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FALL RIVER'S APPAREL INDUSTRY 1920 - 1986

by

Jeannette J. Lambert

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In the 1800s and early 1900s, young immigrant and native farm girls left their homes to live and share rooms in apartment buildings owned and operated by mill owners. These young girls lived and worked under horrendous conditions. They would work an average of fourteen to sixteen hours a day for very little pay. Room and board would be deducted from their pay. In the twenties and thirties the apparel industry began its endeavors. People banded together to improve conditions; hence the unions were able to stabilize and were able to achieve a better environment for the people of this productive city.

After World War II, the need to educate people became quite evident. People needed to be trained for various jobs and these training programs needed to be funded. The city needed workers, and people needed the state and federal government to help subsidize various training programs. As a result,

FOREWORD

The city of "Troy", the "Spindle City", and the city of "Fall River" are all one and the same. The name has changed as times changed, but life in the "Spindle City" will always be one of productivity. Throughout the history of Fall River, its work force has had to adapt as often as the city's name has changed. Transitions have taken place even in this city as the mills began to close their doors and "sweatshops" came into being. Even now, "sweatshops" have changed into plants and factories. Now some of these buildings have transformed into retail outlets.

In the 1800s and early 1900s, young immigrant and native farm girls left their homes to live and share rooms in apartment buildings owned and operated by mill owners. These young girls lived and worked under horrendous conditions. They would work an average of fourteen to sixteen hours a day for very little pay. Room and board would be deducted from their pay. In the twenties and thirties the apparel industry began its endeavors. People banded together to improve conditions; hence the unions were able to stabilize and were able to achieve a better environment for the people of this productive city.

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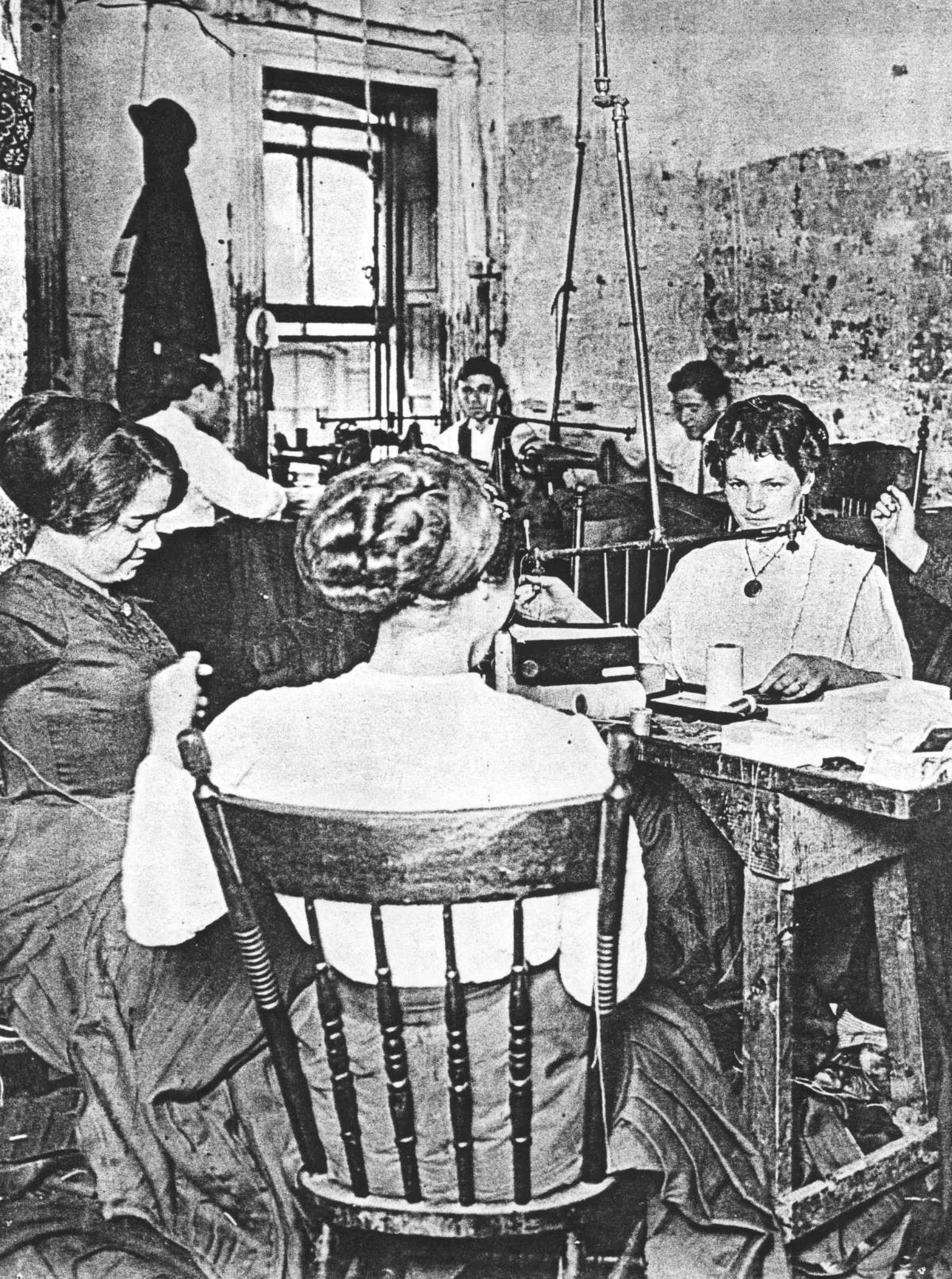
management, government, and the community had to look to each other for support in the industry.

A major problem of the needle trade industry is the import quota. At one time, we were the wealthiest country in imports and exports; but times change and now we are at the bottom of the ladder. Currently, our largest export is scrap metal and paper trash. We export approximately 2% of our textiles. Our trade deficit leaves a lot to be desired considering we are supposed to be a wealthy and productive nation.

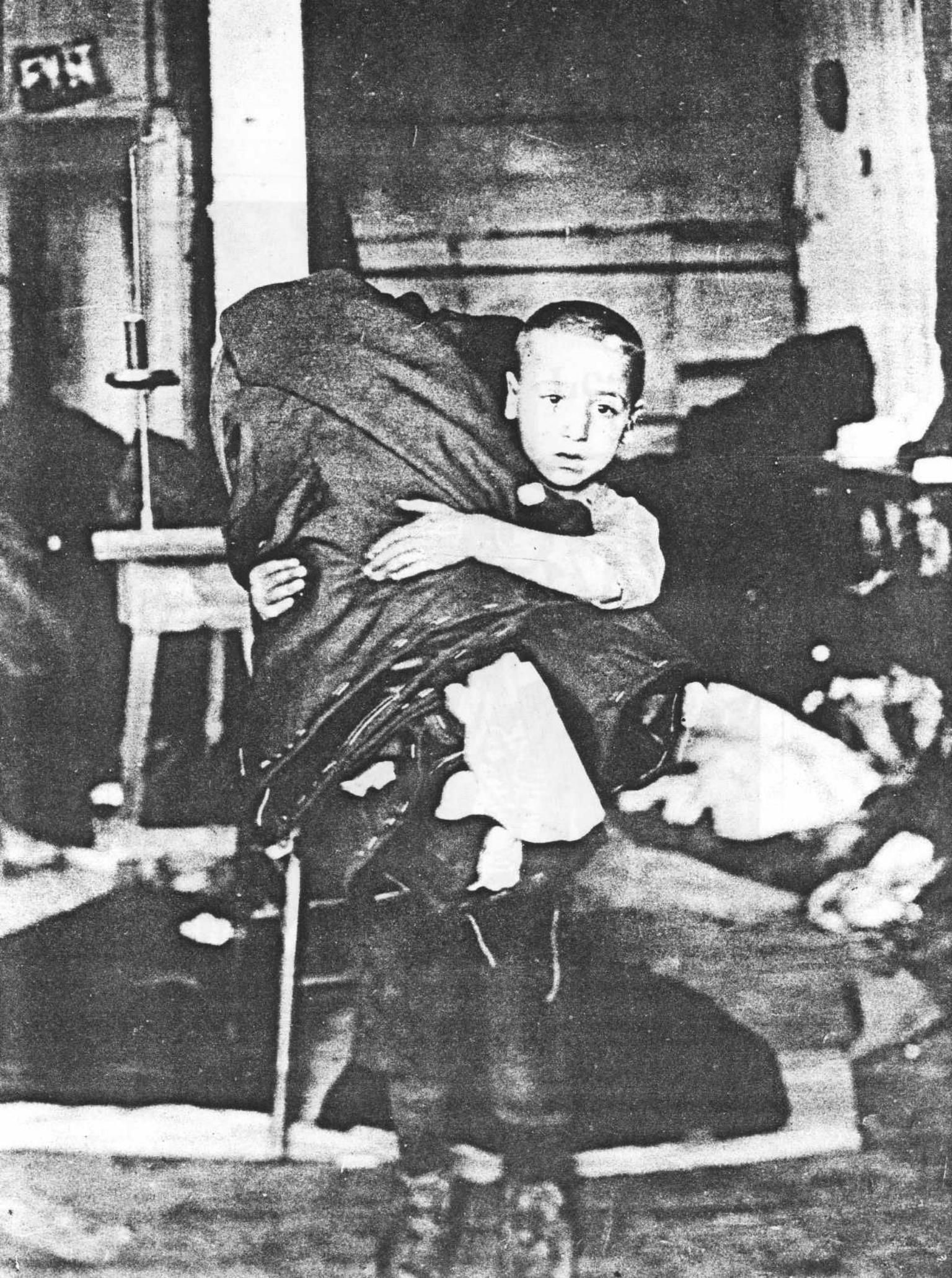
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The following people have been a great help to me through guidance and encouragement; so to these people goes a special thank-you: Sue Porter Benson, Joe Murphy, Ron Bettencourt, Eddie Lambert Jr., Ed Lambert Sr., and all members of my family. Thank you.



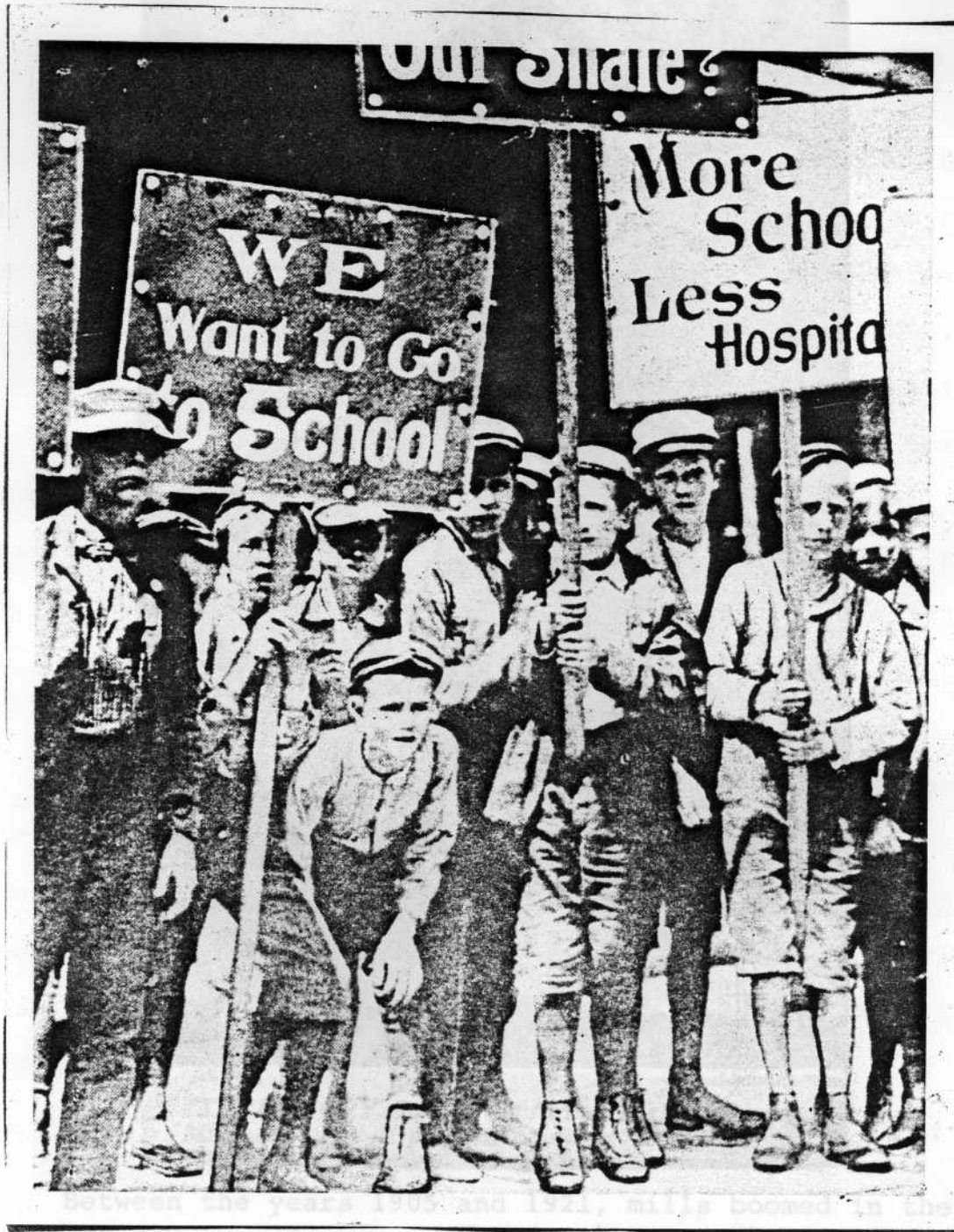






TRANSITIONS:

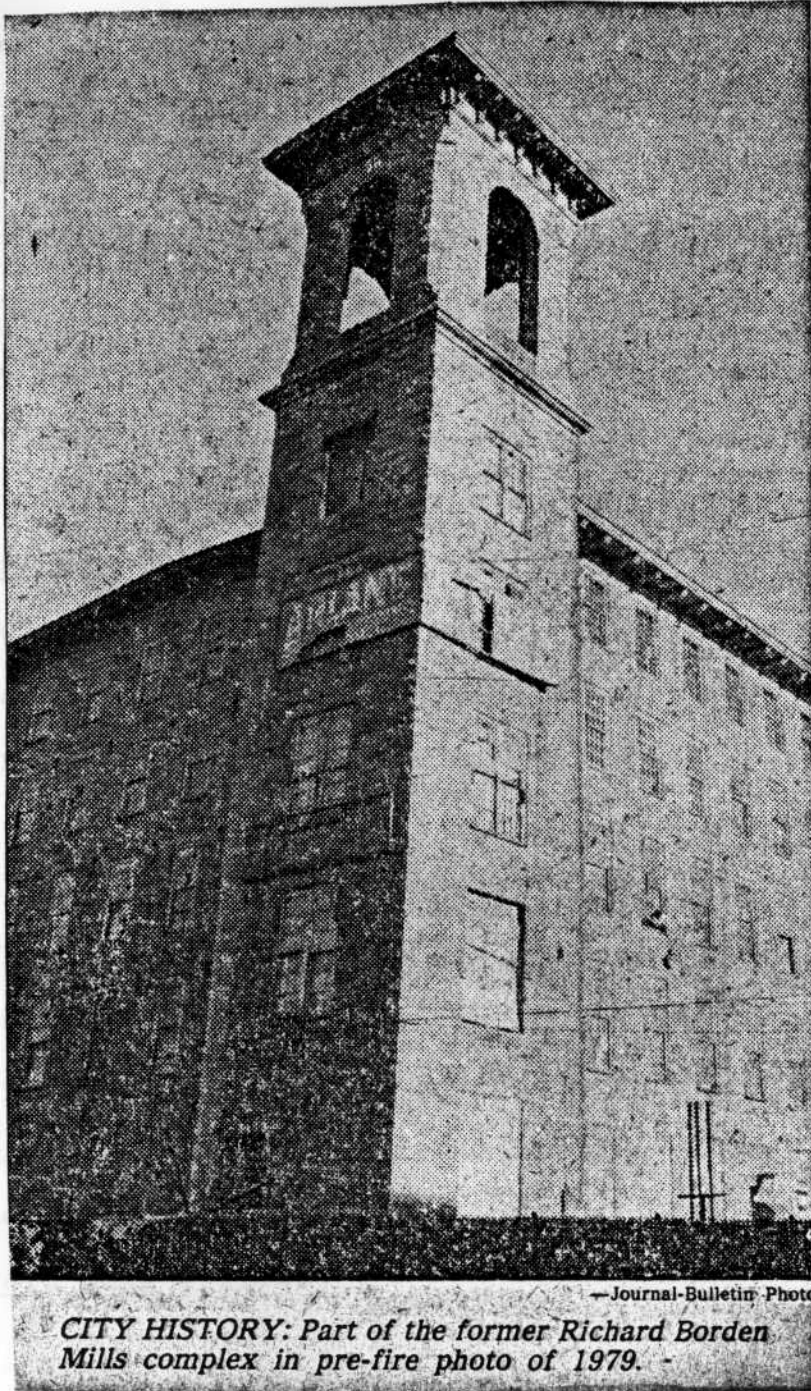
Mills to Shops to Outlets



Between the years 1905 and 1921, mills boomed in the Fall River area. More than one hundred mills, housing four million spindles, gave thirty thousand people employment and there was a weekly payroll in excess of one million dollars. Yet, what took one hundred years to build crumbled in less than a decade. Some

TRANSITIONS:

Mills to Shops to Outlets



CITY HISTORY: Part of the former Richard Borden Mills complex in pre-fire photo of 1979. -

Between the years 1905 and 1921, mills boomed in the Fall River area. More than one hundred mills, housing four million spindles, gave thirty thousand people employment and there was a weekly payroll in excess of one million dollars. Yet, what took one hundred years to build crumbled in less than a decade. Some

for about \$750.00. Very few of these were made, for special orders only. Jacob Korber now employs approximately seventy people; their peak time is December through June. Weaving is done in December, and it takes about two months to weave and another month to put on the finishing touches. Experienced craftmen handle the most expensive line, the finer the weaver the better the quality. In 1929, the city ranked fourth in the nation in its payrolls. In 1929, the city ranked fourth in the nation in its payrolls. During the depression, the city ranked second with its payrolls; the weekly payroll for the textile industry was \$600,000. During the late thirties, the needle trades found a home in Fall River's mills. (Spindle City vol.2 page 716) During the war, some shops closed their doors, but at the end of the war the payroll for the needle trades industry in the nation was \$17,680,858. By 1953, Fall River ranked fourth in the nation in the textile industry. (Spangler) The last mill closed its doors in the mid sixties.

Maria Paria and Yvonne Jalbert, now both retired workers of the Pilgrim Mill building was purchased by Louis Hand for a curtain factory. The entire second floor was used, consisting of two hundred and five thousand square feet. (Fall River Herald News 2/29/44) At the time, Mr. Hand employed five hundred people; he provided a lunch room and clean facilities. (Fall River Herald News 2/27/46)

The first Korber Brothers Hat factory began in Dorchester, in 1912, by Jacob Korber. Jacob's father, Sidney, took over the business shortly after moving to Fall River in 1935. Korber Hats is a third generation of hat manufacturers. The "Panama" hat was promoted by President Roosevelt during the Panama Canal crisis in 1914. The Montecristic, which was the top line of hats, retailed

for about \$750.00. Very few of these were made, for special orders only. Jacob Korber now employs approximately seventy people; their peak time is December through June. Weaving is done in Ecuador, and it takes about two months to weave and another month to put on the finishing touches. Experienced craftsmen handle the most expensive line, the finer the weave the better the quality. In 1983 things are done pretty much the same, some exceptions are plastic solution which replaces horse glue and blocking presses are now automatic. (Providence Journal 7/3/83)

Har-Lee Manufacturing was another firm that flourished in the thirties and forties. It was one of the largest firms in the country, if not in the world. They employed over 2,000 people and manufactured inexpensive cotton dresses.

Maria Faria and Yvonne Jalbert, now both retired workers of the apparel industry, began working in the early thirties for an average of \$3.00 per week. Their day would begin at 7 in the morning and end at 4:30 in the afternoon with a half hour for lunch which they ate at their machines. They would work on Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 12 noon. A penny raise would be welcomed in "those" days. Maria would also have to operate the elevator and do various jobs while doing her own job. She would sometimes take her work home and finish it at night, then return it the following day. Neither of them have any regrets about the "Good Old Days." After World War II, the N.R.A. (National Recovery Act) was passed which meant a minimum wage for everyone. Maria was one of the many women who donned their uniforms and

marched proudly in their white dresses and little white hats with red, white and blue stripes which were made in local factories. Maria was also one of the first women to help organize the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (I.L.G.W.U.). She would go knocking door to door to try to convince people to organize. This had to be done discreetly, because management was not in favor and her job would be in jeopardy if they found out. Maria and her friends won, and the union was begun. Maria is now President of the Retirees Club of the I.L.G.W.U. which now has 700 members.

Most of the women in the thirties and forties sewed on the machines; very few would venture out on their own. One of these few women was Hilda Costa, who opened her own factory, and manufactured undergarments. (Herald News 10/24/49)

There was cheap labor at the beginning, but with the help of the I.L.G.W.U., the stigma of "sweatshop" was overcome. Workers became skilled in their trades and more firms located here, and by 1934, union and management worked together and the industry sprang up. (Herald News 5/5/48)

In the year 1952, there was a shortage of workers. As a result of this, shops began moving down south. If a person became a skilled worker in the needle trade, he/she would not do anything else, he/she would rather collect unemployment. Hence there were long lines in the unemployment office which hurt the economy. (Herald News 4/12/52) With the labor shortages in the garment industry, Congresswoman Margaret Heckler suggested that

immigrants from the Azores be brought in and trained. (Herald News 10/15/69) The Portuguese people were the ones who kept the trade going in this community. (Herald News 7/7/85) The dress industry was in trouble; plants were working to only forty percent of their capacity. (Herald News 6/18/70) As time went on, there was a change in women's fashions. In 1971, pantsuits became popular, and this fashion required more operators to complete the job. This helped the needle trades industry. (Herald News 5/20/71)



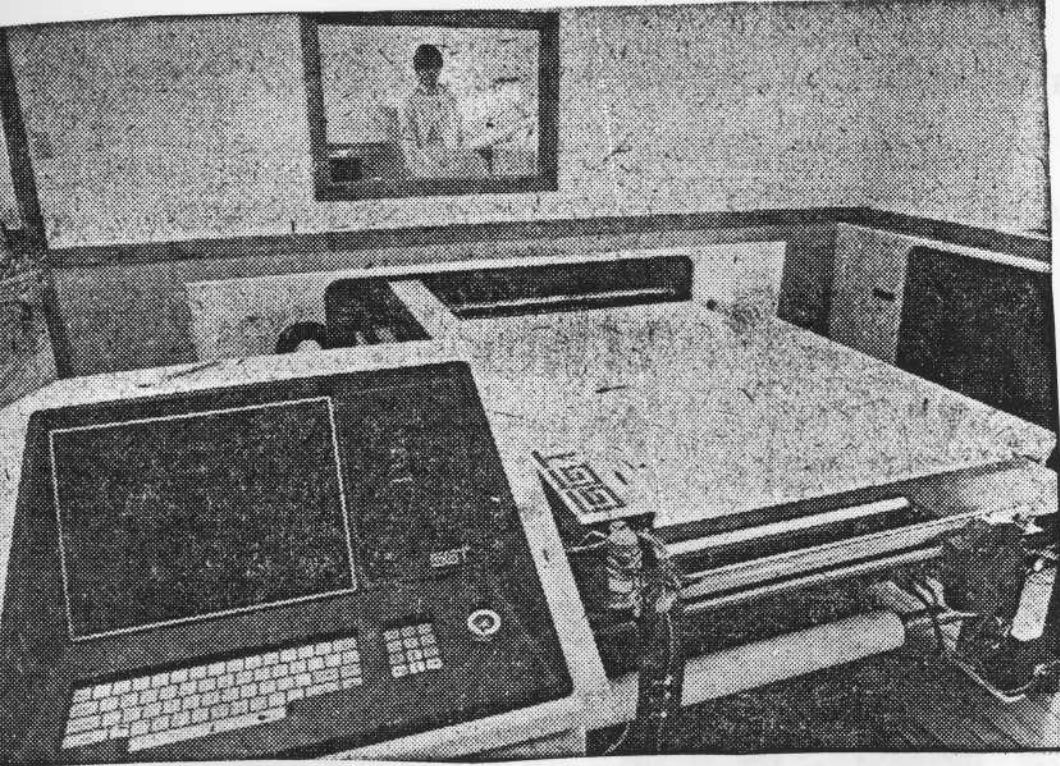
'THEY WORK as hard as longshoremen, but they don't get the recognition they deserve.'

Shelburne Shirt and Tioga Sportswear have been in operation for thirty-eight years and have decided to expand their operations. (Herald News 7/22/70) Shelburne is a family type shop, there are more than forty years of family management. It was founded by Sander Epstein, who was treasurer and manager of Fall River operations. His son Seymour is president in the New York office, and Selwyn is now manager of Fall River operations. The Fall River shop consists of three floors; on the third floor there is a three hundred foot cutting table. The shirt is begun by first taking a photographic layout, then patterns are inscribed on fabric lots. Next a cutter cuts stacks of material with the ease of a butter knife and does it with precision. The cut fabric then goes to the second floor for skilled operators to sew and trim, then down to the first floor for final touches, sales and shipping. (Herald News 3/17/73)

Aaron Mittleman, who is president and executive director of the New England Apparel Manufacturing Association Inc., and owner of Cheryl Dress, in 1979 purchased new machinery to prove his faith in the industry. He stated that the garment industry has come out of the last eight-to-ten year slump. He believed the industry would be around for another fifty years. The industry is what made the city survive; workers were earning an average of \$4.75 an hour. He expected the industry to grow, but predicted there would be a shortage of workers to keep up the pace.

(Herald News 12/30/78 page 1&6)

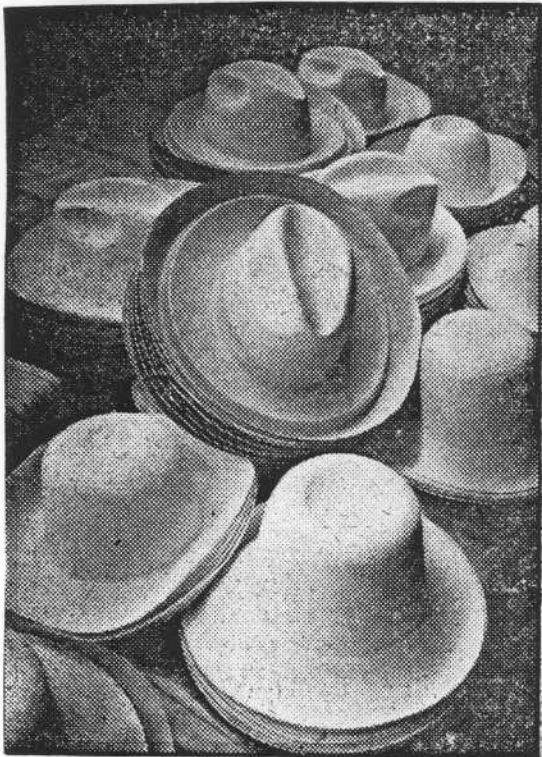
CUTTING PATTERN



COMPUTER

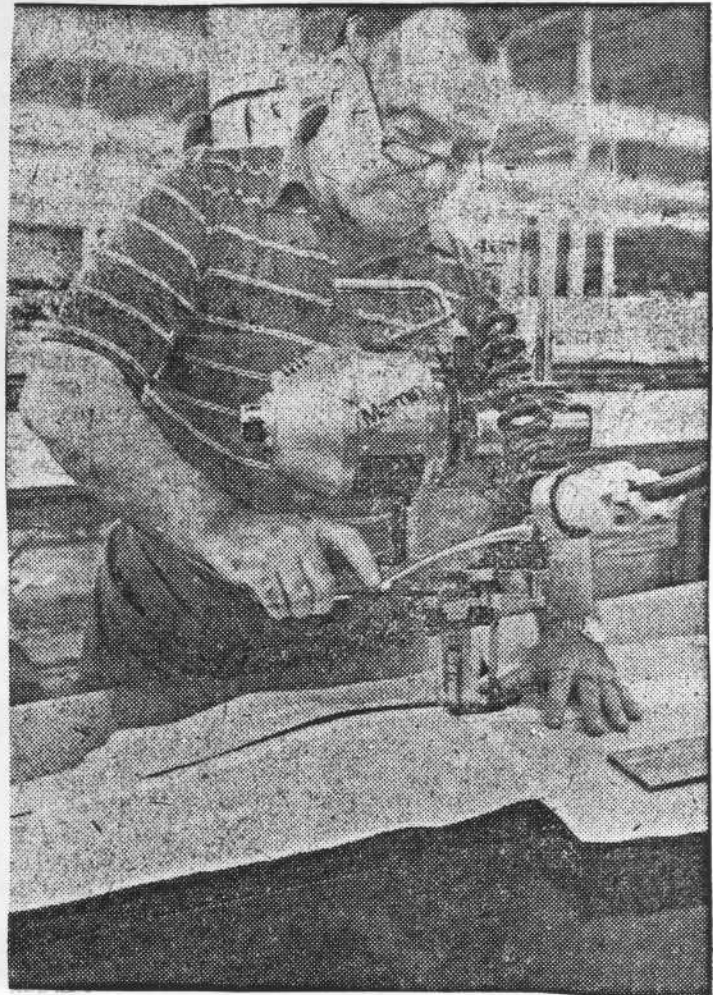
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LAYOUT MACHINE



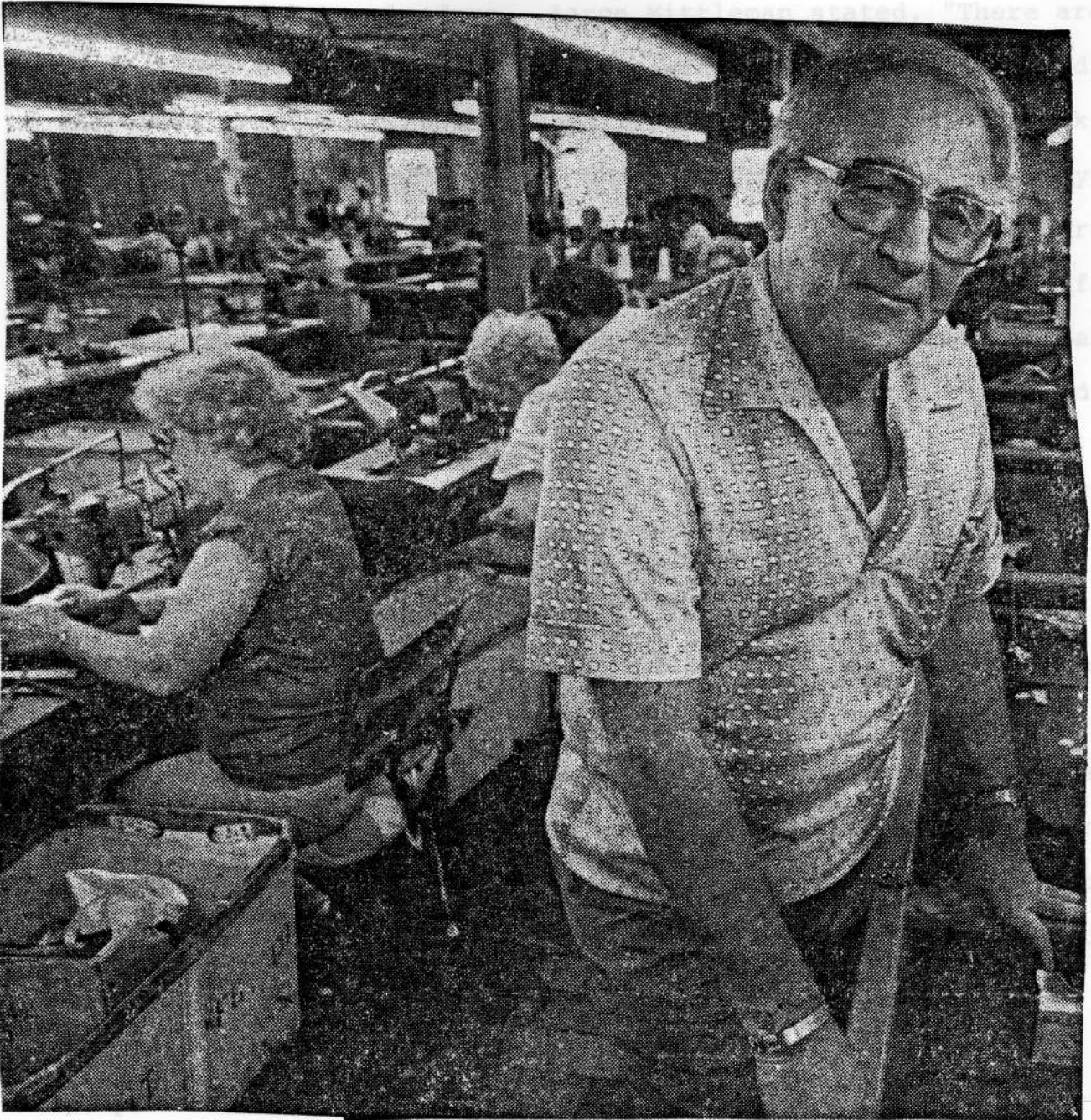
—Journal-Bulletin Photo by BOB THAYER

HATS OFF: Panama hats await finishing touches in Fall River.



CUTTING PATTERN

Headline: FALL RIVER TRIES TO END TAILSPIN. Through one of cooperative agreements, management of various shops agreed to help each other fulfill their contracts and buy high tech machinery. to obtain low interest loans for the city's apparel industry, and Governor Dukakis pledged to help the city. (Herald News 7/23/83) State officials met in Fall River to help stabilize the shortage Mr. Joseph DeNardo with local government.



had hoped to help upgrade plants with modern technology and to

offer Mr. Joseph DeNardo, manager of the Bobe Jo plant, was one of the first to introduce high tech machinery into the industry. (Herald News 7/3/83) Representative Barney Frank was able through HUD funding to obtain low interest loans for the city's apparel industry, and Governor Dukakis pledged to help the city. (Herald News 7/23/83) State officials met in Fall River to help stabilize the shortage of workers; they met with local government, industry, and labor leaders. Aaron Mittleman stated, "There are over five hundred vacant slots for sewing machine operators and there are about four hundred unskilled persons looking for work." He asked for a skills center in which to train people, not only as operators, but for other jobs in the industry as well. There was training for the child care program as well as promotions for the apparel industry. The average worker made \$6.00 per hour and had fringe benefits. The industry's public image was what needed improving. (Herald News 3/19/85)

Mr. Maynard Freeman, vice chairman of the Needle Trade Action Program, noted that the industry was still the city's largest employer; even though the industry had shrunk, there was no rush of other industries to replace it. Nicholas Roussos, a board member of the NTAP and manager of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, suggested that the NTAP send out speakers to address service clubs advising people of the importance of the industry and its economy to the area. Sister Kathleen Harrington termed the needle trades industry "the life blood" of the community. The board was hoping to obtain funds to enlighten people and to help in the marketing of the needles trade. They had hoped to help upgrade plants with modern technology and to

offer training for time study engineers. Once public funds were no longer available, they were hoping to obtain help from private foundations. (Herald News 11/14/86)

Headline: FALL RIVER MILLS IN TRANSITION. The garment industry went into a tailspin in 1973. Factories began cutting back or closing, and unemployment rates went up. Shops located in the same building pooled their resources and helped each other. Some employers invested heavily in sophisticated high technology equipment to increase productivity and to help factory outlets supplement their sales. Merrill Lewis and Lawrence Soloff, owners of buildings, went from mills to textile industry to retail outlets. Landlords received subsidies to remodel and maintain their buildings. By doing so, they collected more rent monies than they had for the mill or textile industry. Rents doubled in five years and diversification was the key word in transition. (Providence Journal 7/10/83) Fall River had become the mill outlet capital of New England.



COSTUME & DRESSMAKERS
UNION LOCAL 60
I.L.G.W. DRESSMAKERS
COME JOIN
OUR UNION



**IF YOU DON'T
COME IN
SUNDAY
DON'T COME
IN MONDAY.**

**THE
MANAGEMENT**



the uniform making factories, they number approximately 50,000 nationwide. The Amalgamated union is geared mostly to men's

clothing, they have merged with other unions, to increase their membership.

WORKERS AND THEIR STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE

new ideas in technology, and are the second largest union in the apparel industry.

Since the beginning of time, people have always banded together through good and through bad.

The International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (I.L.G.W.U.)

In the 1800s, working mill girls formed clubs, for companionship, and to help support each other in their community and in their work day. In 1896, a home on Pine Street in Fall River opened for working girls, and the club provided rooms rent free. In 1905 a fund raising was begun to establish their own building on Franklin Street. The structure was completed for them in 1909. (History of F.R. by Fenner)

In the "Good old days," the average life span was fifty-eight years, cars were for the rich, tuberculosis for the poor. Some people decided in the name of justice and human dignity, to stop work and demand a union. Management did not want workers to unionize; they came here to escape the unions in New York. The first union was predominantly male tailors, but with the influx of the war women moved into the industry; then work moved into assembly and piece work. After the war, the National Recovery Act (N.R.A.) allowed for the organization of unions. The N.R.A. guaranteed workers a minimum wage of forty cents an hour, employees were only giving them twenty cents an hour. Workers began banding together for their rights, which helped organizations of unions. Various unions were formed for the apparel industry. The United Garment Workers, have most of the uniform making factories, they number approximately 50,000 nationwide. The Amalgamated union is geared mostly to men's

clothing, they have merged with other unions, to increase their membership. They have always been very supportive to new ideas in technology, and are the second largest union in the apparel industry.

The International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (I.L.G.W.U.) is the largest of the apparel unions. William Ross, a young union organizer helped form the I.L.G.W.U., Ross and workers laid out the foundation. Fred Siems followed and built a union of over 12,000 workers. Mr. Dobinsky, who was the first president of the I.L.G.W.U., was known as the "Father of the Union". In 1934, Little Dorothy was the first factory to sign a contract, with nearly 100% of the workers in agreement. The contract promised shorter hours and a modest wage increase. It was a small beginning; then a curtain factory followed, after that an undergarment factory joined and it just kept growing from there. It was not hard to convince workers to join the union, women were more than welcome in the union, because they made up at least 80% of the industry. They received fringe benefits and better wages.

The I.L.G.W.U. health center, which was begun by the union to service its members, opened in 1944 and moved to Garment Workers Square in 1951. (Herald News 3/3/84) The health center has had the best doctors and nurses and has provided very good care for its members. They give thorough check-ups and have a very good health plan, not only for its present members but also for former members. Members who are 65 years of age and have twenty years in the union are able to receive full medical benefits, and enjoy the retired members club, which provides trips to various

locations and political functions as well, which enables them to socialize. and retired members.

The high point of the union was in 1961, there were more than 16,700 members in this area. Business was good and contracts were approved with a thirty-five hour week, with overtime pay after the thirty-five hours. The union also provides training programs to help stimulate a person's mind and help a person to grow. They do not provide training in the industry, but are concerned about upgrading the educational level of their members. They provide self development programs such as the G.E.D., which is the equivalent of a high school diploma. They feel it is their obligation to help members fulfill their full potential; they also provide scholarships for college. Most people working within the union were at one time employed in the industry. Mr. Nick Roussos, who is now president of the I.L.G.W.U., claims there are approximately 4,000 members in the Fall River area, and 400,000 members nationally. In 1978, the A.F.of L. and the C.I.O. combined their efforts to train 350 underemployed people for better jobs. This included not only the Fall River and New Bedford area but areas such as New York, New Jersey (metropolitan area), Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, So. Carolina, Pennsylvania and others. It was funded under Title 3 of the CETA program. This also included people who wanted to get an education, various programs such as the G.E.D., and English as a second language was made available to all workers. (Herald News 7/28/78 page 2) A year later, the amalgamated and textile unions received a grant of \$150,000 for a

humanities program. The monies came from the national endowment agreement, employers may hire anyone, but workers must join the union within a fixed time. (Herald News 1/17/49 pages 1 & 11)

A year later, the union received a \$150,000 grant for a humanities program. The amalgamated and textile unions received monies from the national endowment for active and retired members. THREADS was the name of the program; it was tailored to deal with local interests and used local resources. Susan Porter Benson was leader and lecturer. It was done on a weekly basis with eight two-hour sessions using history, literature, and philosophy. The program was open to change. (Herald News 1/16/79)

There are non-union plants that now exist. They may work a little steadier, but if employees do not agree with management, they are fired. In non-union plants, workers may work overtime

with no overtime pay. Although employers are now more considerate than they were in the thirties, management now has to abide by a minimum wage, and people have become more educated than they were in the early nineteen hundreds. People are now more aware of their legal rights.

In 1949, union and management did not exactly enjoy each other's company. Neither one trusted the other, and as a result, the law stepped in. The Supreme Court upheld the law on closed shops in various states. The Taft Hartley Act of 1947 outlawed future closed shops and permitted a more unionized contract shop when a majority of workers voted on it. Under a union - shop

agreement, employers may hire anyone, but workers must join the union within a fixed time. (Herald News 1/17/49 pages 1 & 11)

At the beginning, unions wanted better working conditions for their workers. Eventually, they sought to gain better living conditions by obtaining raises for them. In 1974, the first major strike in 53 years occurred. In this city, there were 992 members who went on strike. Companies were picketed, and members wanted more money, longer vacations, and better health benefits. Some of the factories affected by the strike were Anderson Little, Darwood, Bradley Scott, and San-Toro manufacturers. (Herald News 6/3/74) Workers across the nation banded together through their union and went on strike for eleven days. They made their stand and won their fight with a raise and a cost of living protection for the next three years.

In 1977, the I.L.G.W.U. tried to expand its membership by getting health care workers to join them. The union became a certified bargaining agent for the employees, and Mr. Jay Clarkin was the attorney for the health care services. Negotiations took approximately a year and a half. They lost the first vote; it was declared illegal when free coffee was given to workers by an executive of the health care office. The second vote was taken at the court house, and the union won. The final offer was rejected, and a strike vote was taken. This proved to be illegal because Congress had passed an amendment stating that all health care facilities must give at least ten days' notice, and they had

given only nine, the result being that health care facilities had have since formed their own union. previous year's imports. The U.S. apparel industry lost 300,000 jobs, and conditions in the

Contracts are usually drawn up between union and management, but there are times when unions have to negotiate not only with management but with political leaders as well. In 1979, Mr. Sol C. Chairkin, president of the I.L.G.W.U., stated that the union would seek a wage increase. Union leaders met with President Carter and his advisers about exemptions on a 7% ceiling wage increase. The union also wanted exemptions from fringe benefits and equity among unions. Workers in this area were making approximately \$4.50 - \$4.75 per hour for skilled workers; New York members were being paid higher wages. Their biggest competitor was not the south, but foreign imports. Chairkin stated that of every 100 garments sold in the United States, 40 were from foreign countries, China being the largest exporter of goods. (Herald News 1/24/79) In May of 1979, garment workers received a 25% pay hike over a three year period. Mr. Chairkin had announced that 130,000 workers in the Northeast area, including 15,000 in this area, would set the trend for 360,000 workers nationwide. (Herald News 5/31/79 page 1) Workers not only received a wage increase from this, but health benefits increased, as well as an additional paid holiday, plus employee retirement funds. Two days later, the strike continued at two major plants. Officials and workers awaited the outcome of a

Contract negotiations are very important to union members. In the spring of 1985, the I.L.G.W.U. held meetings to discuss contracts which had to be renewed. Union leaders stated, "We're an important industry, but we're in trouble." The main topic was

the apparel imports. They were hurting the industry as there had been an increase of 30% from the previous year's imports. The U.S. apparel industry lost 300,000 jobs, and conditions in the shops were deteriorating. People were working 60 - 70 hours per week in small, crowded shops, and doing "homework" for less than \$2.00 per hour. This practice had been fought by the union since the thirties. (Herald News 3/21/85 pages 1 & 4)

There are times when negotiated settlements cannot be reached and contracts do not get signed. The result can mean hardships for everyone. For the union officials, it means they have to be able to convince their members to take a stand regardless of the consequences. For members of the union, it could mean hardship in everyday living. If negotiations are not easily finalized, it affects not only the members, but their families, and eventually the community feels the brunt of a strike. For management, it could mean the loss of their business. For everyone involved, it takes a great deal of time, patience, and understanding on all sides; it's a give and take situation.

On June 4, 1985, more than 5,000 workers in Fall River and in New Bedford went on strike, stopping nine manufacturing firms. (Herald News 6/4/85) Two days later, the strike continued at two major plants. Officials and workers awaited the outcome of a national vote taking place at plants affiliated with the clothing manufacturers association. Anderson Little and Bradley Scott are not C.M.A. members, but accept the C.M.A. and A.C.T.W.U. contract

levels. They received an hourly increase of fifty cents in the first year of a three year contract. (Herald News 6/16/85)

On October 3, 1986, Duro workers went on strike. The following day, management closed its doors and shut down in response to the union and its members. On the 13th day of October, the strike ended. Union officials and management had reached an agreement. Workers received a raise, and management re-opened their doors. (Herald News 10/86)

When all is said and done, union, management, and members need each other. The union has become a way of life.

Lynch and Harry Gottlieb looked into a vocational training school. A girls vocational school began in September of 1948, with Mr. Joseph P. Gilligan as the principle. (Herald News 1/29/48)

Mr. Sleas, who managed the A.F.of L. at that time, brought men into the needle trades training program to help break the myth of sewing being woman's work. (Herald News 4/16/52) Jay Jay Sportswear was one of the shops which advertised a three week training program for men. They were deluged as over one hundred men applied for jobs. (Herald News 4/17/52) Various plants began advertising. There were openings for at least 2,000 jobs.

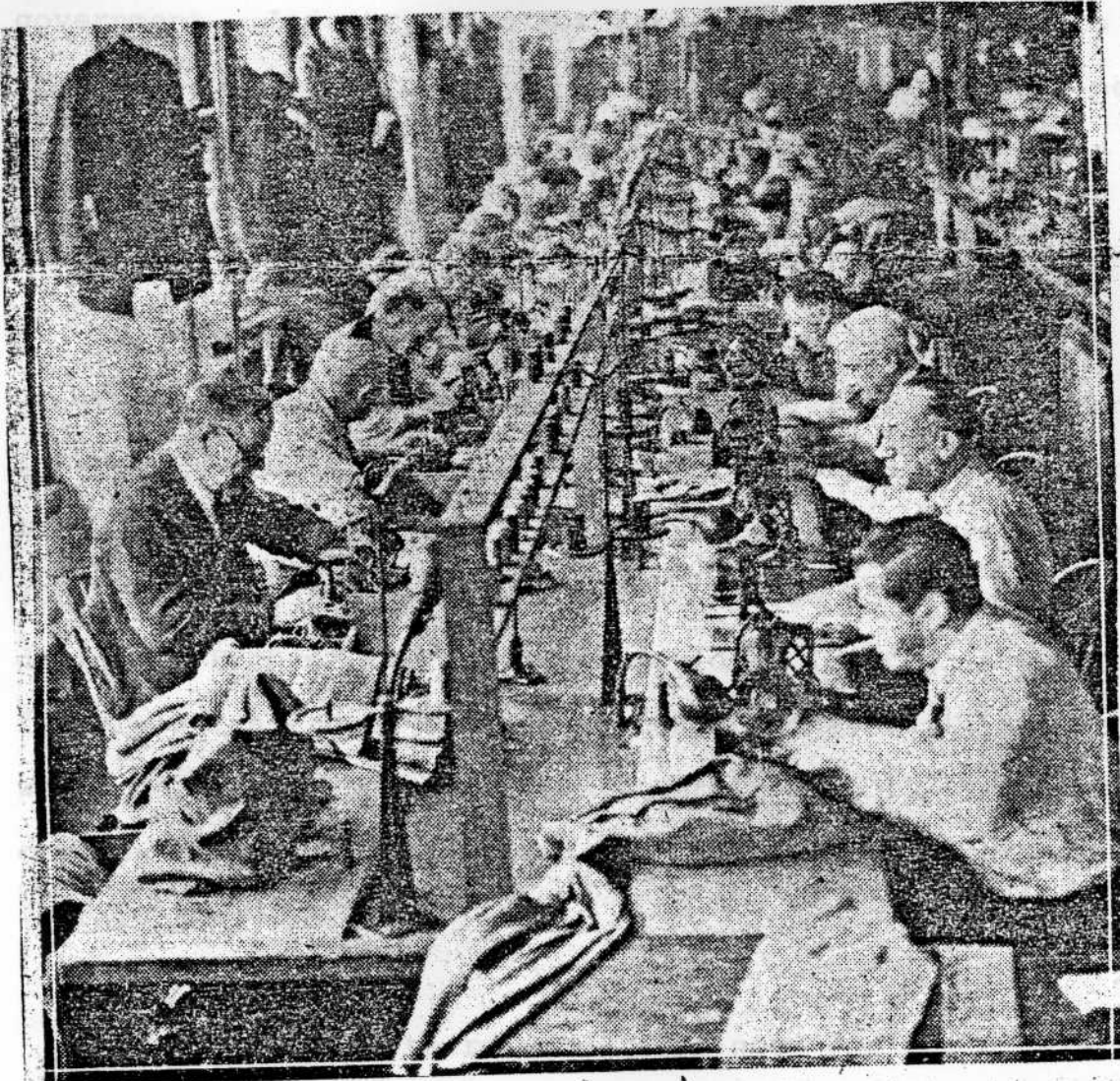
During the month of May, a grant was obtained for a formal training program. The industry received \$9,000 in federal funds and an additional \$1,500 with equipment. More than seven hundred men registered. They were divided into three age brackets with a trial group of twenty-one men. The courses were on a Thursday

evening from GOVERNMENT GRANTS AND TRAINING PROGRAMS Machinery
from various shops had been donated. The men made children's
dres The first sewing school in Fall River was begun in 1879 by
mill girls. They would get together and learn to sew their own
clothes; they were not only sewing, but using it as an evening of
socializing. (Fenner) Before the war, there were 12,000 needle
workers. During the war, it dwindled to only 10,000. The need
for training was important because of this. It wasn't until
after the Second World War that formal training schools for men
and women began. On-the-job training in the needle trade was
offered to veterans who could earn \$50.00 to a \$100.00 a week for
forty hours. (Herald News 3/1/46) Public School Superintendent
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The Manpower Act of 1962 provided various training programs throughout the country. It came into conflict with the union in this area. The union did not want federal monies from the government for a needle trade program. The union feared that such a program in the South would hurt the industry up here. There is frequently a lot of conflict between union, management, and



—Herald News Photos
SEWING OF WOMEN'S GARMENTS A MAN'S JOB: These scenes taken yesterday at the Century Sportswear Co. in Boston, nationally known producer of women's clothes, proves that the finest tailored garments in the world are sewed by men. Thirty-two male sewing machine operators, shown in the lower photo, earn from \$50 to \$100 for a 40-hour week.

...and had the Sisters of Charity from Quebec to operate the day care center. (Herald News 4/3/70)

The Manpower Act of 1962 provided various training programs throughout the country. It came into conflict with the union in this area. The union did not want federal monies from the government for a needle trade program. The union feared that such a program in the South would hurt the industry up here. There is frequently a lot of conflict between union, management, and government. Industry does not take advantage of seminars that are offered. Yet in order to be competitive, management needs high tech equipment. Management needs to understand state of the art equipment and modern methods.

Darwood Manufacturing received federal help for a job training program called TAP (Trades Action Program), given through CEBA. (Herald News 5/16/77) During this time period, Darwood Manufacturing employed approximately 500 people. In 1985, management sold shares of the company to its employees; forty people chipped in a sum of \$500.00 each. They are now in co-ownership. The factory employs approximately forty people, who are working in three shifts. They are affiliated with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. The merger of the Needle Trade Association and the New England Apparel Manufacturers Association took place. Each association had a number of factories within their association. The merger had a total of forty firms. This was done to better benefit their members. The association was created to fight inequities.

Mr. Santoro, from the Chamber of Commerce, and Aaron Mittleman, president and executive director of the New England Apparel Manufacturing Association Inc., worked together to try to set up a consortium consisting of ten manufacturers to erect a 300,000 square foot mill complex at a cost of three million dollars. Each of the factories would be located in one combined factory. Instead of renting spaces at other buildings, they would be renting one building. (Herald News 11/19/69) The complex received backing from the city for land approval. (Herald News 2/4/70)

In the 1970's, there was a dire need for child care which would allow mothers to be able to work. Tioga Sportswear became Southeastern Massachusetts operators by the association. Federal funds of one million dollars were obtained for nationwide distribution. There were to be fifteen hundred people trained for a fourteen week period of on the job training. Mr. Mittleman hoped to train a minimum of five hundred people in this city over the life of the contract. The association and the corporation

When the needle trade was in trouble again, Mr. Mittleman stepped in to help get a \$15,000 government approval for a training program at Diman Vocational High School. (Herald News 9/1/76) In February, the garment industry tried to get help from CETA (Comprehensive Employment Training Act), but this was only a hope. (Herald News 4/19/77)

Darwood Manufacturing received federal help for a job training program called TAP (Trades Action Program), given through CETA. (Herald News 5/16/77) During this time period, Darwood Manufacturing employed approximately 500 people. In 1985, management sold shares of the company to its employees; forty people chipped in a sum of \$500.00 each. They are now in co-ownership. The firm employs approximately forty people, who are now working for themselves. They are affiliated with the amalgamated union.

Merging of the Needle Trade Association and the New England Apparel Manufacturers Association took place. Each association had a number of factories within their association. The merger had a total of forty firms. This was done to better benefit their members. The association was created to fight inequities.

(Herald News 4/27/77) A one year contract was signed to train Southeastern Massachusetts operators by the association. Federal funds of one million dollars were obtained for nationwide distribution. There were to be fifteen hundred people trained for a fourteen week period of on the job training. Mr. Mittleman hoped to train a minimum of five hundred people in this city over the life of the contract. The association and the corporation

were to contribute \$784.00 each for the training and wages of prospective operators. Employers who participated had to provide material, machines, and supervising personnel. Trainees started at \$3.20 per hour. People who completed the program earned an average of \$4.50 to \$5.00 per hour, fringe benefits, paid holidays, three weeks paid vacations, the use of the I.L.G.W.U., and, last but not least, retirement benefits. (Herald News 8/16/79)

Under a new contract with amalgamated and textile unions, three hundred workers were trained for better jobs. It was funded by Title 3 of the CETA program. Training was set up for minority groups, women, veterans, and persons with language difficulties. They were trained for occupations such as dyers, weavers, loom fixers, rotary mechanics, and knitters. Under previous union contracts, more than one thousand persons were trained through May of 1980. (Herald News 5/80)

Aaron Mittleman, trying to revitalize the apparel industry, met with state officials hoping to have a successor to the CETA program. They had hoped the consortium would be their answer. A plan was developed for a training center and job placement; people being trained had to be able to find work once training was completed. It was hoped that federal, state, and local government would cooperate with people living in this area to help fill jobs. (Herald News 3/21/85 page 4) The Dukakis administration wanted to help Southeastern Massachusetts; the plan would help promote economic growth. It was one of four proposals across the state.

few monies to accomplish anything else. They had hoped to find monies from other funds. (Herald News 11/21/85 page 15)

A state grant of \$40,000 to develop a preliminary proposal for a comprehensive NTAP (Needle Trade Action Program) was announced by Mayor Carlton Viveiros. The city received \$30,800 to aid the needle trade industry with the NTAP; the full proposal was for \$120,000. The project was guided by a fifteen member board of directors comprised of equal representation from labor, management, and community. (Herald News 6/12/85 page 2)

Southeastern Massachusetts was a model for the rest of the country with this grant. This grant was coordinated by Mr. Hughes and Mr. Calkins, executive director of the Bristol County Training Consortium. A budget for grant monies was drawn up. (Herald News 5/23/85 page 6) It gave the city job opportunities and should improve the viability of the needle trade. Mr. Mittleman felt the program would incorporate sufficient training for the work force and quality day care centers. "A seed has been planted," said Patricia Hanratly, executive director of the State Industrial Service Program. The consortium was hoping to receive the full \$120,000 annually for the program. (Herald News 6/13/85 page 1) A subcommittee had to submit a final proposal. The approval of the plan was to pave the way for additional monies, \$100,000 to \$200,000. This was to be used for staff and to hire consultants. (Herald News 8/13/85) Members of the NTAP planned to meet with executives of the Offices of Labor and Economics to redefine their budget request. Their request was for \$649,200 which was slashed to \$210,000. Members said they needed \$120,000 just to pay staff salaries which would leave too

few monies to accomplish anything else. They had hoped to find monies from other funds. (Herald News 11/21/85 page 15)

The panel explored ways to use monies from the \$30,800 to help the industry. Topping the list was a dire need for training workers in more than one or two skills in the industry. Mr. Mittleman brought up the needle trade vocational training now being offered at the high school. An evening course was suggested. David Horowitz wanted a needle trade center to train workers in child care, administration, payroll accounting, marketing, trucking, and numerous other jobs that help the industry.

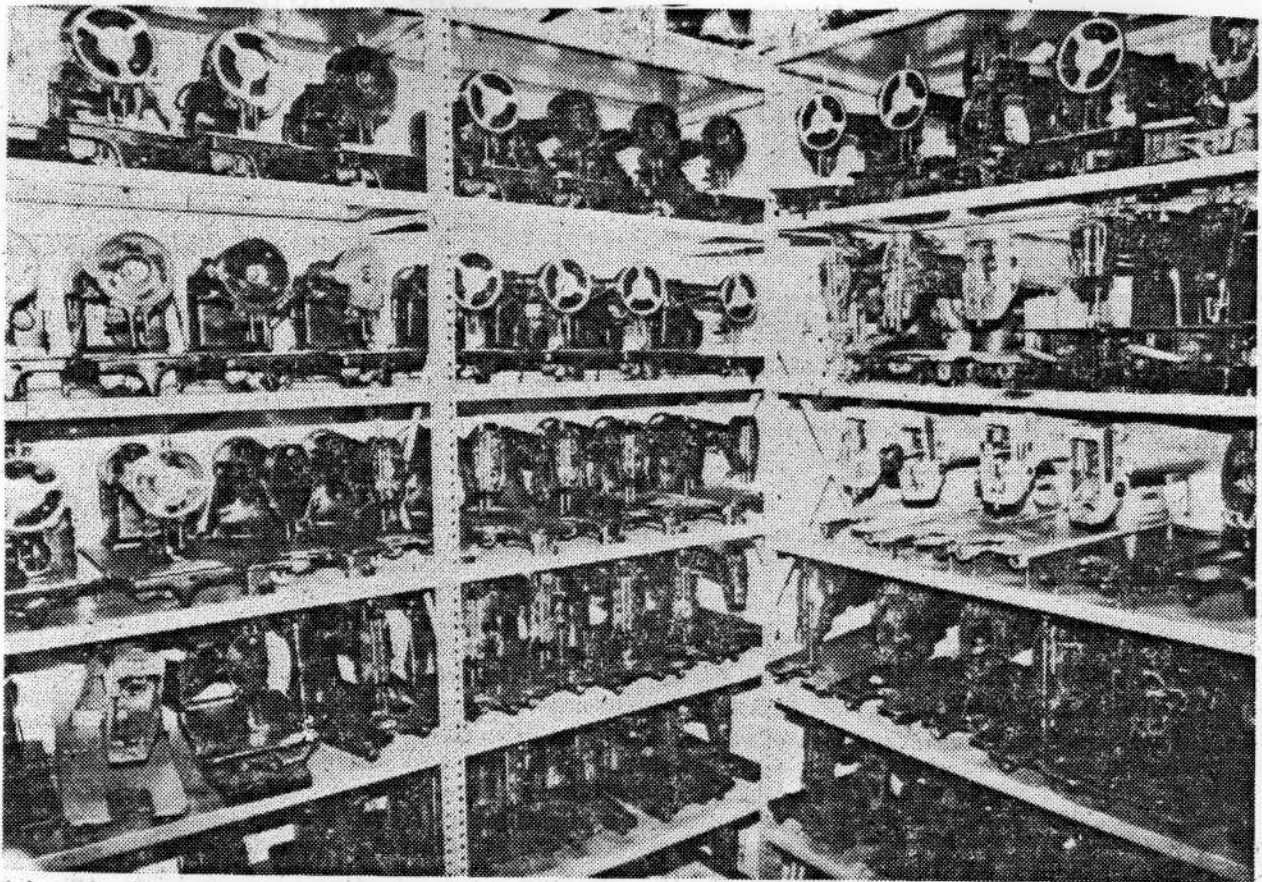
The NTAP did not materialize, because of conflict between union, management, and government. The needle trade industry felt that government had not been faithful by allowing more imports to come into the country. Management did not want to adhere to government and its subsidies with its demands. The state of Pennsylvania passed a bill which enables management to obtain low interest loans for new equipment and refurbishing their factories in order to be in a competitive market. Mr. Tom Norton, Senator from Fall River, is now in the process of trying to get a similar bill passed in congress for Massachussetts. It will help the industry, but management will have to cooperate. Direct contact is what is needed. The public has to be sold on the idea that working in a factory is not a stigma, and a person can maintain a home and support a family on that type of an income.

Headline: DURFEE HIGH PRODUCES VALUABLE WORKERS FOR NEEDLE TRADE. Mr. Edward Lambert had been a sewing machine mechanic in a factory for thirty-five years, and has been teaching at Durfee since 1979. He trains students in the mechanics and operations of the needle industry. He stated that, "We can move mountains together if we try."



Edward Lambert, a 35-year sewing machine mechanic veteran, stands in his expanded classroom at B.M.C. Durfee High School, surrounded by thousands of dollars of equipment donated by area needle trades companies.

Mr. Lambert, and Mr. Cabral, who also teaches sewing machine mechanics at the school, were anxious to help put into effect a proposed training plan. Together they have obtained hundreds of machines from factory owners in the industry. Through the efforts of the school department, the industry, and the teachers, an extensive program was developed in which students are given hands-on training in the classroom and in various factories. Upon graduation, students who are devoted to the trade can make a comfortable living. (Herald News 9/1/85 Sunday Supplement)



Hundreds of sewing machines are nestled away in a closet of the training center for sewing machine mechanics at B.M.C. Durfee High School. Students who successfully complete the vocational program are required to pinpoint a problem with a machine and have it up and running in 15 minutes, the amount of time required by union workers in the area mills.

Herald News Photos By Hank Pollard

There are approximately 70 students in the ISMM (Industrial Sewing Machine Mechanics) day program at Durfee. Juniors and Seniors are involved in a co-op program. Seventy-five per cent of the students who have taken the course are involved in the needle trade industry. An advanced Industrial Sewing Machine Mechanics course is available in the evening to anyone interested in sewing machines. The fee is \$70 for a fifteen week course, two nights a week, Monday and Wednesday evenings. The course is given at Durfee High School. Mr. Lambert and Mr. Cabral are very enthusiastic about this program, which they hope will train individuals to foster the needle trade industry in the Fall River and New Bedford areas.



Robert J. Hay, President of Lord Jeff Knitting, blasted the

Feder Imports have always been a major part of the economy in the United States. Textile imports have greatly affected the Hong industry in this area; the exports in the industry are minor compared to the imports. It is only recently that a consortium has been created to help obtain overseas contracts, thereby creating exports in the industry.

In 1985, Max F. Gold, of Essex Manufacturing Incorporated,

trav In the seventies, clothing workers across the nation banded together to protest imports. Congress was urged by days a Representative Margaret Heckler, from Massachusetts, to help curb textile imports. (Herald News 3/19/70) Japan, they had a high

quality of work, and workers were paid an average of \$4.00 an

hour. In April of 1977, union members and workers rallied and demonstrated at government center where Massachusetts Governor Dukakis, and civic leaders were meeting to discuss the effects of imports. (Herald News 4/14/77) Since 1972, the country had lost a million jobs in the textile and apparel industry due to imports. Congress wanted to require strict enforcement of past trade agreements. (Herald News 2/24/85 page 4) Korea, Taiwan,

and Hong Kong were affected by reduction quotas of 30% for

import By the year 1980, various factories began closing their doors due to the impact of imports. Representative Barney Frank joined the battle to restrict textile imports. Legislation initiated by Congressman Ed Jenkins would limit the increase on imports each year to 6% of the total volume of imports, roll back imports to the 1983 level, and close loopholes that were allowing substantially higher levels to occur. There were 130 members who

supported the proposed measure. (Herald News 4/6/85 page 6)
Robert J. Hay, President of Lord Jeff Knitting, blasted the federal government for failing to come to the aid of the industry which was suffering from imports. He stated that Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan were no longer third world nations. They were fully developed nations that were hurting us, not with bombs, but with imports. (Herald News 4/26/85 pages 1 & 6)

In 1985, Max F. Gold, of Essex Manufacturing Incorporated, travelled overseas and observed that in Taiwan, women worked for fifty cents an hour, ten hours a day, twenty-eight days a month. Unmarried girls were housed in a building next door and their pay was sent home to parents. In Japan, they had a high quality of work, and workers were paid an average of \$4.00 an hour. (Herald News 7/7/85)

On December 4, 1985, the textile and garment industry won a victory in the House of Representatives with the passage of legislation that pushed back import quotas to 1984 levels. Barney Frank said, "The senate bill reduces quotas on textile garment and shoe industry imports to 1984 levels." Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong were affected by reduction quotas of 30% for imports from Korea and Taiwan and 21% coming from Hong Kong. (Herald News 12/4/85 page 2) In 1986, the U. S. planned to cut imports of polyester fabric from Japan by 50%. Mr. Mittleman, president and executive director of the New England Apparel Manufacturing Association Inc., stated that for months, representatives of the textile and apparel industry had warned that trans-shipping had become widespread in order to subvert the

international trade agreement. In the previous twelve months, imports of polyester from Japan were nearly 186 million square yards. The new quota was set at 100 million square yards, a 54% reduction. Square yards are measured whether they come in as manufactured goods or in rolls. (Herald News 10/4/86) A good example of this is when the U.S. - Japanese textile agreement expired. South Korean manufacturers began shipping fabric to the U.S. through Japan in order to subvert the quota on South Korea which remained in effect. All totaled, Japan shipped 800 million square yards of textiles to the U.S. in the following twelve months.

President Reagan vetoed the limit to import quotas on manufacturing goods. Mr. Tom Norton, Senator from Fall River, feels that a tariff should be put on clothing imports. That would put the Asian market in competition with the U. S. A tariff is mandatory on wine, cheese and other articles, but not on clothing. The apparel industry needs a tariff in order to have a fair market price. We do not export clothing so we must try to sell it to the American public which is hard to do, because people now shop for price. This puts us in competition with other countries. If people shop for a label; they are buying from a third party jobber. Mr. Norton feels that labels are the key to the garment trade. The apparel industry here looks to New York for their labels. If we could make a Massachusetts label we could lower our prices, because we would not have to deal with New York; if we have our own entity we could better control our apparel industry.

In August of 1985, the Coca Cola Co. advertised their "All American Line." It was to be manufactured by Murjani International, Macao and Hong Kong but, not by the firms in the U.S. Mr. Mittleman lambasted the Coca Cola Co. for their venture into imports. (Herald News 8/18/85 page A1) In response to the Coca Cola Co., Mr. Mittleman called for a coke "Tea Party." Both Mr. Eustace, Secretary of State, and Governor Dukakis supported Mr. Mittleman in his protest. Coca Cola Co. decided to consider that probably they would go partially with domestic goods. This would have meant a contract of one million dollars, with twenty million going for labor related expenses. Mr. Mittleman stressed the importance of the NTAP (Needle Trade Action Program). (Herald News 8/26/85 pages 1 & 6)



Chief Little Horse of Westport, a former textile worker, participated in the "Coca-Cola tea party" Saturday afternoon at Heritage State Park, protesting Coke's new sportswear line manufactured overseas.

Herald News Photo By Hank Pollard

HEADLINE: COCA COLA GETS DUMPED. Approximately 75 people gathered at Heritage State Park. Some were dressed as Indians,

The real thing' gets dumped

shirts were made available to the people present. Herald News

Sunday Herald News, September 1, 1985.



A facsimile of a Coca-Cola vending machine sails over the heads Saturday of participants in the "tea party" protest of Coke's overseas sportswear production. Some 75 people, many of them textile workers, crammed the walkway at Heritage State Park to take part in dumping the "real thing" into the Taunton River.

Herald News Photo By Hank Pollard

Co. is the only contract local firm received from the Coke line. we did not receive any contract for the "American line." The Coca

Cola HEADLINE: COCA COLA GETS DUMPED. Approximately 75 people gathered at Heritage State Park. Some were dressed as indians, joined by Chief Little Horse of Westport, who was a union member and early organizer. They dumped six cases of Coke and a cardboard Coke machine into the Taunton River. Free Pepsi, and T shirts were made available to the people present. (Herald News 9/1/85 page A1)

In November, the NTAP received a sample shipment of T shirts, sweatshirts, and outerwear to inspect. They had to report back on whether those items could be produced locally at competitive prices. This would represent 70 - 75% of Coke's new line. This stemmed from Murjani International Limited, the firm that coordinated the Coca Cola sportline. They had a three year contract with the company. The mayor hoped they would spread the work around. He stated, "The Coca Cola Co. Has a moral obligation to use local manufacturers." (Herald News 11/15/85 page 1) On January 9th, 1986 (Herald News 1/9/86 pages 1 & 6) Tom Norton, Mayor Viveiros, W.D. Spirito, chairman of the NTAP, met with Coca Cola executives in Atlanta. Coke sent officials with NTAP to convince Murjani Co. to share the contract. There would be less profits, but it would mean 42 weeks of work for 250 people.

The reason the Coca Cola Co. gave the contract to Murjani Co. is because they are an Asian based firm and do not have to pay a tariff on the clothing; therefore they can sell at a lower price than our firms. The sleeping bag logo for the Coca Cola Co. is the only contract local firms received from the Coke Line, we did not receive any contract for the "American Line." The Coca

EPILOGUE

Cola Co. did however donate five million dollars to Mr. Roger Milliken, chairman of the Craft it with Pride program, to help the program.

We never know what tomorrow holds, and on January 12, 1987, tragedy struck. On an early Monday morning, the Kerr Thread complex, which housed various businesses, was engulfed in flames.

The city of Fall River is one of seventeen communities nationwide that are members of the CDTG (Community Development Trading Group) based in Newport, Rhode Island. It is a non-profit consortium created to increase the export of American-made products to strengthen local economies. The city, through its membership, helped secure a contract for Korber Hats to export hats to a merchandiser based in Milan, Italy. Korber will produce and export 550 hats of various styles. One of the hats was seen on the T.V. show "Simon & Simon." (Herald News 11/26/86 page 6) Just as we banded together to help curb imports, the industry must band together to help our exports. At one time we were the wealthiest country in imports and exports; today we are at the bottom of the totem pole in exports to other countries. Mr. Mittleman feels that we export approximately only 2% of our industry which is very minor when you consider the amount of import %. Mr. Norton feels that a label would help; we can make all fashions and need the label to sell our product to other countries and to advertise where these fashions come from, in order to make us competitive in the overseas market. If this country doesn't work to be the best another country will.

The future does hold hope for everyone who believes in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

DI EPILOGUE

The We never know what tomorrow holds, and on January 12, 1987, tragedy struck. On an early Monday morning, the Kerr Thread complex, which housed various businesses, was engulfed in flames.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS: From the Fall River Herald News unless otherwise

wise The Kerr Thread began as a mill in the 1800s. As the mills closed, it ventured into the apparel industry. Then as time went on, it also ventured into the retail business.

3/17/33 3/22/52
It held jobs in one aspect or another for approximately 1,000 people. Everyone felt a loss, not only for the economy, but also for a way of life in this community. As in the past, the struggle to survive for a community took precedence. The American way of life brought people together once more. Government, Union, management, workers and the community banded together to help one another. 4/3/70

1/3/48 6/18/70
By March of 1987, at least three of the plants that were devastated by the fire have re-opened at other locations. Plans are in the making to build a new factory where the old one once stood. Workers are very enthusiastic about being in their "second home," with their "families."

2/9/35 6/12/74
The future does hold hope for everyone who believes in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. 5/26/76

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