

to spend a quiet hour cheerfully, comfortably and peacefully! Room for the enthusiastic, energetic people of all ages who demand only lively entertainment of any kind, safe from the seducing power of drink

### WHAT LOUISVILLE DID FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

Harris Ginsburg  
Cincinnati

Louisville was somewhat reluctant in admitting the existence of an unemployment problem. For a time the idea was entertained by some men of affairs that the unemployment was of a momentary nature, or at its worst—characteristic of the “won’t work,” casual and transient classes; but the ever-increasing demand on philanthropic agencies, the cases of distress frequently brought to the attention of church organization and other social agencies, forced the community to take some action.

A Mayor’s Committee on Unemployment, consisting of twenty-five citizens representing the different social strata, was brought into existence, whose duty it was to ascertain the extent of the situation and to provide ways and means for its handling. Louisville could not follow the more modern course pursued by other communities in meeting the same emergency through issuance of bonds, as the State law provides a popular approval at the regular election; the committee was therefore compelled to use the less modern and less dignified way in providing funds by a subscription. This stumbling block afforded by the State law would have thrown off the immediate practical work of the committee for some time were it not for the magnanimity of a well-known, public-spirited citizen, who guaranteed a \$20,000 fund. This guarantee was well taken both by the Mayor’s Committee and the city administration, which was to advance the money on the pay roll, and cleared the way for immediate practical work.

The ridiculous helplessness of American communities to utilize the labor power, when such is forced on them, on some useful field where the results would be lasting and of tremendous value to the community, is characteristic. All that goes to make up the physical part of a city—

and disorder! And room, too, for the more sober portion of our neighborhoods who would gather in friendly council and debate and make effort to impress their fellow-citizens with the worth of good citizenship!

the building of roads, the paving of streets, the construction of canals, the laying out of parks, etc.—are let to contract by private firms, leaving to the city a limited insignificant sphere which dwarfs her activities in exploiting her surplus labor power, even when that power is gratuitously offered to her.

Louisville was no exception in this respect. There was no other way of employing the unemployed, except in sweeping the streets, under the supervision of the Street Cleaning Department, which furnishes the supervision and teams, the latter at a cost of \$8552 from the city funds.

A sub-committee of seven was intrusted with the supervision over the registration bureau, which later assumed the name of the Public Free Employment Bureau. The Bureau was given quarters in the City Hall, and registration centers were opened in almost every police station, a situation which made it possible for an applicant to register as many as five times, and caused duplication of assignments before a working system was introduced.

During the month of February the community responded to the call for help very generously. Contributions were forthcoming from individuals and firms very lively. In the earlier part of March the subscriptions slackened up, coming almost to a standstill toward the latter part of the month, when the fund reached the \$19,000 mark. From the reports of the different teams it seemed as if the civic body had exhausted its financial vitality, awaiting the injection of some stimulant. This stimulant came in the form of a motion from a member of the Mayor’s Committee to copy Chicago, which succeeded in realizing \$10,000 one afternoon from newspapers sold by prominent citizens, who in their remote “knickerbockers” made their first dollars in

newspaper business. The idea was enthusiastically supported by the rest of the members; a publicity campaign was immediately launched; a date was set, and the drafting of “newsies” squads was begun. The pulpit, the bar, the “captains of industry,” the M. D. and Ph. D. were well represented in those squads. On this occasion, which served as a “revival” for Louisville in general and for the participants in particular, a sum of about \$4000 was realized, bringing the total of the Unemployment Fund to \$22,914.31. The prices received for a single paper were from a nickel to a \$100 check, the slogan being “no change.”

Of the amount raised, \$566.80, or about 2.5 per cent, was paid in salaries to the office help for administering this fund; \$460.30 was donated to Salvation Army for “Bundle Day” movement; \$19,585.26 was paid in wages to the unemployed for cleaning the streets, and the remainder, a little over \$2000, was appropriated for the further maintenance of the Employment Bureau.

As to the number of unemployed in Louisville, approximate figures were offered from 1000 to 8000. The actual number registered with the Bureau for work, from February 1st, the day of its opening, to April 10th, the day of its closing as a relief station, was 2767 males and 427 females. A classification of the whole number by trades would be very interesting. Unfortunately, during the first two weeks, before a proper record system was introduced, many applicants answering the crude question “what can you do?” registered their trade as “anything”—a statement impossible to permit of classification. From the number properly recorded, it is to be seen that laborers predominated, comprising 54 per cent, farm hands 7 per cent, drivers 6 per cent, handymen 4 per cent, carpenters 4 per cent, paperhangers and plasterers 2 per cent, clerks 2 per cent, firemen 2 per cent, engineers 2 per cent, porters 2 per cent, machinists 1.5 per cent, molders 1.5 per cent, cooks 1.5 per cent, cement workers 1.5 per cent, bricklayers and masons 1 per cent, blacksmiths 1 per cent, and 8 per cent for all other trades.

In administering the fund to the needy, the Bureau was guided by police investigations and the endorsement of social agencies or trustworthy individuals. The police in-

vestigations revealed 141 cases in 1870, or about 7.5 per cent, unworthy of assistance. Drunkenness and non-support figured prominently as reasons for declaring a case unworthy.

Seventeen hundred and twenty-nine men were benefited by the Unemployment Fund. A classification of these beneficiaries with respect to their family units and the average amount earned by them shows that:

Number Men	Number Dependents	Average Earned
170	0	\$ 8.81
405	1	11.31
363	2	12.46
226	3	14.46
142	4	13.16
94	5	14.68
53	6	14.46
31	7	19.28
21	8	18.10
5	9	13.55
3	10	11.86
216	“no card”	4.17
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1729		

The largest portion of the fund was shared by the groups with dependents from one to six, the average size of the American family. The reason that few families with nine and ten dependents earned a smaller average than those with less dependents is due to the fact that in a large family there are usually several wage-earners, thus relieving distress to some extent and exempting the family from the “in urgent need” class.

The 170 cases with no dependents, who were benefited by the fund, were made up of those exceptional cases mentioned before, and those who benefited by mistakes made in handling the problem in the early period of the Bureau’s existence.

The “no card” group also belongs to the earlier period of the Bureau’s existence, and indicates beneficiaries who did not register with the Bureau at all. These were recruited by the Street Cleaning Department early in the day to fill the gaps caused by those who failed to report or reported late for work.

A classification of the 1729 cases, with reference to their period of idleness, shows that:

	No.	Per Cent
Less than 1 month.....	345	23.7
Less than 2 months.....	458	31.4
Less than 3 months.....	254	17.
Less than 4 months.....	129	9.
Less than 5 months.....	97	6.6
Less than 6 months.....	54	3.7
Less than 7 months.....	27	1.8
Less than 8 months.....	16	1.1
More than 8 months.....	16	5.2
Unknown .....	273	

Two hundred and seventy, or about 18 per cent, were unemployed for a period of idleness of four months and more. These were not of the "won't work" class. In the majority of cases idleness was due to advanced age.

As to the length of residence in Louisville the 1729 cases classify as follows:

	No.	Per Cent
Born in Louisville.....	348	23.
Less than one year.....	65	4.3
One year.....	37	2.6
Two years.....	88	5.8
Three years.....	88	5.8
Four years.....	45	3.
Five years.....	66	4.35
Six years.....	37	2.6
Seven years.....	35	2.3
Eight years.....	29	2.
Nine years.....	8	.05
Ten years.....	47	3.2
Longer.....	620	41.
Not known.....	216	
	1729	100.

Only 4.3 per cent of the applicants had not acquired a legal residence in Louisville, which indicates that the overwhelming mass of the unemployed was not composed of the hobo or migratory worker, and that the community was justified in making an effort to offer a helping hand to those who in their daily pursuits had contributed to its welfare.

A classification of cases with full records according to nativity and birthplaces shows: Native white 70 per cent, colored 14 per cent, German 8 per cent, Irish 1.7 per cent,

English 1.1 per cent, French 0.5 per cent, Russian 0.6 per cent, Austrian 1.7 per cent, Asiatic Turkey 1.1 per cent, Switzerland 0.6 per cent, and Italian 6.6 per cent.

The large percentage of the native-born is interpreted by the constituency of Louisville's population, which consists of but a small percentage of foreigners.

Though from the very beginning the presumption was that the Bureau would be purely relief, and of temporary nature, its activities came to an end with that of the Unemployment Fund. An attempt was made to find employment with firms and individuals. An appeal to employers through the press, personal letters and calls resulted in placing 187 men and 46 women. A tabulation of positions filled shows: Male—apprentices and boys 4, clerks 2, carriage woodworker 1, carpenters 4, cement workers 3, cooks 2, day workers 52, dish washers 2, drivers 3, elevator operator 1, factory workers 3, farm and dairy hands 28, fireman 1, gardeners 2, handy men 7, janitor 1, laborers 50, painters, paper-hangers and plasterers 10, solicitors 2, tinner 1, tobacco stemmers 4, all others 3. Female—cooks 2, day workers 9, factory workers 9, general houseworkers 9, housekeepers 5, housemaid 1, laundress 1, sales-ladies 2, seamstresses 6, stenographer 1, all others 1. In addition to the above, 75 women were given temporary employment at the "Bundle Day" shop under the auspices of the Salvation Army.

These various placements comprise 60 per cent of the total requisitions for male help and 34 per cent female help placed with the Bureau. No excuse could be offered for the low percentage of placements of female help, excepting the statement that of the non-filled positions 36 per cent fall in the "domestic service" classification and 15 per cent were in canvassing and soliciting lines. A large number of those placed in domestic service were placed out of town.

Of the 40 per cent of the positions for males left unfilled the Bureau accounts for them in the following manner: In one instance, where the requisition comprised 15 per cent of the total number of openings, the Bureau made no attempt to fill the vacancies when it learned the wage offered was below standard. In another instance,

comprising 14 per cent of the total number of openings, the positions were not filled due to a misunderstanding on the part of the employer who failed to make arrangements with the foreman in charge of a gang. In still another instance, comprising 3 per cent of the total number of openings, the call for help was canceled; thus 8 per cent of the positions unfilled were due to the fact that the Bureau failed "to find the right man for the right job."

Painstaking care was exercised by the Bureau in placing farm help. If an employment bureau justifies its existence by bringing together the city man with the city job, its value is emphasized when it succeeds in bringing together the farm hand with the farm. The Bureau succeeded in placing 28 farm and dairy hands, 70 per cent, with fully 10 per cent pending, not heard from, at the Bureau's close as a relief station.

It is probably opportune to mention here that the farm was looked upon as a test of

the unemployment problem. It was the belief of many that unemployment would have no footing, in Louisville at least, if the masses would turn to the soil. Accordingly, about 500 "help wanted" cards were mailed to farmers and land owners within a radius of fifty miles, asking them to fill out same and return to the Bureau, the result of which was one reply.

On the other hand, the requests for labor received from the farmers with whom the 28 cases of farm help were placed, bore witness of the difficulties they underwent in getting the right kind of help.

The Bureau in its short-lived period emphasized the fact, for Louisville at least, that a well-trained, disinterested municipal employment bureau would be of inestimable value both to the city and its unemployed; but the none too satisfactory placement of farm labor demonstrated that the problem of the unemployed, particularly of the unskilled, cannot be solved by the so-often prescribed movement "back to the soil."

## RELATION OF INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS TO CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

By Charles Strull

Certain as it is that this country, although at peace, has felt the effects of industrial depression in the past year, it is equally certain that there has been an over-indulgence in "calamity talk." The psychic effect upon some people of "hard times" scares, frequently, results in increasing business stagnation to an extent not justified by the true economic conditions. It is undoubtedly true that part of the industrial crisis which is generally prevailing throughout the country has been caused in this way.

The most palpable effect of this crisis which has come to the attention of social workers has been the unusual extent of unemployment, with its concomitant results, poverty and suffering, resulting in a drain upon the resources of charitable organizations to their fullest limit.

At the suggestion of the editor of JEWISH CHARITIES the writer sent out a questionnaire to about fifty Jewish charity organizations with a view of ascertaining the

effect it has had upon the budgets and activities of these organizations. The following questions were propounded:

(1) Has your organization suffered a reduction in receipts during the past year? If so, how much?

(2) Have you met with a deficit? How much?

(3) Is your deficit due to a decrease in income or an increase in expenditures, or both?

(4) What has your organization done, or what does it contemplate doing, to remedy the situation, such as soliciting increased subscriptions or new subscriptions, or raising money in any other way?

(5) Please state what success you have had in meeting your deficit, and in what manner your extra funds were raised?

(6) Has the industrial depression affected your subscriptions to any considerable extent?

(7) Have the solicitations for funds by the American Jewish Relief Committee or