regular shirt factories, is performed in the homes. Clothing manufacturers in Louisville stated that they were facing the necessity of closing the factories on account of dearth of orders. They had offered to take government orders and to add the necessary equipment for that type of manufacture, but had received no notice that their application had been received.

*Chapter II* *new page*  
THE DISTRIBUTING SYSTEM.

The Character of the Work. The principal product of home work manufacture is the army

shirt, but overalls and bed sacks are also given out. Materials for all these are received at the Jeffersonville Depot. Here they are cut and tied into bundles. Practically all the cutting is done by electric machines through many layers of folded cloth. The operatives are men who earn from \$90.00 to \$250.00 a month on piece work.

Each shirt is made from 27 pieces and the shirts are in five different sizes. Moreover, the pieces of khaki cloth are not uniform in shade. Mistakes in assembling the 270 pieces which should be in each woman's bundle not infrequently occur, according to the workers, who have to bring back the material and lose the time of the extra trip. Many of the women complained that their bundles contained pieces which did not match and they lost much time in returning the material to the station before they could get the right shade to complete their garments. Badly cut pieces, due to the occasional twisting



of the cloth in the cutting, are another cause necessitating a return to the factory before the work can be finished.

Demonstrators were at hand at the giving-out stations to teach the method of making up the garments. A new worker is allowed to take home a sample shirt from which to learn. Women who are familiar with sewing can learn the process from the demonstrator or from the sample. The unskilled women learn from their more experienced neighbors, or from their own mistakes. The number of women at the Depot who were busy ripping out stitching in which mistakes had been made, is an indication of the proportion of errors. The ordinary domestic sewing machines are used. It was stated that a motor attachment, costing \$15.00, made it possible to make twice as many shirts in the same length of time, but few workers possessed them. Only two of the 193 workers visited had machines with motors.

Work on the bed sacks and denim jackets is much heavier. It is not popular with the women

workers who object to the delay and expenses caused by broken needles on the heavy material.

The prices paid for the articles manufactured are as follows:

\$4.45	per bundle of 10 O.D. shirts*	or 44½ cents per shirt;
\$3.45	per bundle of 10 Denim jumpers or	34½ cents per jumper;
\$3.45	" " " 10 Denim trousers or	34½ cents per pair;
\$1.50	" " " 10 Mattress covers or	15 cents per cover;
\$1.20	" " " 10 Bed sacks or 12	cents apiece.

The approximate number of garments manufactured per week was stated on February 4th, 1918, to be:

Louisville Branch	65,000
New Albany Branch	25,000
Jeffersonville Depot	20,000
Frankfort Branch	12,000
Scottsburg Branch	10,000
Madison Sub-station	10,000

On account of cloth shortage the stations were at this time giving out a smaller amount of work than formerly.

The Giving-out Stations. The bundles ready for stitching are sent by train and truck

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\*This is a slightly lower price than is paid for home work at the Schuylkill Depot in Philadelphia (\$4.50 per bundle.)



to the various sub-stations for distribution to the "Bundle Women" as the women who do the sewing are called. Each of these must present a letter from a responsible person before a "pass" is issued permitting them to take out work. For the two months preceding February 4th, 1918, no new passes had been issued. Before the present war all of the women sewers came to Jeffersonville for the bundles; but with the increase of work the sub-stations were established to supplement the main Depot. These are located at Louisville, New Albany, Frankfort, Scottsburg, and Madison, Jeffersonville and the sub-stations draw workers from great distances, as is indicated by the following lists of towns in which the workers who are registered at New Albany, Louisville and Frankfort live.

Towns in which workers live who receive  
work from the New Albany Sub-station.

Alton, Ind.	80 miles down river,
Battletown, Ky.	60 miles from Louisville, on Texas R. R.,
Bedford, Ind.	53 miles, C. I. & L.,
Bennetsville, Ind.	17 miles, C. I. & L.,
Birdseye, Ind.	53 miles, Southern R. R.,
Bloomington, Ind.	100 miles, C. I. & L.,
Borden, Ind.	20 miles, C. I. & L.,
Bradford, Ind.	15 miles by stage,
Brandenburg, Ky.	40 miles down river, (Approx.)
Campbellsburg, Ind.	53 miles, C. I. & L.,
Carwood, Ind.	10 miles inland,
Central, Ind.	60 miles down river, 7 miles inland,
Charleston, Ind.	17 miles, Interurban line,
Corydon, Ind.	25 miles, Southern R. R.,
Grandall, Ind.	14 miles, Southern R. R.,
Davidson, Ind.	40 miles down river, (Approx.)
DePauw, Ind.	25 miles, Southern R. R.,
Deputy, Ind.	40 miles B. & O. R. R. out of Jeffersonville.
Dogwood, Ind.	20 miles inland, (Approx.)
Doolittle Mills, Ind.	49 miles, Southern R. R. Eckerty, 5 miles inland,
Dry Run, Ind.	49 miles, Southern R. R. Eckerty, 4 miles inland,
Eckerty, Ind.	49 miles, Southern R. R.
Elizabeth, Ind.	16 miles, inland by stage,
English, Ind.	39 miles, Southern R. R.,
Evans Landing,	30 miles down river, (Approx.)
Farabee, Ind.	31 miles, C. I. & L.,
Fredericksburg, Ind.	27 miles, inland by stage,
Galena, Ind.	10 miles inland by stage,
Georgetown, Ind.	9 miles, Southern R. R.,
Grantsburg, Ind.	39 miles to English, 5 miles inland,
Greenville, Ind.	12 miles, C. I. & L.,
Hardinsburg, Ind.	27 miles Southern, Milltown, 10 miles inland,



Howard Park, Ind.	3 miles, Interurban line,
Huntingsburg, Ind.	68 miles, Southern R. R.,
Iaconia, Ind.	40 miles down river, 2 miles inland, (Approx.)
Lanesville, Ind.	13 miles inland,
Leavenworth, Ind.	75 miles down river,
Lexington, Ind.	22 miles out of Jeffersonville, on B. & O.,
Little York, Ind.	30 miles, Scottsburg, Interurban, 7 miles inland,
Locust Point, Ind.	9 miles down river,
Magnet, Ind.	80 miles down river, (Approx.)
Magnolia, Ind.	39 miles, Southern to English, 7 miles inland,
Marengo, Ind.	32 miles, Southern R. R.,
Martinsburg, Ind.	20 miles, C. I. & L., to Borden, 4 miles inland,
Martinsville, Ind.	81 miles, Penn. R. to Franklin, 20 miles Big Four,
Marysville, Ind.	16 miles on B. & O., out of Jeffersonville,
Mauckport, Ind.	40 miles down river,
Miflin, Ind.	45 miles, Southern R. R.,
Milltown, Ind.	27 miles, Southern R. R.,
Mitchell, Ind.	63 miles, C. I. & L.,
Mooreville, Ind.	81 miles, Penn. R. to Franklin, 51 miles Big Four,
Nabb, Ind.	19 miles B. & O., out of Jeff.,
New Amsterdam, Ind.	60 miles down river, (Approx.)
New Middletown, Ind.	14 miles inland,
New Philadelphia, Ind.	32 miles, C. I. & L. to Norris, 4 miles inland,
New Salisbury, Ind.	17 miles, Southern Junction,
Newton Stewart, Ind.	49 miles, Southern R. R., 7 miles inland,
North Vernon, Ind.	53 miles, B. & O.,
Oriole, Ind.	80 miles down river to Alton 7 miles inland,
Orleans, Ind.	58 miles, C. I. & L.,
Otisco, Ind.	19 miles, B. & O. from N. A.
Oxonia, Ind.	
Palmyra, Ind.	20 miles, inland by stage,
Paoli, Ind.	58 miles to Orleans, C. I. & L. 6 miles S. on C. I. & L.,

Paris Crossing, Ind.	43 miles, B. & O.,
Pekin, Ind.	25 miles, C. I. & L.,
Princetown, Ind.	105 miles, Southern R. R.,
Ramsey, Ind.	20 miles, Southern R. R.,
Riddle, Ind.	39 miles to English, Southern R. R., inland, 5 miles,
Salem, Ind.	28 miles, C. I. & L.,
Sattillo, Ind.	51 miles, C. I. & L.,
Sellersburg, Ind.	8 miles Interurban line,
Smedley, Ind.	40 miles C. I. & L.,
South Boston, Ind.-	34 miles C. I. & L., to Farabee, 5 miles inland,
Sulphur, Ind.	39 miles, English, Southern R. R., 16 miles inland,
Taswell, Ind.	45 miles Southern R. R.,
Temple, Ind.	35 miles Southern R. R.,
Tower, Ind.	65 miles down river, (Approx.) 2 miles inland,
Valeene, Ind.	32 miles Southern R. R. to Marango, 5 miles inland,
West Fork, Ind.	45 miles Southern to Taswell, 6 miles inland,
West Point, Ky.,	20 miles from Louisville, (Approx.)
White Cloud, Ind.	25 miles to Corydon, Southern R.R. 5 miles inland,
Wickliffe, Ind.	49 miles Southern R. R. to Eckerty, 8 miles inland,
Wolf Creek, Ky.	

Towns in which workers live who receive  
work from the Louisville Sub-station.

Ammons	Brownsburg	Crestwood
Anchorage	Brooks	Crenshaw
Bardstown	Buckner	Custer
Bedford	Buechel	Deatsville
Belmont	Chapeze	Early Times
Big Clifty	Campbellsburg	Eastwood
Big Ben	Caneyville	Ekron
Black Rock	Carrollton	Elizabeth
Bloomfield	Cecelia	Elizabethtown
Bonnieville	Cecelian	Eminence
Bondville	Clarkston	Fern Creek
Boston	Clermont	Finchville
Brandenburg	Cloverport	Fisherville
	Colesburg	Frymore



Forrest Station	Lotus	Prospect
Garfield	Lydon	Pilcher
Gethsemane	Lyons	Raywick
Glasgow	McQuady	Richardson Lodge
Glendale	Mellwood	Rineyville
Goshen	Middletown	RockHaven
Guston	Milton	Shelbyville
Harned	Mt. Eden	St. Helen
Harrods Creek	Mt. Washington	St. John
Hazelwood	Muldrough	St. Mathews
Hodgenville	Neaddy	Shenepersville
Horse Cave	Nelsonville	Shively
Hibers	New Castle	Simpsonville
Irvington	New Haven	Skylight
Jeffersonstown	New Hope	Senora
Jericho	New Liberty	South Park
Kosmosdale	Nolen	Stithton
La Grange	O'Bannon	Sulphur
Lawrenceburg	Okolona	Taylorville
Lakeland	Owensboro	Valley Station
Lebanon Junction	Orell	Veechdale
Leithfield	Paduchh	Vine Grove
Lincoln Ridge	Paris	Waddy
Lodisburg	Pendleton	Webster
Long Grove	Park Haven	Willisburg
Long Run	Pewee Valley	White Mills
Loretta	Pleasure Ridge	Woodlawn

Towns in which workers live who receive  
work from the Frankfort Sub-station.

Bagdad	Green Hill	Pleasureville
Bell Point	Hatton	Polsgrove
Benson	Honeysuckle	Spring Station
Bethlehem	Jett	Stamping Ground
Blackville	Leestown	Stanford
Christiansburg	Lexington	Swallowfield
Cropper	Lockport	Switzer
Elkhorn	Midway	Thornhill
Elmville	Monterey	Truesdale
Falls	Muir	Tyrone
Farmdale	New	Versailles
Franklinton	Nicholasville	West Point
Georgetown	Orville	Westport
Gest	Ottersville	Woodlake
Glenn's Creek	Payne's Station	Worthington

The workers in some of the distant towns do not appear to make much out of the sewing. In two instances they stated that the money received from the work was nearly all spent on the railroad fare to the sub-station, but it made possible a trip to the city which could not have been taken otherwise. It is evident that in such cases the shirts are turned in only at such time as is convenient for making the trip. This often means that they are greatly delayed in reaching the sub-station.

The Louisville Sub-station is located in the Armory, and occupies most of the enormous floor space of the building. The room is divided into aisles, on the general plan of the inspection room in Ellis Island. Each woman waits with her bundles until a number is thrown out to show that one of the 44 inspectors is ready to examine her work, and then moves down one of the aisles to the long tables, on the other side of which the inspectors stand. The bundles are opened and the work graded on a card



which also shows the time the work was taken out and returned. If the work is in need of correction, and unless some radical change has to be made, the sewer may repair it on machines provided in the building to save the worker from carrying it home again. The "Trouble Desk" explains in detail what is wrong, gives advice, and supplies extra pieces of goods when necessary. When the inspectors are not all busy, some of them may also assist in the repairing. The worker cannot get her pay until her bundle is accepted, nor can she turn in part of her bundle; so that if she does her repairing at home all 10 shirts have to be carried back although only one may have failed to pass the inspectors. After her work has been graded, the worker then takes her card to the pay window and on to the place where new bundles are given out. If the worker declines to make the desired changes, she turns in her bundles, loses her pass, and receives no pay for the bundle.

Both men and women inspect returned work.

The women are paid \$50.00 a month. The men, who do exactly the same work, receive \$100.00 a month.

Agents for sewing machines, needles and motors are allowed to have stands in the Armory. They do not pay for this concession. The Government sells at cost bags suitable for carrying the bundles. Workers are encouraged to use them in order to protect the cloth.

The sub-station at Frankfort, Kentucky, is situated in the old Capitol building. When it was visited (January 24, 1918) it had been open four months. Very few women were in the station, though quantities of packages of both shirts and bed sacks were ready to go out. Signs on the wall urged women to show their patriotism by sewing army shirts. A woman was seen taking away an unwrapped bundle of shirts contrary to the injunction not to take bundles out without wrapping them.

Fumigation. The fumigating apparatus at Jeffersonville and at Louisville was inspected. After examination the inspectors spread the shirts



on racks or tables behind them. The racks are wheeled into the fumigating room at the end of the day and subjected to the fumes of formaldehyde during the night. Every garment is supposed to go through this process, but it is to be noted that the capacity of the fumigator at Louisville is 14,000 shirts, while 17,000 to 20,000 shirts are received each day. It is manifestly impossible for all shirts to be fumigated when the sub-station is receiving the normal number.   
✓ It was stated by <sup>the</sup> officer in charge of the process <sup>said</sup> that it is effective in destroying vegetable germs only. The plant is not equipped with any means of applying steam under pressure to destroy the forms of animal life which may inhabit the garments. When the appearance of the shirts is suspicious, they are left for several days in the fumigating room.

*An official report*

Inspection of Homes. (Capt. H. H. Cheal,)

2( writing) from the Jeffersonville office January 16th,  
stated:

"The total number of dawning operatives employed at the several stations being operated under the direction of this office is approximately 21,000 and the number of sanitary inspectors employed is 15."

Two of the 15 inspectors are women and receive \$50.00 a month. The men receive \$60.00. Each inspector is expected to make about 30 visits a day and keep ~~the~~ <sup>or visits</sup> his or her records up to date.

The department has established three marks for denoting the condition in which a house is found as follows:

- Class A - Entirely satisfactory and not to be reinspected for at least six months.
- Class B - Fair and to be inspected at an early date.
- Class C- Unsatisfactory. A reasonable opportunity is given to change conditions and the pass necessary to take work out is forfeited if this is not done.

Thirty visits were made with the officer in charge of the Inspection Department of the Louisville district and with one of his staff. The



investigator who accompanied the Chief of the Inspection Department agreed with him in the classification of the homes visited and reported that in his explanations to the home workers of what was expected of them he was clear, kind, and decisive. The Chief is accustomed to make visits to check up the work of his staff.

In the country and in the small towns the workers are given cards, which they are asked to return after they have had a physician's signature to the statement that the condition of the house is sanitary. Notices in the sub-station in Frankfort stated that an inspector was to visit the homes, but no inspection had been made of any of the 10 homes visited January 24th, 1918. In Pewee Valley none of the 19 homes visited January 11th, 1918, had been inspected, but after the women had been working five months cards were distributed for them to sign. Even in the city of Louisville itself, a woman who had been working for four years said that her home had not been

inspected during that time.

The Louisville Sub-station receives a daily report from the City Health Department giving the location of contagious disease. Women who have sewing at any of these addresses receive the following notice.:

"WAR DEPARTMENT

Office of the Depot Quartermaster  
Jeffersonville, Ind.

Address reply to Depot Quartermaster,  
and quote File No.

From: Sanitation Bureau,  
Sub-station Q. M. Depot, Louisville, Ky.

To:  
Subject: Contagion.

1. THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASE (of . . .  
. . .) at your home being reported to this office, it is directed that you retain the shirts in your possession until your home has been thoroughly fumigated.

2. Please have the attending physician certify on the enclosed card (which requires no postage) that your home has been fumigated, mailing promptly to this office before returning work, that inspection may be made.

Respectfully,

Captain Q.M.U.S.R."



The sub-station calls in the sewing after it receives notice that the quarantine is lifted.

The Department of Sanitary Inspection in Louisville has charge of "delinquents." This term is used to designate the women who have kept work more than a month. After a month has elapsed the women are notified by mail to return the work and if they do not comply, they are visited by a sanitary inspector.

The Time Lost. The continuance of a method of manufacture which has become an industrial anachronism, because of the long delays inherent in it, <sup>is</sup> ~~calls for particular criticism,~~ especially *To be regretted* at a time when the need for army uniforms is urgent. To the time consumed in distributing the goods to the sub-stations and the transportation to the widely scattered homes of the workers must be added the unproductive time when the sewer is engaged in household and other tasks. In some cases the sewing is a very secondary employment. The files in the sanitary inspector's office at

Louisville contain the cards of a group of workers who must be visited at night because they are employed in factories or are away from home as domestic helpers during the day.

It is the rule that a bundle of shirts must be returned after two weeks, but they are frequently kept out much longer. One worker said that she asked at the sub-station if she should bring back unfinished a bundle she had had out for four weeks, and was told to keep it until she could finish it.

In addition to the delays and waste of time due to the scattering of the workers and their slowness in returning materials, account must also be taken of the fact that the process of home manufacture itself is of necessity a very slow one. In order to obtain the rate, the women visited were classified according to their output. The



173 women\* who gave their output were divided into groups of almost exactly even thirds. Fifty seven (32.9%) were able to make just one bundle of 10 shirts each week; sixty (34.6%) were not able to complete the bundle in a week's time and the last third (32.4%) were able to make more than one bundle a week. The difference in the number of shirts made is to be largely accounted for by the amount of time the women were able to devote to sewing, but also to the fact that some very slow workers were included. [As explained in another place (p.4) the need of a supplement to income rather than ability of the stitchers determined the distribution of work.] <sup>in</sup> the time the study was made ~~and~~ for some time previous a cloth shortage had been the occasion of the rule that one workers should be allowed not more than ten shirts a week, ~~in order~~ <sup>So</sup> that no one should be entirely without work. This rule in itself may have operated to reduce the

\* Seven of the 193 women visited were working on bed ticks and 13 were unable to make a definite statement as to the number of shirts they were able to make in a week.

number returned to the station. In any case it is evident at a time when the cloth shortage made it especially difficult to keep up the output, a very considerable amount of material was held up in the workers' homes.

The workers visited often spoke of women whom they knew who were making large numbers of shirts. These were followed up whenever possible and only seven women were found who could make more than 20 shirts a week regularly. Three were visited who claimed that they could occasionally make 30 shirts a week, two claimed they were able to make 40 in a week, and one woman <sup>said</sup> ~~stated that~~ she had once made 10 shirts between 3 A. M. and midnight, but that she would never try to do it again. On the other hand, instances were found of work that had been out a long time; in one case, three months; in five cases, more than one month.

Even the largest claims of the home workers as to the number of shirts they were able to make in one week (40), are below the ordinary output



of the worker under factory organization. The foreman of the Jeffersonville factory when army shirts were being made there (See p. 34.) *said* stated that he thought one woman in the factory could make eight <sup>shirts</sup> shirts a day or 48 a week.

*Chapter III*  
THE SEWING WOMEN AND THEIR HOMES.

*new  
Page*

Composition of the Group. A difference in the making of army shirts in the homes in war times and home work under other auspices lies in the fact that the Government employees now include a considerable number of women in very comfortable circumstances who sew from patriotic motives. One of these was a member of the Kentucky State Committee on Women in Industry of the Council of Defense. She stated that the pay was so poor that only patriotic impulses led her to undertake the work, which she preferred to knitting. She said that she knew many of "the best women in the city" were stitching shirts. Another worker was a hotel keeper and a third was making payments on a home. At the other extreme are the very poor in whose favor it is the

policy of the Louisville Sub-station to discriminate in giving out work. Some of these were receiving aid from the Associated Charities at the time the visits were made.

Character of the Poorer Dwellings. One family was living in squalid surroundings in an old barn. Equally undesirable dwellings were occupied by the workers who lived in the "shanty boats" along the banks of the river. The shanties are picturesque, but many of them are unsuited for human habitation. They are entirely without sanitary conveniences and are situated on low ground which is covered with water at the flood season when some of them are actually afloat. The general disorder which is shown in the photographs also characterizes the interiors. In the picture on the next page, in which the figure of the investigator indicates the height of the room inside, (there was a case of pneumonia on February 5th.) The house contains four rooms in two of which chickens and a pig were kept at the time the Government sewing was done. A second picture

8 ?



shows the city dump in the rear. The third picture is that of the home of a woman who was an invalid and who had not been out for 18 years. She was able to use the sewing machine, but could not walk. [Pictures are numbered I, II and III.] 2

The colored workers in Pewee Valley live in cabins, many of which are dirty, in poor repair and without conveniences. Rural occupations are combined with the Government stitching. At the time of the visit one worker who was about 18 years old had been engaged for the previous two weeks in hog killing. Her family consisted of herself, her husband, who was a farm hand, and two uncared-for children of two years and six months respectively. The elder was sickly and had never walked.

The Work Room. In no instance a special room set apart for the stitching was discovered. In nearly two-thirds of the cases the work was done in either the kitchen or the bed rooms. In five instances the workers lived and worked in a single room.

Comments about Work. In general the work was regarded as an opportunity to be much appreciated, though it was not looked upon as easy. In order to make a success of it, the women thought <sup>one should</sup> ~~it necessary~~ to be a steady worker and to possess good eyes and a good machine. Some women appeared to be working under a good deal of nervous strain. One hired another woman to make the fronts of the shirts for her. In only one case <sup>had</sup> ~~was~~ the worker ~~a woman who~~ had ~~had~~ previous experience in a stitching factory. Others had been in other factories, however, and two workers had determined to return to the factories in order to earn more. One had already gone back to a cigar factory where she intended to remain until the Government work was more plentiful.

A source of real dissatisfaction was the limit of one bundle of shirts a week. Some workers complained that others with "influence"



were able to get more than they. One woman was using four passes in order to get a larger number of shirts. The passes were given her by "ladies" she worked for who did not themselves want to sew any longer. She said there was no objection at the sub-station to this arrangement.

*Chapter IV* *new page*  
THE CLOTHING FACTORY AT JEFFERSONVILLE.

In December, 1917, the Government created at the Depot a factory for the manufacture of army clothes. Army shirts of the same kind as those made by the home workers were being produced here at the time of the January inspection, but when it was again visited on February 4th, the plant had been given over to the production of army uniforms. At that time about 200 women were being employed, the majority of whom were white. Two hundred and fifty women were said to be on the waiting list for factory positions. It was anticipated that 1500 women will be employed next summer.

*True ?*  
The Process of Manufacture. The cloth

for the uniforms as well as that for the army shirts made by the home workers is received, inspected, and cut at the Depot Factory. The inspection is done by women who sit under a framework over which the cloth is passed in such a way that the cloth is between the inspector and the light. A crank turned by hand moves the cloth over the frame. Similarly a hand crank is used when the cloth is passed between rollers for sponging. In factories with up-to-date equipment, a power driven mechanism is used for both of these purposes.

The cutting is all done by men with the use of cutting machines. Men also assemble the pieces for the home workers' bundles and count off the appropriate number of buttons for each. In performing the latter occupation they were seated and the work was as light and easy as any that could be found in factory production.

The stitching room was equipped with special one and two-needle power machines for work on the coats and trousers of uniforms. The foreman



stated that the operatives were for the most part women who had had no previous experience in power machine stitching. At one end of the room women were pressing on the Hoff-Man machine. This requires throwing the entire weight of the body on the release. In the report of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics on the Employment of Women in Power Laundries in Milwaukee,\* the opinions of medical authorities are cited showing that such occupations endanger the health of young women, possibly producing a distortion of the spine with a one-sided development of the body and possibly pelvic disorders. If it is not expedient to install presses operated pneumatically in order to prevent this strain and danger to the women workers, it should be possible to substitute the men engaged upon such light tasks as that of sorting buttons for the women at the presses.

Still  
used?

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\*U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Report on the Employment of Women in Power Laundries in Milwaukee, Bulletin # 122, May 1913, p. 21.

Colored women were employed in a separate room to repair the shirts made by home workers. They were also employed in the packing room.

Hours. The schedule of hours at the time of the inspection provided for a nine-hour day from 7:30 A. M. to 4:00 P. M. with one-half hour for lunch. ~~It was stated that the schedule was~~ <sup>said to</sup> regularly maintained. <sup>1/2</sup>

Wages. A flat rate of \$50.00 a month was paid to all women operatives in the stitching room regardless of occupation, skill or output. Women who inspect cloth were also paid \$50.00 a month, though men were paid \$100.00 for the same work.

Provisions for Health and Comfort. At the time of the inspection only five toilets were available for the use of the 200 women employees. These were used by white and colored women indiscriminately. A sixth toilet was used as a locker for the mops and buckets of the janitress. Ad-



ditional toilet accommodations begun at the time of the first inspection were no nearer ready for use at the second visit. The location of the toilets in use was such that workers in the stitching room had to pass through several other rooms and out of doors in order to reach them.

*Improved?*

There was no provision of a rest or wash room of any kind and no arrangement for hanging up outside clothing. The hats and coats of the workers were in the work room on chairs and piles of cloth.

A lunch room is provided in a separate building and hot food is served in cafeteria fashion, but the room is not large enough to accommodate comfortably the officers and other Depot workers. Although it is opened to employees, none of the women workers in the clothing factory use it. The greater number bring their lunch and eat it in the work rooms. Some of them patronize a small grovery just outside the gate which does a thriving business at noon.

Medical Care. Two medical officers are stationed at the Depot. A Red Cross first-aid room

furnishes the usual emergency service.

Welfare Work. Three welfare secretaries are maintained in Jeffersonville by the Government. They are not especially trained for this work. No statement of their specific duties could be secured. ) ?



### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee holds the opinion that several changes should be made with respect to the manufacture of army shirts and other supplies as carried on at Jeffersonville, and accordingly makes the following recommendations:

1. Home work on army shirts and other articles for military use manufactured at the Jeffersonville Depot should be abolished. The efficient manufacture of standardized articles of clothing requires skilled workers, constant supervision and inspection, the application of power machinery, and countless incidental economies of time and effort. None of these are possible under a home work system. The delays due to the transportation of the workers for long distances, the slowness of the women in returning garments, mistakes in the distribution of materials, and faulty workmanship on account of lack of supervision should be eliminated at once.

2. Army shirts should be manufactured,  
either by private concerns or in Government  
factories, in the established clothing centers  
of the country. These clothing centers are  
already suffering from unemployment, their  
workers are numerous and are already adequately  
trained and experienced for this type of work,  
and the potential labor supply for steady fac-  
tory work is greater.
3. Economic distress of individuals and  
families in Louisville and vicinity, whether  
previously existing or arising from the abolition  
of home work should be relieved by local charit-  
able agencies. The present policy of the  
Depot, that of awarding work on the basis of the  
financial necessity of the applicant, although  
doubtless due to admirable philanthropic motives,  
tends to divert the function of charitable  
assistance from the local unit to the federal  
government. It has continually been the policy  
in this country to leave to the local authorities,



in part, and to the State authorities in part, the administration of charitable funds. The assumption of this task by the federal government, without special authorization, appropriation, or machinery, means confusion of responsibility in whatever communities it is adopted.

4.        The maintenance of the Jeffersonville factory should not be continued.  
Jeffersonville lacks the trained labor, proper transportation, and adequate housing facilities for the forced development of a clothing center. Only loss results from the utilization of untrained and unskilled workers at a time when experienced women are available in other clothing districts. The factory building itself could be used for storage. The many supplies piled in the open indicated that additional storage space is urgently needed.
5.        (Provisional Recommendation.) In case it is

found inexpedient to discontinue the Jeffersonville factory immediately, the following recommendations are made:

a. The process of manufacture should be reorganized by an experienced clothing manufacturer. It is assumed that this would include the substitution of machinery for the hand work in the preliminary processes of examining and preparing the cloth, and the substitution of men for women in the operation of the Hoff-Man machines.

b. The basis of pay should be revised in accordance with the value of the worker to the establishment. The present flat \$50.00 a month pay for all women employees should give way to a system in which comparative output is recognized, while at the same time the hardships of a strict piece work system are avoided.



c. Immediate provisions of a sufficient number of toilets conveniently located, should be made. *for*

d. Rest and cloak rooms should be provided.