

## Cincinnati Industry: Women Were There

Lynn Estomin  
Andrea Kornbluh

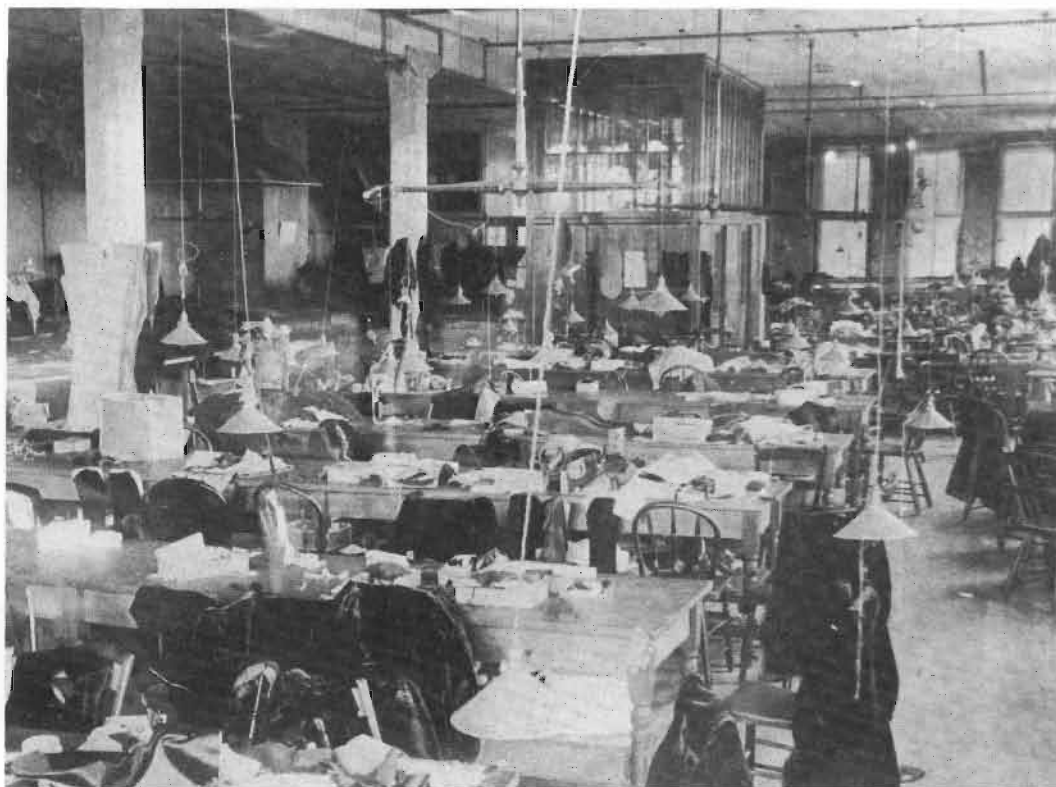
Cincinnati working women have contributed much to the growth of the city's industry, but the story of that contribution has yet to be told in full. The goal of this photo essay is to initiate the collection of evidence about the role of women in the industrial development of Cincinnati and to acknowledge the fact that working women have always been an integral part of the economy. The following quotations about the garment industry illustrate this:

*Some of the largest fortunes in the city amassed in business have come out of clothing.*

1901 Chamber of Commerce and Merchants Exchange.  
*Cincinnati, The Queen City.*

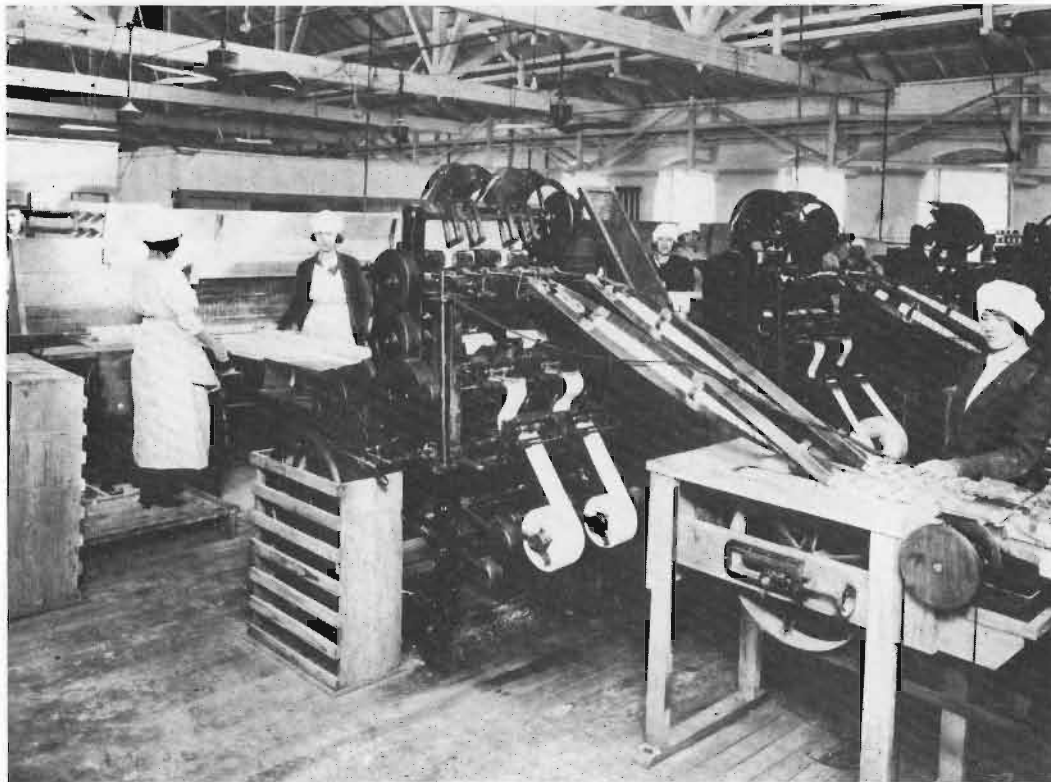
*The value of the manufacture of clothing returned in the New York census of 1855, for the city of New York, did not equal that of Cincinnati in 1857... of the nine thousand persons now engaged in it at least seven thousand are women with children the only resource they have for the profitable employment of their spare time. The condition of these women has frequently been the subject of earnest inquiry by benevolent persons...*

Women garment workers provided the basis of Cincinnati Manufacturing fortunes, little recognition in the way of photographic record remains.



Empty garment shop/  
Burkhardt's clothing.

Lynn Estomin, a photographer and graphic designer, and Andrea Tuttle Kornbluh, a graduate student in history, are founding members of the Women's Film Project.

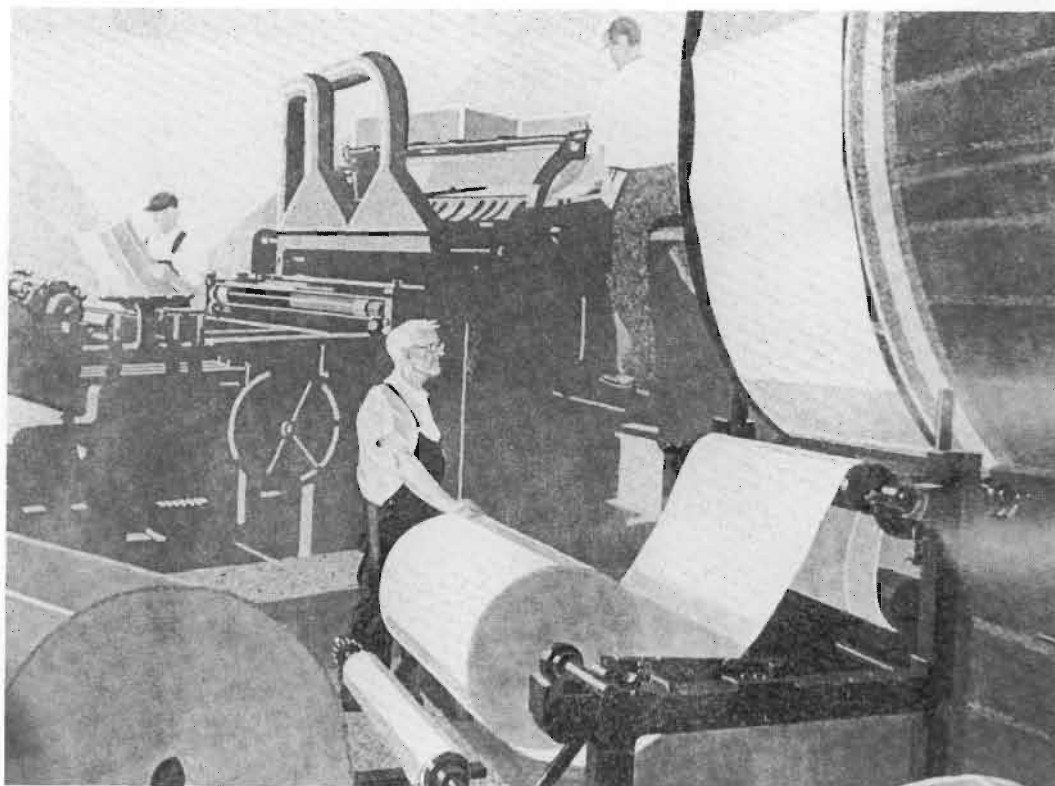
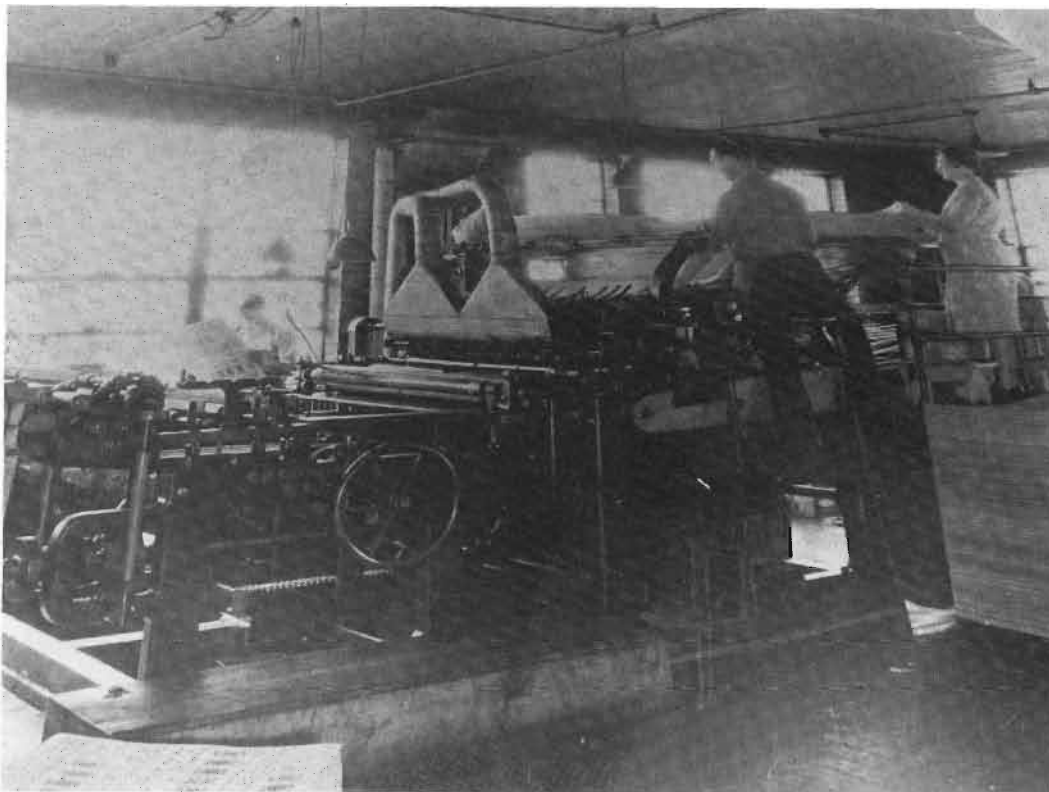


In the 1850's Cincinnati, known as "Porkopolis," was the principal hog market in the world. By the 1930's Kahn's had become the city's leading meat packer and the twelfth largest in the country. The

photograph above shows male and female workers at Kahn's doing the same job.

The making of soap was considered to be a woman's task during the pioneer days. By the 1880's soap manufacture was one of the city's leading industries, and soap manufacturers continued to employ

the labor of women. In 1881 Procter and Gamble employed 20,944 men and 3,495 women, paying \$ 1.69 for men and ninety-one cents for women.

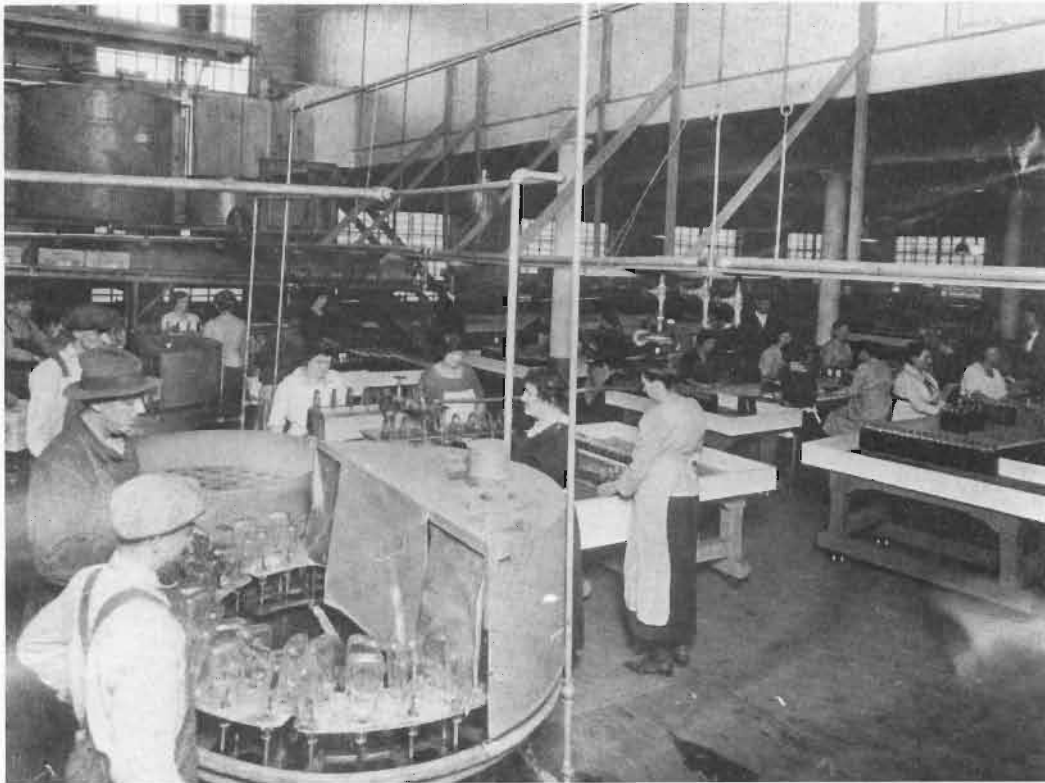


One of the two study photographs Winold Reiss used to design the U.S. Playing Card Mural. The woman loading the press has been eliminated in the mural. She is covered by the press and paper roll taken

from the other study photograph. U.S. Playing Card Company was founded in 1880 and by 1907 had become the leading playing card producer in the country.

This mural is one of fourteen mosaic murals depicting industry in Cincinnati which were designed by Reiss for the Cincinnati Union Terminal Train Concourse. The murals dramatize the contributions of work-

ing people to Cincinnati's leading industries, however they fail to even record the presence of women or the role of Blacks in Cincinnati's industry.

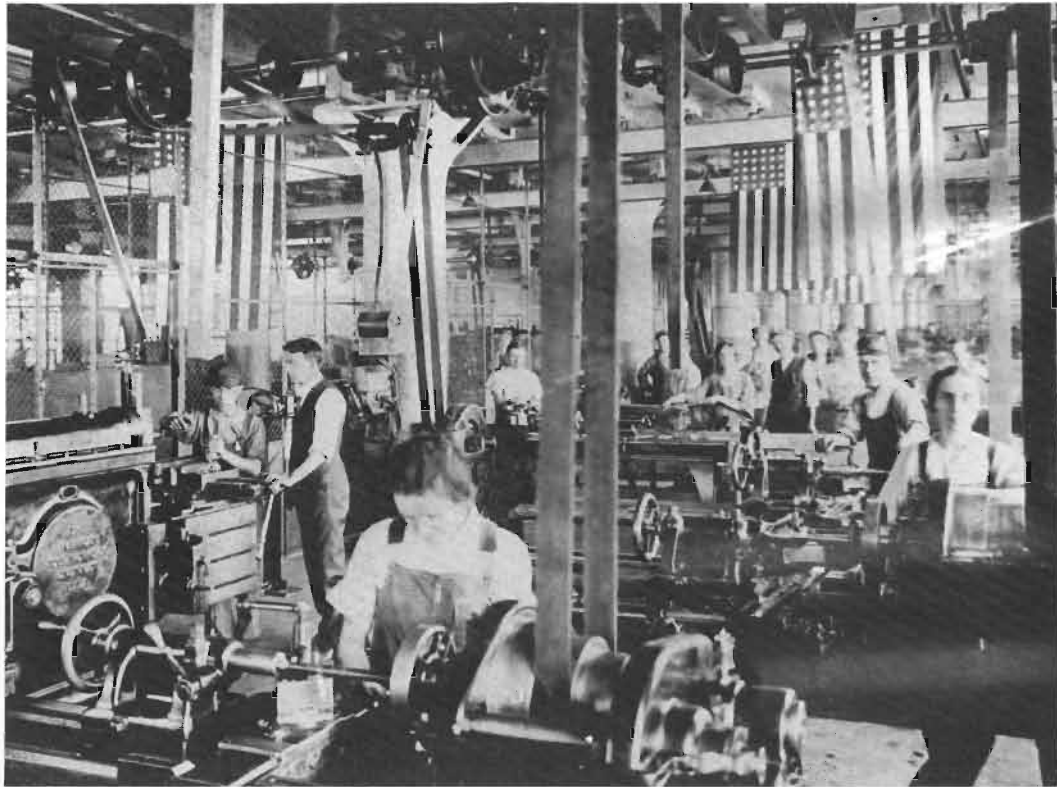


Women were employed by Cincinnati distilleries both before and after prohibition. In the 1930's the National Distilleries Plant was the second largest distillery in the country. It was the leading producer of

gin and sloe gin in the world.

This is one side of a memorial by employees of Procter & Gamble to the last Procter/Gamble head of the company. Employees collected the money, planned the marble memorial, and hired the artist, Ernest Bruce Haswell, to exe-

cute it in the late 1930's. The memorial depicts the employees of Procter & Gamble and memorializes the contributions of women workers as well as men to the building of Procter & Gamble.



Cincinnati is a world center for machine tool products. During World War I, with the shortage of manpower, women went to work in the plant on machines for the first time. American Tool did well during

the war using women's labor. "However much havoc it wrought with modern civilization, the war was good for the Cincinnati Machine Tool industry, which in more than one way went to the front." (Federal

Writers' Project, "They Built A City") After the war women at American Tool lost their production jobs.