

## Arms and the Woman:

# Transition From Embroidery to Welding Is Rapid

*This is the sixth of a series of articles on living conditions in industrial defense areas and on the part women are playing in the defense effort. Miss Christie is a well-known newspaper and magazine writer who has specialized in sociological studies.*

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By MARGARET CHRISTIE

even the difficult overhead welds did not daunt the industrious young learners and workers.

It was oddly touching to find a group of young women, ages 17 to 25, making incubators for new babies. Inexpensive, simple things with a small thermostat that really worked very well. In this same shop another proud group was re-making beds. No, not the top layers, but the structural foundations. It seems that a number of beds had been turned out at some time that were too wide for hospital use. Here groups of young welders had first severed the metal, taken out the excess and then rewelded the whole to proper size.

Out of the pieces that were left they had made legs for garden benches and picnic tables, the tops of which were donated, as had been the beds, by a manufacturer. The result being that for the price of the gas used in the welding, the city of Indianapolis has any num-

ber of pieces of much needed equipment for public use.

### SEWING ON LARGE SCALE

It was also in Indianapolis that I saw a complete plant built by NYA labor and so equipped. It was the kitchen end that fascinated the housekeeping eye, for here the girls had made beautifully-fitted cupboards, tables, stands and had done every scrap of the job themselves.

Sewing goes on everywhere. But not sewing as we have known it. This is learning to use great machines, power-driven, so that the young woman is equipped to take a sewing stand in one of the great factories, to do her bit toward clothing the Army or the legion of workers.

Directors of the NYA plants are constantly in receipt of calls for skilled workers. This turn out to be true in a slightly more limited sense even in the machine shops, where young women are learning to

handle machine tools with the same ease and skill that they bring to the sewing machines.

Young Negro women are finding themselves with a decided gift for machine work and very happy learning to do it. Just where they will find an opportunity of applying this skill is something that has the directors puzzled. There is not as yet sufficient demand for women in some defense industry fields to assure this oncoming crop of a place.

### EMBROIDERY TO WELDING

Of course, many of the Government plants, arsenals and shops are still under construction, with prospective workers being interviewed and classified. Today women, trained and experienced for the most part, are being used on such diverse defense jobs as the making of small arms ammunition, bagging of powder, fitting and examining of infinitely important parts of many varieties of guns.

From embroidery hoops to welding may seem like a far cry, but in Indianapolis I found young women following blueprints with ease, handling their welding irons with finish and precision. At a machine they are equally serene. I watched a squad come on duty. They methodically took up their oil cans,

serviced their machines, scanned their blueprints, set their gauges and began. The noise is terrible. Do they mind it? Not at all. They are completely absorbed in the work in hand.

Inspectors' jobs are filled by a remarkable lot of women.

"They're better at it than me," says the guide. "Those women find a defect so small they have to see it through strong magnifying glasses and mark the place to be worked with color, for the naked eye cannot detect the blemish."

## Rev. George Backhurst as Substitute for S

The Rev. George Backhurst, superintendent of the Detroit Episcopal City Mission, will preach his son, the Rev. G. Clare Backhurst, vicar of St. Christoph Episcopal Church, Redford, at harvest festival service Sunday morning. The church will be decorated with fruits and vegetables which will be donated to the hospital for men, women and young people conducted by the mission. The service will be held in the Redford Masonic Hall.

INDIANAPOLIS, Oct. 4.—This dateline really should read "everywhere." For this is the record of the preparation of young women to take their part in national defense.

Young men are taking much the same work in many places, but always for them there lies ahead a tour of duty in the armed forces, while for young women the matter resolves itself into as useful a job as they can find. But—a job.

"Why are you learning all this? What are you doing this for?"

"I've put the question in dozens of vocational classrooms; in machine shops; in employment offices; in numerous national youth training centers.

Always the eyes light up and the voice rises joyfully as, grey-eyed or brown, dark skinned or light, they answer, "Oh! It's a job." "We're going to earn money." "We're going to make things." It is not only defense that calls them. The main and urgent thought was that at last they were going to "earn our living."

### ENTER NEW FIELDS

What were they doing? Many a thing that few, if any, women have done before. I've seen women on an assembly line; women welding;