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A STUDY OF THE HARSHMAN COMMUNITY AND  
THE COMMUNITY INDUSTRIES IN SULLIVAN,  
ILLINOIS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE TO  
THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR IN THE SULLIVAN  
SCHOOL SYSTEM

Rosemary E. Ulmer

A Study of the Harshman Community and the  
Community Industries in Sullivan, Illinois  
And  
Their Significance to the Guidance Counselor  
In The Sullivan School System

A Paper  
Presented to  
the faculty of  
Eastern Illinois University  
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In Partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science in Education

Plan B

by  
Rosemary E. Ulmer

July, 1960

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To all of these I am deeply grateful.

## INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to make a research into the factors which were the basis for the formation of the Harshman Community Industries in Sullivan, Illinois, its development, and the importance of this information to the Guidance Counselor in the Sullivan Schools.

### Method of Research

The material for this study was gathered from various authoritative sources; two textbooks dealing with the foundations used by the church group which founded the industries, newspaper records and reports written by newspapers in the local areas, talking privately with members of the Harshman group, and with life-long residents of Sullivan. I have also used several books dealing with guidance and counseling and have talked with the Guidance Counselor in Sullivan, Illinois.

## Chapter I

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY AND ITS USE TO THE  
GUIDANCE COUNSELOR IN THE SULLIVAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

According to Merle M. Ohlsen guidance involves much more than just building cumulative records, giving tests, prescribing courses, and providing students with vocational pamphlets. He says that guidance must view the problems of students in relation to the continuous history of the individual and in relation to all the various phases of the individual's life. In finding a solution to a problem, we need to have an understanding of the whole picture of his activities. The particular problems which arise may come from frustrating and irritating experiences in any area of his activities which may be in school or outside of school.<sup>1</sup>

One of the major features of a good guidance program listed in Merle Ohlsen's book is stated as follows:

"A GUIDANCE PROGRAM IN ORDER TO BE EFFECTIVE SHOULD BE BUILT AROUND THE NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF THE CHILDREN. In different areas of the country, among people of different backgrounds, the problems of children will differ. Therefore, the building of a good guidance program should begin

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1. Merle M. Ohlsen, Guidance An Introduction (Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1955), p. 1.



with the study of the problems of the children in the school in which the guidance program is to be operated."<sup>2</sup>

Since children of the Harshman community are sent through the grade and high schools in Sullivan, the counselor should try to learn as much information as he can about special groups such as this so as to have a better understanding of problems which these students may have.

Some of the problems which might arise that would cause these students to come to the counselor for help are the possibility of wanting to date other students not belonging to their church group, going out for school events, participating in sports, wanting to go on to college, or wanting to marry someone outside of their church. Boys of about draft age may be faced with the problem of entering military service and breaking all ties with their families and church, or refusing to go into military service and being disgraced and looked down upon by classmates and members of the Sullivan community.

Some of the students may hesitate to discuss some of these problems with their families or with workers in their church and will welcome the opportunity to talk with the guidance counselor. According to Ohlsen, the counselor can help a student by discussing his doubts or inability to live by the code of the church, or by helping to define issues which may be unclear to him. The counselor, though, must respect the student's right

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2. Ohlsen, Guidance An Introduction, p. 7.

to hold values that may be different from his own. The counselor should also let the student know that he doesn't have to see things as the counselor does. Some students may be able to solve their problems with the help of the counselor, while others may have to be referred to workers in their church for assistance.<sup>3</sup>

Students may reject the idea of discussing their religious convictions with workers in their church, if they wish to break away from their church. In this case, it is the student's personal choice and the counselor should not try to influence the student's decision. The counselor should not say anything to encourage the student to leave his church, nor should the counselor encourage the student to break all of his church and family connections. The counselor should not encourage the student to join another church. According to Ohlsen the counselor should function the same as he would in any other counseling situation.

The counselor must try to understand the student's problem, help the student to see what the problem actually is, and get him to accept it. Then they must decide upon a course of action to take and work together on it as a team. It is the counselor's duty to make certain that the student clearly understands the situation, has enough information available, and then the counselor must let the

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3. Ohlsen, Guidance An Introduction, p. 390.

student make his own decision from this.

A specific example in which the guidance counselor might have helped two students from this group was in 1953, when two brothers decided to go to college. They had been living at home and working at the Community Industries. The boys considered several schools and finally selected Blackburn College. They attended there for two years on the money they had saved before entering college.

The younger boy then married a college student and joined the Air Force for four years. Upon his discharge he enrolled at the University of Illinois and graduated in June, 1960.

The older brother attended the University of Chicago for two years after leaving Blackburn. After graduation he enlisted in the Army and is now stationed in Germany.

If a guidance counselor had been available to help these boys at the time they were considering going to college, he might have helped them in selecting a college. They had already made their decision about wanting to go to college, therefore the counselor might have helped the boys to get scholarships or student loans to help them finance their college education.

The guidance counselor in Sullivan feels that there are several of these students that are very capable of going on to college and doing very good work if they were only given the opportunity.

Some of the more intelligent students have expressed a desire to learn more, but probably fear the thought of breaking away from their family and church.

The guidance counselor also thinks that in the near future some of these students will feel the need for more education and the leader or leaders of the group may even ask students to go on to college with the hope that they may return with new ideas and ways to help their group and possibly the Community Industries.<sup>4</sup>

One important factor that should be mentioned is the fact that church workers can provide many facts which the students may need in solving their religious problems. In some cases the students should be referred to church workers for help, but the counselor should never force the students to use these services.<sup>5</sup>

Another reason the Guidance Counselor in the Sullivan School System may need information about the Community Industries is because it happens to be one of the major sources of employment in Sullivan. Community Industries has several different types of work which are actually done in three plants under one big roof. The guidance counselor should have information on the number of people employed there, their salary, the number of jobs available, what the jobs will be, what qualifications are necessary to work there, and whether the work will be temporary or permanent, steady or seasonal.

Robert Hoppock says that most high school graduates

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4. Interview with Norman Buckner, Guidance Counselor for the Sullivan School System, July, 1960.

5. Ohlsen, Guidance An Introduction, pp. 390-391.

and dropouts get their first jobs close to home, and that this happens in many suburban communities despite popular impressions to the contrary. He also says that it is imperative that the counselor and his clients be familiar with the major employment opportunities of their community.<sup>6</sup>

The guidance counselor who is aware of the possibility of various jobs available at the Community Industries can provide information and help for the graduates and dropouts who are interested in obtaining work at the Community Industries. Sullivan does not have many jobs available to high school students and as a result many seek employment in near-by cities such as Mattoon or Decatur. The Brown Shoe Factory and the Community Industries are the two major sources of employment in Sullivan. The guidance counselor should be equally informed about the Brown Shoe Factory in Sullivan, but that is not included in the purpose of this paper.

The Community Industries also will make arrangements for an interested group of students to go through the factory. The guidance counselor might make arrangements to take all students interested in working there on a trip through the factory so they could actually see what the plants are like and what the people are actually doing.

E. G. Williamson suggests that the counselor should

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6. Robert Hoppock, Occupational Information (McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1957), p. 256.

encourage tryout experiences.<sup>7</sup> M. E. L. Billings says that the counselor may help the client arrange for sample work experiences.<sup>8</sup> Since the Community Industries has the policy of hiring students during the summer, the author thinks this would be good for students to get actual work experience before graduation. This work experience would also provide the opportunity for students to meet full time employees and be able to ask them more questions about their work. Then the students should be more capable of deciding whether they would still want to go ahead working there permanently after graduation.

The guidance counselor for the Sullivan Schools should have the following information available in his files. The actual number of employees in the Community Industries at the present time is two hundred-fifty but this number will vary because some of the work is seasonal. According to Mrs. Rufus Harshman, the number of church members employed is equal to the number of non-church member employees. She also said that during some of their busy seasons more than half of their employees start at one dollar per hour and will vary according to the piece work which is done. Some employees' earnings will average from fifteen to twenty dollars per day. During busy seasons the factory will work a day shift from 6:00 A. M. to 2:30 P.M. and a night shift from 2:30 P. M. to 10:00 P. M. During a

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7. E. G. Williamson, Students and Occupations, (Henry Holt and Company, 1937), p. 21.

8. M. E. L. Billings, Teaching About Vocational Life, (International Textbook Company, 1937), p. 36, quoted in Robert Hoppock, Occupational Information (New York: 1957), p. 124

regular season the factory will work only on the day shift which is then from 7 A. M. to 4 P. M. 9

The information found in the following chapters should also be available to the counselor in his files.

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9. Interview with Mrs. Rufus Harshman, Payroll Clerk for Community Industries, July 5, 1960.

## Chapter II

## CERTAIN BELIEFS AND PRACTICES WHICH MAY CAUSE CONFLICTS OR PROBLEMS

Children of the Harshman community are sent through public grade and high schools in Sullivan, but are not allowed to go away to college or to marry outside the church. There have been a few members who have married outside the church. These outsiders either joined the church or else the members are excommunicated from the church.

Members of this church group do not vote, or take part in the community activities in Sullivan, or support the Community Chest. The members refuse to salute the flag and to stand and sing the National Anthem.

Since World War I the young men do not accept combat or even non-combat service for they do not believe in military service. It has now become a test of their membership, for they are not free to make an individual choice.

The reason members do not go to war, according to Miss Harshman is because Christ said, "Thou shalt not return evil for evil." She also explained that they do not belong to unions or secret societies, or to any organizations with people who do not share their beliefs. They want only the liberty to put obedience to Christ above obedience to government whenever that choice has to



be made; and they are sorry it ever has to be done.<sup>10</sup>

The Harshman group will not sue in court in defense of their rights, because they refuse to take an oath. Some judges permit them merely to affirm, but in some instances they have been fined and jailed for contempt of court in refusing to take the witness oath even in their own defense.<sup>11</sup>

The members of this religious group use no tobacco or intoxicants, and the women avoid cosmetics. They dress in no distinctive way such as the Amish and some church sects. Their homes are some of the best and most modern in design throughout the Sullivan area. These people drive new and late model automobiles. The factory, where many of these people work, is well equipped with modern machinery.

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10. The Moultrie County News, December 24, 1954.

11. Ibid.

## Chapter III

A GENERAL HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS GROUP AND THEIR  
REASONS FOR FOUNDING THE COMMUNITY INDUSTRIES

The "Harshmanite" church group in Sullivan, Illinois, is one of the smallest religious sects in America. The congregation of about 225, including children, is non-denominational. The church is named the Church of Christ, with Miss Leah Harshman as its present pastor. The brick church building in the southwest part of Sullivan is known as the Hamilton Street Chapel.

The name "Harshmanite" has been given to this group by the outsiders, because of the leading role the Harshman family has had in its founding and subsequent management.

The church was founded in 1871 by Samuel Rufus Harshman. Mr. Harshman's ancestors came to America from Bavaria in 1751. These people were Dunkards. According to the American College Dictionary, this is a popular name for the German Baptist Brethren, now located chiefly in America. They are characterized by their Baptist practices, opposition to legal oaths and military service, and by simplicity of life.

Rufus Harshman became a licensed Methodist minister and was once the pastor of the Methodist Church in Jacksonville, Illinois. Reverend Harshman was excommunicated

from the Methodist fellowship for his zealous preaching of holiness during the time the holiness movement was strong in the Methodist Church.<sup>12</sup>

Reverend Harshman was an evangelist for a time, preaching in several Southern and Central Illinois towns. After coming to Sullivan, church services were held in his own home for several years, and later in the present church building which was erected in 1910.<sup>13</sup>

After S. R. Harshman's death in 1912, the church was without a pastor for a time. Later, Joel R. Bradley, a member of the congregation became pastor. Miss Leah Harshman, a daughter of S. R. Harshman, eventually became associate pastor for Mr. Bradley. Since Mr. Bradley's death, Miss Harshman has been the pastor.

The Community Industries was founded to provide employment for members of the church, for during World War I many members of this religious group were discharged from employment. Businesses owned by the group's members were boycotted by the Sullivan community as a result of hatred and mistrust caused by the group's resistance to the draft.<sup>14</sup>

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12. Samuel Rufus Harshman, Harshman's Memoirs (The Werner Company, 1914), VIII, pp. 96-113.

13. O. T. Banton, "Harshmanites Have One Church," Decatur Herald, (October 14, 1951).

14. The Moultrie County News, December 24, 1954.

## Chapter IV

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY INDUSTRIES

Miss Leah Harshman founded the Community Industries to provide employment for members of her church group. In 1937 the original plant, organized in two downtown rooms, manufactured dresses and a line of candy. The candy can be traced back to the chocolates which Miss Harshman made in her home. Later at her suggestion, Lucia Harshman and Eileen Hagerman developed the Lucy Ellen candies.

The firm is now located in a three-story modern factory on carefully landscaped grounds. The Community Industries has operated here since 1941. At that time the plant was operated by the church group and employed about one hundred of their members. It produced candy, a garden tractor, for which it has an extensive out-of-state market, and women's dresses. The department which made women's dresses later took a government contract for making nurses uniforms. The plant is a means of grouping some of these enterprises under one roof. In 1951 the plant was owned about equally by the men who put money in it at first and with the employees.

Up until 1959, Miss Harshman was the only trustee of the firm, but late in 1959 the group was incorporated. Felix Hagerman is treasurer of the Community Industries.

The factory now has a third product besides the making of dresses and candy. It is making a line of motor-powered lawn and garden tools, sold from coast to coast. The Snowbird, which is the latest development, removes snow. Another product, the Earthbird, tills soil, and the Combo is another tiller type tool. The products were designed by Don Van Hook, a member of the group.<sup>15</sup>

The candy products made at the present are chocolate nut candy for fall, and jellied fruit for distribution the year round. An outstanding feature of the jellied candies are the many patterns in which they are molded for seasonal and holiday use.

The Community Industries concern for their workers goes beyond just working conditions. A recreation area and lake for workers has been developed west of Sullivan. The site is known as Elam. It contains summer cottages and some permanent residences around a small lake.

The enterprise which sprang from the church group has grown into an industry which employs two hundred-fifty people on a weekly payroll of over \$10,000 at the present time. Many residents of the Sullivan community as well as members of the church group now owe their jobs to this enterprise.<sup>16</sup>

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15. Jane Krows, "Sullivan Church-Industry Group Thrives," Decatur Sunday Herald and Review, (June 21, 1959).

16. Interview with Mrs. Rufus Harshman, Payroll Clerk for Community Industries, June 22, 1960.

In addition to the contributions made by the factory several of the members perform various services for the town of Sullivan and the surrounding areas. Some of these services are electrical and plumbing repairs, contracting, building houses, construction of bridges, and other road work.

## CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters the author has tried to present information about the Harshman Group and the Community Industries which she feels is necessary for the guidance counselor in the Sullivan School System to have in his files. The counselor should have knowledge of this particular group and the Community Industries. He should have this information available so he may refer to it when a student comes in to talk with the counselor about a problem concerning the group or work.

With the availability of this information the counselor should be able to better understand the problems of students from this group and help them to find solutions to their problems, as well as students having problems in relations with the group.

By having this information available, it will also help the counselor in his counseling with students about job opportunities available to them in the local area.

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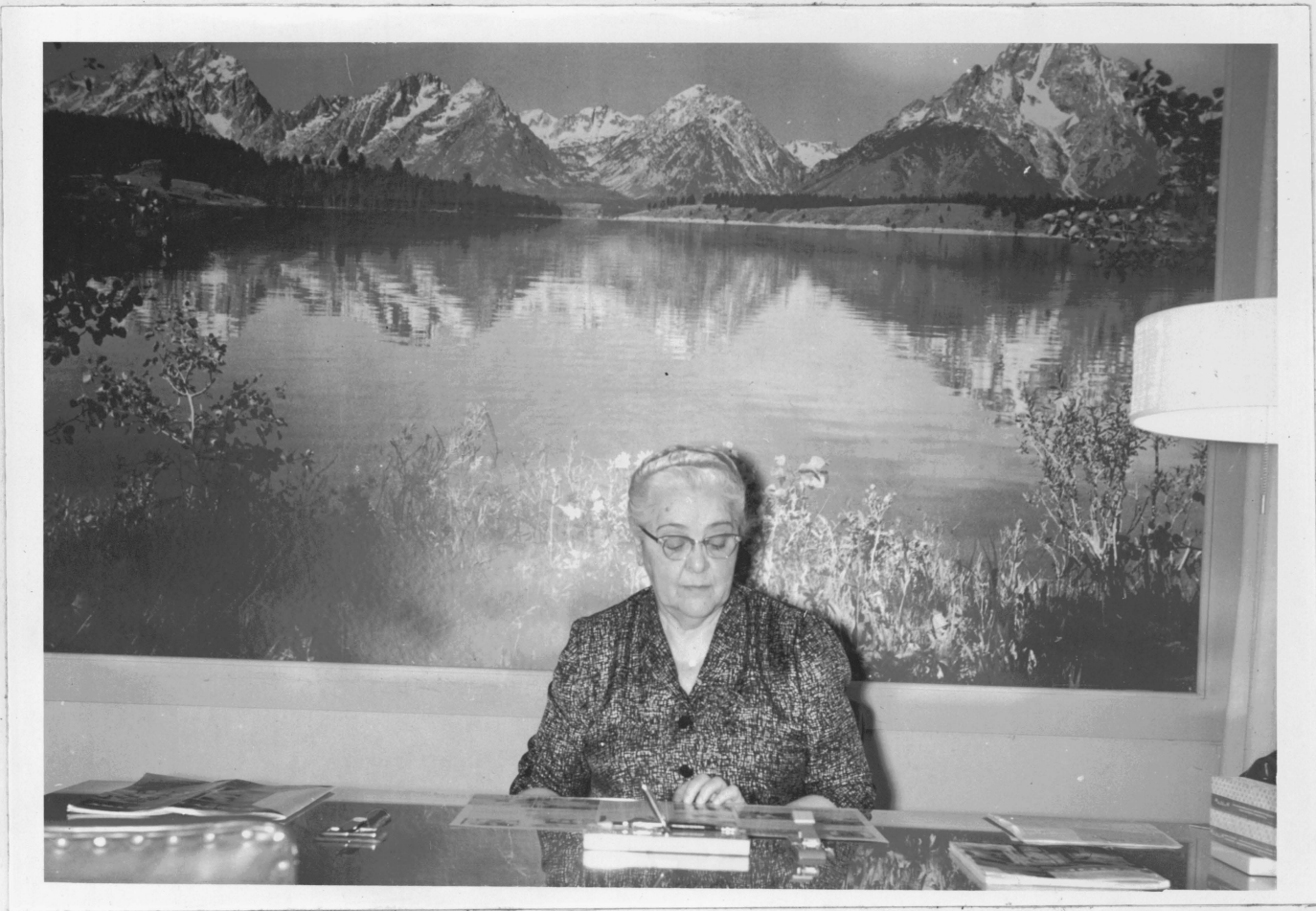
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## APPENDIX

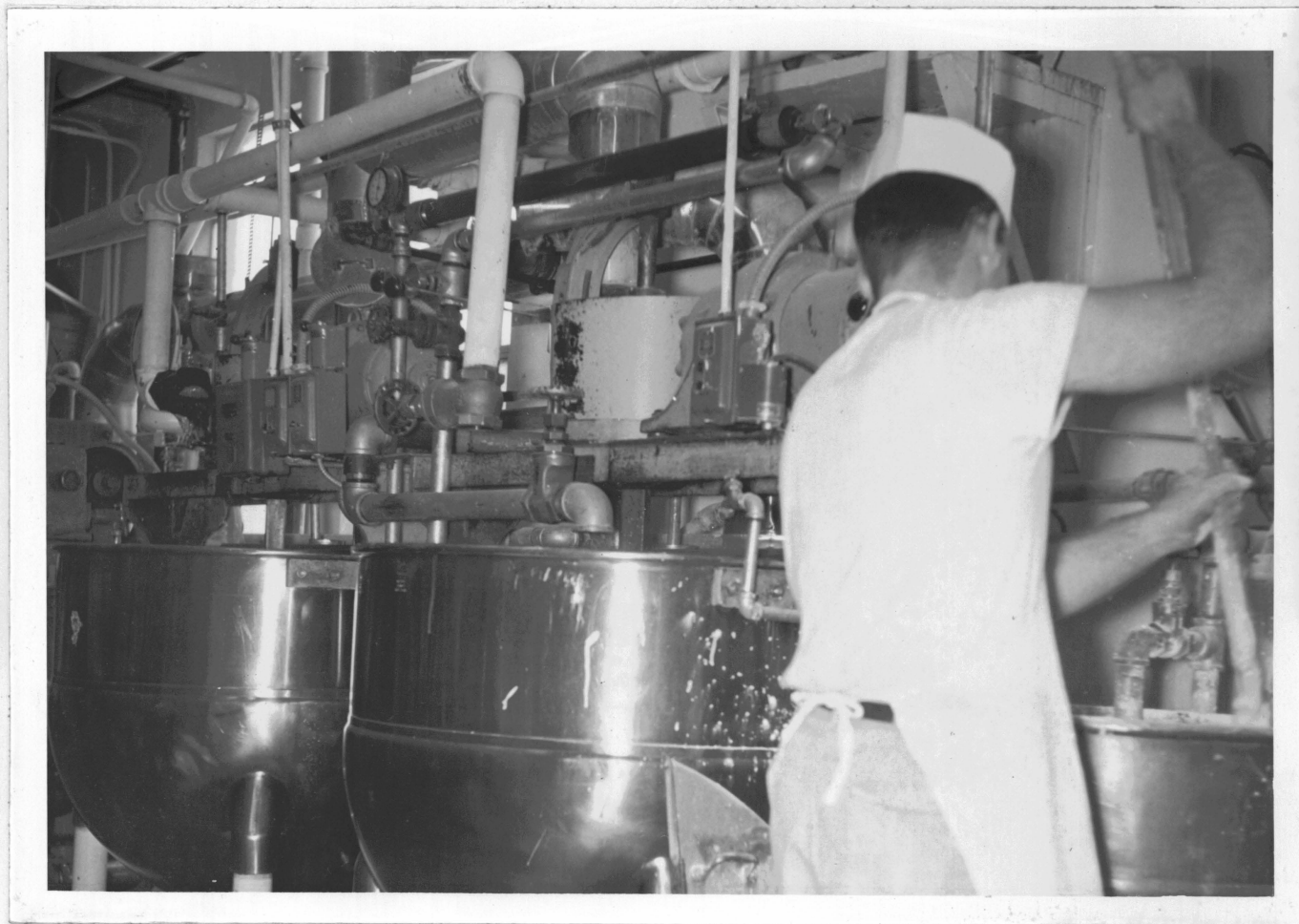
## Plate I

Founder of the Community Industries



Leah Harshman works daily at her desk in the main building. She is informed on operations and holds conferences with plant managers and others.

Plate II  
Candy Factory Pictures



An employee stirs candy which is cooking in one of the plant's large, stainless steel vats.

## Plate III



This woman cuts the jellied candies. She handles them on trays and passes them on to the next in line for sorting. During the summer season the plant's main production is jellied candies. In the fall the making of chocolate candy is resumed.

## Plate IV



Girls dressed in white uniforms are working on the conveyor belt which delivers the colorful jellied candies into their boxes and cellophane packages. The girls are arranging the candies so they will be packed in an assortment of colors.

Plate V  
Garment Factory Pictures



This man cuts several thicknesses of dress material into patterns. He uses an electric cutter to go through 150-200 layers of material. The dress factory has a production of 400 dozen dresses a week.

## Plate VI



This picture shows two of the women working at power machines in the sewing room of the garment plant. This part of the industry employs about 60 for cutting, sewing, pressing, and packing.

## Plate VII



This woman uses a steam iron to press a finished garment. Other garments are to be pressed.



## Plate VIII



These women are folding the dresses and packing them for shipment.

Plate IX  
Tractor Plant Pictures



These men work at a gas heater and are heating tiller knives before turning the blades. The tractor plant employs 80 men. The products are all motor powered garden and lawn tools.

## Plate X



On the assembly line these men add motors to the wheel base and other parts of the motor driven tools. Before reaching this point, parts are soaked in a solution to remove all grease and dirt. Then they are dried thoroughly and moved on a belt through a paint tank.

## Plate XI



The tractor plant foreman is exhibiting two of the plants three products. The Combo tractor is on the left and the Snowbird is on the right. The third product, the Earthbird, is similar in size to the Snowbird but it has tractor blades. Both the Combo and the Earthbird are modifications of what is known as the George Tractor.