A study of social and economic factors affecting a selected group of negro women workers in the Federal Tin Company Baltimore, Maryland.

Lucile Worford
Atlanta University

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A STUDY OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS
AFFECTING A SELECTED GROUP OF NEGRO WOMEN WORKERS
IN THE FEDERAL TIN COMPANY
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
LUCILE WORFORD

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
AUGUST 1949
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of Study

Today, more than ever before, the need for the services of social work in the field of industry is being recognized. Social work, which is concerned with the human element in industry, purposes to enlist in industrial service the fundamental desires of all engaged in industry.

Industry is a social as well as an economic phenomenon. An industrial concern is not only an organization for the promotion of economic purposes; it is also a human organization in which the hopes and aspirations of individuals are trying to find expression.¹

In an effort to conduct a preventative program of social work the Baltimore Urban League works to improve conditions in housing, health, recreation, industrial relations and race relations. However, because the agency considers the economic conditions the basis for other community relationships, the Industrial Department is set up to work with management and labor and with public and private employment agencies to widen the areas of job opportunities for Negroes and to improve the conditions under which they must work.

The Baltimore Urban League, a community service organization, carries on an educational and promotional program designed to improve conditions under which Negroes live and work. In its efforts to build sound community relationships the agency puts its first emphasis upon jobs and job training. It emphasizes the direct relationship which the city's economic foundation has to its schools, streets, recreational facilities and institutions.²

¹F. J. Roethlisberger, Management and Morale (Massachusetts, 1942), p. 28.

The Industrial Staff includes the Industrial Secretary, the Women's Industrial Secretary, and the Clerical Secretary to the Industrial Department. The professional Industrial Staff members visit the various industries in the city to discuss the status the Negro employees have in the plants, and work with employers on problems that affect Negro employees. Efforts are also made to get Negroes into jobs that have been previously closed to them.

In order to perform effectively in industrial relations work, it is necessary to know something about the employers and employees and the problems that exist in the various factories. The Industrial Staff of the Baltimore Urban League has realized the importance of setting up a file of factual information pertaining to personnel practices and working conditions in each of the industrial factories in the community. This work had been started but had not been as extensive nor as intensive as the writer thought it might have been. Having worked in the Industrial Department of the Baltimore Urban League for six months the writer had an opportunity to visit the various factories in the community and to discuss industrial conditions with both employers and employees.

The Women's Industrial Secretary of the Baltimore Urban League has the responsibility of working with all Negro women employed in industrial occupations in the community. The agency operates on the idea that the problems existing among women workers are quite different from those encountered by men and require the attention of persons who understand these problems and can devise methods and techniques for helping the women workers to alleviate these problems.

The role of the community in the lives of working women becomes increasingly important, and it is necessary that the Women's Industrial Sec-
retary interpret the needs and conditions to the general public. For the woman who both works outside the home and carries home responsibilities it is especially important that the community provide services that will help simplify the tasks of housekeeping and contribute to the ease and pleasure of homemaking. "The community should guarantee to its working women convenient transportation, child-care centers, recreational facilities and recreational leadership."¹ The length of the working day, the prohibition of night work, the provision of certain decencies in working conditions, the relation of the work of mothers to the life of children and the payment of like wages for like work are also factors that the community should be helped to accept as its responsibility. In order to help the community assume such a responsibility, it is necessary that facts pertaining to working women in the community be brought to its attention.

The community must either pay for the plight of working women by helping them find the fullest possible expression and satisfaction in the services of industry or it must pay heavily for the sub-standard working and living conditions of these women and their families.

When people have no jobs or their wages are too low for adequate support, they still must have food, shelter and clothing. The presence of these persons on the relief rolls constitutes a situation that is of great importance to the citizen who must support them. Experience has shown further that low living standards are costly in that they breed crime and disease, which affect all citizens. Workers desperate for jobs are the prey of unscrupulous employers, who by using their cheap labor, are able to undercut employers willing to pay fair wages.²

² Ibid.
Thus, the welfare of women in industry comprehends the welfare of the whole community.

The breakdown in the health of the woman worker, an important factor, is due primarily to the economic and industrial conditions. The social service worker in industry finds women tired because of the monotony of factory work, plus the care of children and the housework at home. Because of the strain of low family income, the woman worker must spend forty-eight hours in the factory and do double duty in the home. She must oftentimes encounter the specific health hazards on the job which include bad lighting, a backless stool for continuous sitting, a cold cement floor in the washroom and the frequently dirty toilets of many factories.

Purpose of Study

It was felt by the writer that a study made of the social and economic conditions of workers would help the Industrial Staff members in any community understand the problems of workers and would better equip them to assist both workers and employers in improving conditions in industrial factories. It would also help the entire Urban League movement to extend its program to the 'grass roots' in the community. Since the Urban League functions to help citizens make adjustments in all phases of urban community life, information of the sort included in this study would enable the agency to make referrals to other agencies equipped to give services in recreation, health, child welfare and other areas of welfare.

The primary purposes of this study were (1) to present activities that are prevalent in the lives of women working in the Federal Tin Company; (2) to discover and point out some of the needs of the group; (3) to ascertain the relationship of the community to the needs of these working
women; (4) to show how social work organizations can work with such a group in the community.

Scope and Limitations

This study is concerned primarily with a group of women working in a factory in Baltimore, Maryland. The large number of women who have gone into industrial factories to work has brought to the attention of the public the necessity of working with them for the benefit of the entire community.

The scope of this study has the following limitations: (1) it covers one industry; consequently, its findings will not be representative of all Negro women working in industry; (2) seventy-five women were included in the study.

Method of Procedure

Data for this study were collected through questionnaires and personal interviews. The writer visited the Federal Tin Company and met with a group of the women to explain the purpose of the questionnaire. Fictitious names were used in the questionnaires to prevent identification of persons giving information.

Visits were made to most of the homes and informal conversations were used as a means of securing information that had not been included on the questionnaires.

Conferences with the personnel director and plant officials were also used to get information concerning plant procedures and policies.
CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF WORKERS

In studying any group of people it seems important to gain knowledge about the past experiences, for the pattern of one's life is usually a composite of such experiences. Persons reared in a rural and farm environment will portray some of the background characteristics in their behavior long after they have lived in a large city. This has been found true of the Negroes who migrated from the rural South to cities above the Mason and Dixon Line.

Place of Birth and Age

Of the seventy-five women thirty-two of them were born and reared in Baltimore, Maryland. Twenty women were born in Virginia. Eleven women were born in South Carolina. Seven women were born in Georgia; three in New York; one in New Jersey; and one in North Carolina.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF YEARS WORKERS HAVE LIVED IN BALTIMORE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifetime</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 40</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 19</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the women had lived in Baltimore less than ten years. Of the forty-three women who migrated to the city ten had lived in the city for
ten years; fifteen had lived in the city for fifteen years; and fourteen had lived there for more than fifteen years.

The ages of the seventy-five women ranged from 19 to 52. Seven women were 22 years of age; six were between 19 and 21; twenty-two were between 23 and 29; thirty-five were between 30 and 39; and five were between 41 and 52.

**Education and Training**

The median school grade completed was 7.2. This was about average for the Negro population. Of the seventy-five workers, sixty-five had completed six grades of schooling; five workers had completed the fifth grade. However, none had completed twelve grades of schooling. Fifty-eight women had completed between six and nine years of schooling.

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF YEARS COMPLETED IN SCHOOL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many women go into industrial work for the first time without any training and often without any previous idea of doing industrial work. The personnel department should evaluate the mental ability, the background education, the skills and the
past training of the applicant; and the medical department should judge their physical and emotional fitness.\footnote{1}{Anna M. Boetjer, Women in Industry, Their Health and Efficiency (Philadelphia, 1946), p. 25.}

None of the women working in the Federal Tin Company had had any previous training in the work that they were doing. Only four of the women had worked in a factory before becoming employees at the Federal Tin Company.

Length of Time on Job

"The Federal Tin Company first employed Negro women in 1945 ... after the war."\footnote{2}{Interview with Mr. C. H. Kelley (Federal Tin Company, Baltimore, Maryland, December 16, 1948).} This introduction of Negro women was significant because it meant the deliberate choice of employers rather than the hasty experiment of war necessity.

The majority of the women had worked in domestic service. The different types of jobs may be seen in Table 3.

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF FORMER JOBS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maid</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishwasher</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helper</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitress</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock Girl</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Girl</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The turnover in the plant was small among the Negro women. Fifty women had been working in the plant for four years; fifteen women had worked there three years; ten women had been with the company two years.

The reasons that the women gave for leaving their former jobs varied. Twenty-five women left their former jobs because of inadequate salaries; ten women left for better jobs; five women were laid off; five women had to find other jobs because their employers left town; seven women didn't like their jobs; five women reported that their jobs were too hard; two women stated that their jobs were detrimental to their health; and one woman stated that she didn't have any particular reason for leaving her last job. However, all the women indicated that they were satisfied with their present jobs, but felt that they could do some of the other jobs in the plant.

Union Affiliation and Participation

One of the greatest gains for women workers during recent years has been their increasing membership in trade unions. Through trade unions women have been able to increase their wages. They have been able in many unions under union contracts to secure paid holidays, paid vacations.¹

One of the greatest contributions that the trade union movement makes to women workers is the opportunity that it gives women to exercise their capacities for leadership. As women participate in organization they find the scope of their thinking expanding very broadly, not only with reference to the daily work of their jobs, but also into political fields, fields of civil rights ... to all the things that citizens should be interested in. It makes the women aware of their citizenship and community responsibilities.²

²Ibid., p. 139.
A vast majority (92 per cent) of the women included in this study were affiliated with the C. I. O. union and one-third (33 per cent) of them attended meetings. Four of the women held office in the organization.

The large number of union members was partially due to the policy of the plant. There is a union representative in the plant who encourages new employees to become members of the union. Management does not interfere with nor encourage union participation.

From interviews with the workers the writer learned that although 33 per cent of the women had said that they had attended union meetings, many of them admitted that they did not attend as regularly as they should have attended. The largest representation was when they were discussing important issues pertaining to their jobs.

Most of the women were satisfied with the wages and salaries in the plant and stated that they did not find any faults with their jobs. This was probably due to the type of jobs and low salaries for which the women had previously worked.
CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC FACTORS

The extension of the scope of women's work in wage-earning occupations has come about as a result of changes in circumstances rather than by the deliberate effort of women to invade territories hitherto monopolized by men. Practically all working class girls are compelled to earn their living in the interval between school and marriage; for them paid work has not been a symbol of emancipation but a stern and often regretted necessity. The woman wage-earner has not looked upon her industrial occupation as a career, nor as an opportunity to express her individuality, nor as a means of providing herself with an honorable alternative to marriage.¹

Many women work of absolute necessity because a great percentage of them are heads of families, or must supplement the meager earnings of their husbands. There is also that large group of single women who must support themselves.

Women work for much the same reasons as men do ... to support themselves and often others; to raise the standard of living for themselves or their families; to find personal expression, growth and satisfaction; to contribute to community and national life.²

Whereas a man's wages are usually too low to support a family, a woman's wages are usually inadequate even for her own support and they are doubly or trebly inadequate when she has dependents. "Cost of living studies made in various parts of the country indicate that a woman living alone needs from $20 to $25 a week to support herself in health

¹Gertrude Williams, Women and Work (New York, 1945), p. 25.
and decency.¹ Yet it was found in the study that an overwhelming majority of the women working in the Federal Tin Company made twenty-nine dollars a week and supported other persons.

When merchants sell goods, the price is the same to all persons, men and women, those with and those without families. However, one finds that jobs often carry one salary for women and another for men. This hardship has fallen with double severity on the Negro woman worker. She is the latest comer into industry, and to her are opened only the lowest paid jobs from which other workers have been promoted or moved.

Wages Earned and Hours Spent on Job

There are many important influences which should be considered in a study of the wages of Negro women in industry. Perhaps the most significant of them are the discrimination and variation among employers in determining the reward which the Negro woman worker should receive for her labor and the type of jobs offered her by employers.

While the Federal Tin Company has no discrimination and variation in salaries for identical jobs, most of the Negro women workers were employed in the lowest paid jobs in the plant, those of packers.

Out of the seventy-five women contacted in the plant sixty-five received between twenty-five and thirty dollars per week after deductions. A closer investigation revealed that one worker received twenty dollars per week, one worker received twenty-two dollars, and another received twenty-five dollars. These were all janitorial positions. Fifty workers received

a net income of twenty-nine dollars and fifteen received twenty-seven dollars. One worker was reported as having received thirty-seven dollars per week.

"All new employees are hired as packers and after thirty days they are placed on other jobs according to their ability. They are given thirty days to prove their efficiency."¹ There seems to have been no indication of overall advancement among the Negro women workers.

TABLE 4

JOB STRATIFICATION OF NEGROES IN THE PLANT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Wage Rates</th>
<th>Number of Negroes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packers</td>
<td>$0.76² per hour</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine Operators</td>
<td>$0.89² per hour</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutters</td>
<td>$0.89 to $0.91 per hour</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitorial</td>
<td>$20 to $25 per week</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The company's working day is divided into three shifts. These shifts are from 8:00 A. M. to 4:00 P. M., 4:30 P. M. to 1:00 A. M., 1:00 A. M. to 7:30 A. M. It was necessary to include Negro women on each of the three shifts since there were only thirty-five Negro men employed in the plant. There is no alternation of shifts, and the persons working on one shift must continue to work on that shift as long as they work for the company unless there is some particular reason for change.

Family Income

The total family income of all women contacted was similar. However,

¹Interview with Mr. C. H. Kelley (Federal Tin Company, Baltimore, Maryland, December 16, 1948).
the number of persons in each family group differed, thus affecting the adequacy of income. Fifteen women or 20 per cent of the ones interviewed did not know the amount of the total income. Thirty-one women or 41 per cent had a total income of fifteen hundred dollars annually. Five women or 7 per cent had an annual income of sixteen hundred dollars. One person indicated a total income of twenty-eight hundred dollars for the family group. Five women did not answer the question.

TABLE 5
TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME OF WORKERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most frequently mentioned income for those women who indicated the total family income was fifteen hundred dollars. Those persons who gave no answer were married and did not know their husbands' salaries.

Amount of Rent

Home ownership is important to status in the community. It usually indicates stability and family unity. "Ownership of homes among Negroes has increased with their migration to the city." 

Home ownership was at a minimum among women included in this study. Only one person owned her home. Other persons either rented their houses or boarded with other families. There were other persons who lived with their parents and did not have to make rent allowances.

One woman paid twenty dollars per month for rent. Five women paid between twenty-five and twenty-nine dollars. Nineteen women paid between thirty and thirty-four dollars. Thirty-four women paid between thirty-five and forty dollars. Ten women paid between forty-one and forty-nine dollars. Five persons paid fifty dollars per month for rent, and one person paid sixty dollars.

**TABLE 6**

RENT PAID MONTHLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 34</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 49</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 59</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Expenditures

Since the war rent, clothing and food have ranked first in importance in family expenditures. Money spent for these items increased tremendously during the war, and prices were rising also.

Material in Table 7 points out the average cost of food, clothing, and rent in Baltimore for an urban working family consisting of four per-
sons.

There were six women working in the factory whose families consisted of four or more persons. The writer was unable to compare their family budget with the average family budget in Baltimore because four of the six persons did not know the average family income. However, two persons with three children indicated a total family income of fifteen hundred dollars which would make the amount of money spent for food, housing, clothing much less than the amount spent by the average family in Baltimore.

TABLE 7
CITY WORKER’S FAMILY BUDGET, 4 PERSONS
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, MARCH, 1946 AND JUNE, 1947

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>March, 1946</th>
<th>June, 1947</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$815.00</td>
<td>$1,050.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>740.00</td>
<td>773.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>384.00</td>
<td>415.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>121.00</td>
<td>131.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>77.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>71.00</td>
<td>79.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$2,208.00</td>
<td>$2,528.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Food. — If one takes the average amount of money spent annually for food, ten hundred and fifty dollars, he must conclude that a family consisting of four persons must spend eighty-eight dollars a month for food. The largest amount of money spent for food as revealed in the study was sixty-five dollars a month. Two women spent forty dollars per month for food; three women spent thirty dollars; seventeen women spent twenty-five dollars;
ten women spent twenty dollars; eight women spent fifteen dollars; one woman spent eighteen dollars; and three women spent less than fifteen dollars. Nine women did not know how much money they spent for food. Twenty-one women boarded with other families and included the amount of money spent for food with the total amount of money spent for rent.

Clothing. — The amount of money spent for clothing ranged from five to forty dollars monthly. Sixteen women or 21 per cent spent between five and ten dollars monthly for clothing; eight women or ten per cent spent between eleven and nineteen dollars for clothing; twenty-five women or 33 per cent spent between twenty and twenty-five dollars; ten women or 13 per cent spent between twenty-six and thirty dollars; six women or 8 per cent spent between thirty-one and thirty-five dollars.

The largest amounts were spent by single women who had no dependents. Twelve single women with no dependents spent more than twenty-five dollars monthly for clothes; and eight single women with one dependent each spent more than twenty-five dollars monthly for clothes.

Recreation. — The amount of money spent for recreation by women working in the factory was relatively small. Twenty women or 27 per cent did not spend anything for recreation; thirty women or 40 per cent spent between five and ten dollars for recreation; sixteen women or 21 per cent spent less than five dollars monthly for recreation. Four persons spent between eleven and fifteen dollars monthly for recreation; one woman spent twenty dollars; and one woman spent twenty-five dollars.
CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL FACTORS

Neither the type of work in which women have been employed nor the wages and conditions accorded them have been such as to cast any glamour over earning a living. When marriage, home and children offer themselves as alternatives, industrial work could be sacrificed without a pang. However, many women have found that marriage is no escape from the responsibility of earning a livelihood.

More than half of all working women are single (according to 1940 census figures,) but uncounted numbers have others to think of besides themselves; they are helping to support aged parents or young brothers and sisters. The family and economic status of many of the young divorced, separated and widowed women is very similar to that of the single woman worker. The many women workers who are divorced or widowed and those separated from their husbands, legally or by desertion, are in many cases responsible for the support of their children. Of the married women workers living with their husbands a not inconsiderable number are the major breadwinners of their households, owing to the fact that their husbands are unemployed, many of them disabled for work.

Marital Status

"Marriage and the anticipation of marriage are probably the most dominant factors in molding the pattern of a woman's life."¹ The survey showed that 44 or 59 per cent of the seventy-five women were or had been married.

---

### TABLE 8
MARITAL STATUS BY AGE GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>20-25 Years</th>
<th>26-30 Years</th>
<th>31-35 Years</th>
<th>36-40 Years</th>
<th>41-45 Years</th>
<th>46-50 Years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Single women wage-earners... are not simply a group of working women. They represent a period in the economic life history of practically all women. Relatively few now go directly from school to marriage... This pattern of employment is becoming a part of the accepted life pattern.¹

A further breakdown showed that twenty women or 26 per cent were married; thirty-one women or 40 per cent were single; five women or 7 per cent were divorced; ten women or 13 per cent were widowed; and ten women or 13 per cent were separated.

Number of Children and Dependents

This study recognized two groups of families, those having both husband and wife and those without either or both of these members. The former is referred to as a complete family, and the latter is called the incomplete family. The incomplete family included widows, divorced women and separated persons, and single working women who assume the responsibility of parents, siblings, or other dependents.

An important element in the consideration of social and economic factors is the extent of family dependency upon the earnings and service of women who are working. Often the writer found that although they were married, it did not alleviate their responsibility in supporting the family. In the majority of instances practically all the earnings of the women were used to meet the family expenses.

In instances of incomplete families, however, when there were persons partially or wholly dependent upon the woman for subsistence the condition resolved itself as a vital factor for concern.

¹ Ibid., p. 17.
When examined closely the survey showed something that seemed very important. Of the thirty-one single women 13 or 42 per cent had one or more dependents. Eighteen or 24 per cent of the total number had children under twelve years of age. Two women had children between twelve and seventeen.

### TABLE 9

**DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN BY MARITAL STATUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the seventy-five women contacted sixteen single women, one divorcée, one widow and four women who were separated had no families to support. The remaining fifty-seven either had relatives who were entirely dependent upon them or were contributing a definite amount weekly toward the maintenance of the family. Most of the dependents, excluding the children, were either parents, siblings, or grandchildren.

**Care of Children**

The home remains the responsibility of the woman. When there are in addition young children to be looked after, the woman's loyalties are even more sharply divided between home and other interests. "With few exceptions the employed woman has dual responsibilities ... her outside job and her housekeeping duties. She has obligations to her family, to the job, and to her-
self as a person."

Six of the women interviewed had housekeepers to care for their children. However, none indicated that the housekeepers were hired on a full-time basis. Four persons left their children with friends while at work and one person indicated that her children were cared for by her mother during the day. Eight women did not make any arrangements for their children. Two of these women were working on the night shift and did not feel that it was necessary to make special provisions for the care of their children.

If women are to contribute in full to economic, community and family life, thoughtful attention must be given the problems of adequate household assistance. The ideal toward which efforts are directed should be a full-time homemaker for every home where there are children. This implies more than help with household chores; it demands someone who can help meet the emotional needs of children and adolescents.

Social Activities Off the Job

Nothing is more fatal to a woman's success than the sense of being pursued by her job. There must be some hours when a job is forgotten.

Women who have no contacts except those of their jobs and the family circle are in danger of getting into the same state of mind that bogs down the too-isolated farm woman. Small injustices rankle, big problems seem unbearable, the possibilities of change, success, happiness and progress appear to dwindle.

Dancing, radio, movies, and reading were some less expensive forms of recreation that were generally participated in by the women. Twenty-seven women were interested in the movies as a leisure-time activity; ten women


2 Ibid., p. 9.

3 Laine Brophy, If Women Must Work (New York, 1936), pp. 93-95.
listed reading; ten women named listening to the radio as their favorite pastime; seven women preferred bowling; six women listed dancing as their social activity; two women participated frequently in various sports and card games.

The social activities most frequently listed by the women were passive and did not permit actual participation and expression of the women.

The writer was unable to determine what the workers would like to do in the way of recreation and social life because of the lack of response on the part of the workers. Most of them stated that they had neither the time nor the money necessary to increase the number of social activities.
CHAPTER V

AFFILIATION WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

It was inferred from friendly talks with the workers that their lives in the community were largely controlled by the hours and conditions of their employment in the plant. Long hours, continuous standing all day, followed by home duties which had to be performed, so entirely absorbed their energies that they were rendered physically unable to attend meetings, clubs, and other community activities for progress.

The plant was entirely lacking in any industrial, educational or recreational means of improving the workers. Social and community agencies could do very effective work if they would co-operate and encourage management in an effort to organize women in industry into clubs and recreational groups after work hours.

Young Women's Christian Association

The Young Women's Christian Association is a Christian organization in the community supported by the Community Chest. It provided recreational, health and educational activities for adults and children. It also provided transient and permanent accommodations, gave assistance in locating housing for single women, provided personnel counseling for those who desired it, and interviewed women for program participation.

The program was predominantly centralized except for a few activities that were promoted in the various schools.

The Blue Triangle Industrial Club was the only club for industrial women and consisted primarily of women working in the Social Security Building. This club met once a week.
Adult Education classes included millinery, knitting, crocheting, card games, sewing, interior decorating and Spanish. Health and recreation activities included "slim-gym," badminton, bowling, swimming, modern dance and ballroom dancing.

All persons must become members of the Young Women's Christian Association in order to participate in the various activities. This fee is two dollars for all adult persons. They must pay additional fees for each activity in which they wish to participate.

Prices. - This includes three dollars for ten weeks for millinery; three dollars for knitting; four dollars and fifty cents for bridge; three dollars for sewing; five dollars and fifty cents for Spanish; three dollars for gym activities; three dollars for badminton; three dollars for bowling; four dollars for modern dance; and three dollars for ballroom dancing. All of these fees were paid on a ten-week basis.¹

None of the seventy-five Negro women working in the Federal Tin Company belonged to the Young Women's Christian Association. Many of them knew nothing of the program that was conducted in the agency.

One woman said that she had attended a few programs in the Young Women-Christian Association building, but did not like the atmosphere of the agency. She felt that the Young Women's Christian Association was used by people in the community who had money and status and was not for people like herself.

Another woman thought that the fees were too high and said that she was not able to pay them. She said that she liked to play cards, but saw no reason why she should have to pay for this activity when she could play cards at other places without any charges.

None of the children of these women participated in the Young Women's

¹Alice Arrington, Annual Report of the Young Women's Christian Association (Baltimore, Maryland, 1948), p. 5.
Christian Association activities. Most of the women lived in another section of the town and had no way of getting the children to the Young Women's Christian Association building.

Urban League

The Baltimore Urban League is a community service organization specializing in the field of race relations. It carries on an educational and promotional program designed to improve the conditions under which Negroes live and work. The Urban League works systematically with management, labor, government agencies and the general public to expand and improve job opportunities for Negro workers. It promotes occupational advancement of colored workers by carrying on programs of vocational guidance and public education by encouraging training in the skilled crafts and technical occupations.\(^1\)

The Baltimore Urban League employed a Women's Industrial Secretary whose job was to work primarily with problems of women in industry. Her job was not functional, but was educational, promotional and demonstrative. She visited the various plants in the community to determine the working conditions of the Negro women workers. However, there were no records in the office to show that any concrete advancements had been made for the women in the Federal Tin Company.

None of the women working in the plant was a member of the Urban League, and very few of them knew of its existence. Many of them explained that they had always used the Maryland State Employment Service when seeking employment and never had any other reason to use the Baltimore Urban League.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People works

\(^1\) Alexander J. Allen, The Baltimore Urban League, What It Is ... What It Does ... And Why (Baltimore, Maryland, N. D.).
for the legal rights of Negroes in the community, and most of its activities are done in the courts. There is very little work done for individuals and groups unless some constitutional right has been violated.

Twenty of the seventy-five women were members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and most of them knew something of the functions of the organization. However, only one of the women had ever been helped by the organization. She explained that she had had some difficulty with the Baltimore Transit Company and sought advice from the executive, Milton P. Brown, concerning legal procedures.

When asked why they became members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the women replied that the organization was trying to make conditions better for Negroes in the community. Another answer was that they had been contacted by the organization, but had not been asked to take out memberships in the other organizations in the community. Three women felt that giving funds to the Community Chest was their contribution to the other agencies in the community.

Church

Churches are not only religious centers but they also are social centers. They are often used by people in the community to meet new friends and associates. Participation in the various activities in the church is often the only means of expression for many of the people of the community. However, "It has been found that week-day activities sponsored by the church do not attract as many people as the ordinary routine Sabbath Day activities."¹ This is probably true because many of the people must work and are

not able to participate in activities that are carried on during the weekdays.

The varieties of the denominational interests were limited, but interesting. The classification and membership on the basis of information collected through questionnaires and personal interviews with the women showed that a majority were members of three denominations: Baptist, Methodist and Catholic. Thirty women were members of the Baptist denomination; twenty women were members of the Methodist denomination; nineteen women were members of the Catholic denomination. Two women were members of the Saint Pious Church. Four women did not belong to any church.

Sixty-five per cent of the women attended church often and paid dues regularly. Twenty-nine per cent were members of the church but did not attend services as often as they might have.

Church activities most frequently participated in were the choir, the Sunday School, and ushering. Twenty women were members of the church choir; ten women attended Sunday School regularly; and ten women worked as ushers in the church.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study of the social and economic factors involved in the life of seventy-five women working in the Federal Tin Company has led the writer to draw the following conclusions:

1. The vast majority of the women were either born in Baltimore, Maryland, or came from nearby southern states. All of the women who had migrated to the city had come after World War I.

2. The median school grade completed was 7.2, which was about average for the general Negro population. However, only four of the women had ever done industrial labor before being employed by the Federal Tin Company. The Baltimore Urban League could work with management to provide industrial training for these women which would qualify them for better and higher-paying jobs in the plant. It was surprising to find that no problems of absenteeism or tardiness existed in the plant among the Negro women.

3. Most of the women had been accustomed to low standards of work and wages and considered their present jobs adequate and without fault. If the group were organized into a Young Women's Christian Association industrial club, the women could receive information about standards of work and advantages that other groups doing similar work receive.

4. Ninety-two per cent of the women were affiliated with the C. I. O. union, but only one-third of the women were active members. There were no extra activities sponsored by the union, which probably accounted for the low percentage of attendance.

5. Home ownership was at a minimum among the women working in the Federal Tin Company. Only one woman owned her home. If down payments could
have been secured by the women, they could have arranged to pay money now
being paid for rent as monthly installments. A class in consumer education
could acquaint the women with methods and possibilities of owning homes.
None of the women paid less than twenty dollars per month for rent with the
majority paying between thirty dollars and fifty dollars per month.

6. The total expenditures for the women were far below the total ex-
penditures for the average family in Baltimore. It was estimated that the
average family spent twenty-two dollars per month for food per person in
Baltimore in 1947. There were twenty-two persons in the Federal Tin Com-
pany with only themselves to support, but only six women spent more than
twenty-five dollars per month for the entire family. This meant that the
vast majority of the women were malnourished. The largest amount of money
spent for clothing was spent by single women with no families to support.

7. Statistics showed that more than half of the working women were
single; however, the writer found that forty-four or 59 per cent of the
women included in the survey were or had been married.

8. There were thirty-one children distributed among the forty-four
women who were married or had been married. This number excluded those
children who were twenty years of age or older. One single woman had one
child. Six of these children were less than five years of age and twelve of
the children were less than twelve years of age. The problem of caring for
these children and other home responsibilities could have been lessened if
some agency in the community could operate and maintain a homemaker's in-
stitute. The Baltimore Urban League, in co-operation with the Young Wom-
en's Christian Association sponsored such an institute for two weeks each
year. However, the equipment and facilities were furnished by the Gas and
Electric Company and emphasis was placed on the use of gas and electrical appliances, a method of advertisement for the Gas and Electric Company. Such an institute was not of much value to these women since very few of them owned these modern electrical appliances.

9. Most of the social activities in which the women participated were passive and did not require actual expression or participation of the women. Such activities as ping-pong, basketball, public speaking, group singing, and folk dancing could be included in a program if the group were organized into an industrial club.

10. There was a dearth of participation in community agency programs. None of the women belonged to the Young Women's Christian Association or the Baltimore Urban League, and very few of them knew of the existence of the Baltimore Urban League. Several of the women were paid members in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, but only one of them had ever received any direct service from the agency. The program of the Young Women's Christian Association should be more decentralized so that it could include all sections and segments of the community. The Baltimore Urban League should place more emphasis on the interpretation of its work and purpose in the community.
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name __________________________ Address ____________________________________
   last   first     city  zone  state

2. Date of birth ________  3. Place of birth ________________________
   day  mo.  yr.          city  state

4. Number of years completed in school____________________________________

5. How long have you lived in Baltimore?_____________________________________

6. In what state did you previously live?_____________________________________

7. How long have you worked with this company?_______________________________

8. What kind of job did you previously hold?________________________________

9. Where did you work before coming here?___________________________________

10. How long?____________________________________________________________

11. Why did you leave your last job?________________________________________

12. What fault, if any, do you find with your present job?______________________

13. To what Union, if any, do you belong?____________________________________

14. Do you attend meetings?_______  15. Do you hold Office?____________________

16. Marital status: Check (x) one ( ) single ( ) married ( ) divorced
       widowed ( ) separated

17. Number of children, if any: ______ Ages __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

18. Any other dependents? ______ if so indicate relationship and nature
      of dependency _________________________________________________________

19. What arrangements do you make for the care of your children while you
    are working? Nursery ( )  Friend ( )  Housekeeper ( )  Other ( )
    Explanation ___________________________________________________________

20. Does your husband work? ______ What is the total family income? ______

21. What does your weekly earning average? ______ Before deduction?_______
    After deduction? _______________________________________________________ 

22. Do you own your own home, if not, how much rent do you pay monthly?______

23. Approximately how much do you spend for food monthly?___________
    Clothing?_______ Recreation?_______ Savings? ______ Other ________
24. In what activities do you participate during your leisure time? __________

Urban League? _____  Sorority? _____  Civic Club? _____  Other _____

26. What services do they render you? __________________________________________

27. Do you belong to a Social Club?  What is the name and purpose of the club? __________

28. To what church do you belong? __________________________________________

29. In what church activities do you participate? Choir ( )  Usher Board ( )  
Sunday School ( )  Trustee Board ( )  Other __________________________

30. What are some of the things that you would like to do in the way of recreation or social life that you don't do now? 1. __________
2. __________  3. __________  4. __________

31. Do you carry group insurance with the company? __________________________

32. Do you have any personal problem that you need assistance with (problems that would not ordinarily occur if you were not working)? __________________________

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
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