

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classifications, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Yale Union Laundry Building

other names/site number Yale Laundry Building/ Perfect Fit Manufacturing

2. Location

street & number 800 SE 10th Avenue not for publication

city or town Portland vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97214

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide _____ locally.

Signature of certifying official/Title - Deputy SHPO _____ Date _____

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

____ entered in the National Register
____ See continuation sheet. _____

____ determined eligible for the National Register
____ See continuation sheet. _____

____ determined not eligible for the National Register _____

____ removed from the National Register _____

____ other (explain): _____

Yale Union Laundry Building
Name of Property

Multnomah, OR
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many as apply)

- private
- public - local
- public - state
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Business

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revival:
Italian Renaissance
Egyptian Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: concrete
walls: brick

roof: asphalt
Other: _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

See continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing).

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1920-1950

Significant Dates

1908, 1927, 1929

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B removed from its original location
- C a birthplace or grave
- D a cemetery
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F a commemorative property
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance Within the past 50 years

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing the form on one or more continuation sheets) See continuation sheets

- Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36CFR67) has been requested
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

- Primary location of additional data:
- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

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Summary

The Yale Laundry Building is located at 800 SE 10th Street in Portland, Oregon. Built in 1908, the building is a two-story masonry structure with cast stone decoration executed in an Italian Renaissance style. The building also has elements associated with Egyptian Revival style. A two-story 1927 masonry addition wrapping around a concrete water tower pedestal and a 1929 two-story addition to the south forms an L-shaped plan. Both the original portion and the additions have flat roofs although the western rectangular portion of the structure has a half-story steel frame light monitor running the length of the building in the north-south direction.

Location

The Yale Laundry Building sits on a .43 acre urban lot at 800 SE 10th Street in Portland, Oregon. The lot is devoid of landscaping, slopes to the west, and occupies the western half of the block bounded by SE Belmont to the south, SE 10th Street to the west, and SE Morrison to the north. A commercial building located at 1040 SE Morrison and built in 1925 shares a common party wall on the east side of the 1927 addition. The building is located in the established central eastside commercial district of Portland, Oregon. The immediate neighborhood is primarily comprised of one and two story commercial buildings and multi-story residential units. Many of the existing buildings date from the same eras as the Yale Laundry Building and are reflective of both typical early 20th century commercial design and the later "street car" commercial structures.

The 1927 addition located on the eastern portion of lot area has a rectangular foot print and measures approximately 50 ft x 50ft. The building addition allowed for ground level truck access to enter the building on the north off of SE Morrison and exit onto SE Belmont Street on the south. The paved lot area to the north of the addition is given over to parking and general delivery functions.

Exterior

The Yale Union Laundry Building is a wonderful combination of Italian Renaissance commercial style juxtaposed against the Egyptian Revival style. The Italian Renaissance is particularly present in the large arched window openings on the ground floor and the grouping of two narrow tall windows on the second floor. The primary building materials are a deep red brick laid in a running bond, multi-pane arched windows, and cast stone decoration. The building window proportions and placement provide a rhythm to the facades but the overall fenestration and massing are not symmetrical. It is not known who designed and who built the original structure or the two additions.¹

¹ The Portland Inventory attributes the 1927 Addition to Cash & Wolfe. While the original building inspection card was available for Permit 188266 (a plumbing permit); Permit 187293 and plans were not available and this information could not be verified. Only an inspection card for the plumbing permit #89700 was available documenting the 1929 addition and changes. The contractor listed was "De Temple Co."

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The 1929 southwest corner entry on SE 10th Avenue and SE Belmont Street is accentuated by cast stone decoration representing a stylized Egyptian temple and is arguably the Yale Laundry Building's most arresting feature. The corner is a classic example of Egyptian Revival elements inspired by ancient Egyptian temples like the Temple of Philae and the Temple of Amun at Karnak. The corner composition evokes the stone architecture of the temples but is executed in masonry. Overall, the corner has a symmetrical box-like appearance and, because of the south sloping site, was designed as a three story structure. The three story effect is produced by adding an internal mezzanine level with window openings above the first floor. The decorative cast stone units are concentrated in the southwest corner on both SE 10th Avenue and SE Belmont Street. One and a half pair arches rise vertically as engaged pilasters resting on cast stone plinth blocks and adorned with cast stone Lily flower capitals typical of Egyptian decoration. A cast stone door surround occupies the center arch at street level on SE 10th Avenue. The pilasters carry an arched cast stone entablature rising above the mezzanine floor windows. The recesses of the entablature are filled with a cast stone carving depicting laundry workers. At the peak of each arch recess is a large cast stone keystone slipped below the bottom of the arch in the Mannerist style. The carving predates the Work Progress Administration projects but is very reminiscent of depression-era labor scenes. (the artist who created the scene is unknown) The entablature is created by alternating horizontal bands of masonry and cast stone imparting a polychrome affect similar to Egyptian temple painted ornamentation. The temple like parapet above the top windows is derived from the use of a corbel of rowlock brick giving visual emphasis and "weight" to the top. Both the mezzanine windows and the cast stone pilasters create an allusion of a taller corner even though the overall height of the corner and the parapet cap stone are at the same elevation as the remaining portions of facade. Brick spandrel panels between the mezzanine floor sill and the head of the first floor windows are recessed and further adorned with square cast stone decorative inlay units. The top floor windows of the corner are small compared to the other windows and resemble punched openings in a massive masonry wall. The windows are a band of six small two over two wood frame windows with concrete sills.

SE 10th Street (west)

The primary façade faces SE 10th Street (west). It is a masonry bearing wall with both cast stone ornament and a concrete cap stone running the length of the parapet. The Italian Renaissance characteristics of the Yale Laundry Building are imparted by the window patterns and window styles. There are a total of ten "A" pattern and eleven "B" pattern windows on the west facade. The "A" pattern windows are located on the first story and deeply set into arched brick openings with arched brick lintel surrounds and concrete sills. These windows consist of a pair of wood sash, double hung windows with four over four divided lights and an arched wood transom spanning the pair. The arched transom has six divided lights on the outside arch and two divided lights on the interior arch creating a sun pattern. A new customer entrance toward the north corner of the building along SE 10th Avenue was created by removing an original window sill and masonry down to sidewalk level. This entrance has an arched transom spanning over the top. Photographs from the late 1930s show an additional door mid block that serves as a direct exit from the "laundry" floor to the street.

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The second floor of the west façade has 11 pairs of “B” pattern windows. The “B” pattern window pair has two wood frame and wood sash paired windows. Like the first floor, the windows are double hung except the lights are two over two and have a simpler arched transom. These windows are also set deeply back and decorated with arched brick lintel. Decorative cast stone pilasters are placed between each pair of windows accentuating the “piano noblea” of Italian Renaissance architecture. There are two sets of “B” windows located at the northern end of this façade without the cast stone columns between each pair.

SE Belmont Street

Stylistically the SE Belmont Street (south) elevation repeats the Egyptian temple motif. Like SE 10th Street, the cast stone plinth blocks, pilasters, capitals, arches, and entablature are repeated at the corner. In lieu of the center entry door, another pair of wood casement windows with wood transoms are installed. At the sidewalk level, three thin horizontal windows covered with painted grills provide light to the boiler room on the interior. To the east of the cast stone arches is a tall masonry opening extending from the first window sill to the second floor header containing wood frame 2 over 3 windows of the first floor and mezzanine levels separated by a wood spandrel panel. As an overall composition, the east addition of the south elevation constructed in 1927 extends the fortress quality of Italian Renaissance Egyptian Revival commercial architecture. The masonry openings are fewer, narrower, and less tall when compared to the west elevation. Emphasizing the temple fortress quality of the design, the 1927 parapet of masonry above the second floor windows is double that of the area on the SE 10th Street elevation. The rowlock course of the original structure turn down five feet on the face of the addition immediately adjacent to the original building and then extends horizontally across the addition. The effect is to pronounce the weight of the masonry and link the 1927 building to the “temple” original.

SE Belmont Street rises in elevation towards the east resulting in an four feet elevation change. The first floor of the 1927 addition has a large garage door flanked by two large industrial steel sash 3 over 4 windows. A third, smaller window is located at the western edge of the addition. The second story has a band of seven double hung two over two windows with concrete sills. Each window has a small square decorative cast stone piece above it. The concrete cornice runs along the length of the entire south façade and is continuous between the original building and the east addition.

SE Morrison Street

While the SE Morrison Street façade (north) does not have the cast stone ornamentation of the corner at SE 10th and SE Belmont, it does have many of the same Italian Renaissance features as the other primary facades. Four windows on the first story are in the “A” pattern and four windows on the second story are in the “B” pattern. The concrete cornice continues around the building on SE Morrison Street.

The north façade of the 1927 addition (secondary elevation) is back 150 feet from SE Morrison Street along the southern portion of the lot. A large paved parking lot extends from the building to the SE Morrison Street sidewalk. The 1927 north elevation contains a large garage door at the center of the first floor with a large steel sash window. The second floor has two sets of the same type of window in an A:B:A pattern, where “A” has 3 over 4 divided lights, and “B” has 4 over 4 divided lights. A smaller 4 over 4 window is located under the water

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tower. As noted above, the water tower pedestal is concrete and the 1927 building wrapped around the pedestal. At present, the concrete structure is visible from the north and no water tower exists.

The eastern elevation of the original building (a secondary façade) faces the interior of the lot. Both this façade and the north façade of the 1927 addition have no decorative exterior features. The first floor has a pair of 2 over 2 windows with arched brick decoration, a band of three smaller square fixed 2 over 2 windows flank the south side of the doorway to the main floor. Two similar windows in this pattern are located just to the north of this door. The door has a large square metal canopy and a transom. A metal stairway leads up to a door on the second floor which has a transom similar to that found on the first story above the door. There are two small windows on the south side of this door.

Interior

Immediately upon entering the Yale Laundry Building through the original doorway off of SE 10th Avenue, one steps into the lobby and office area. The interior of the lobby and office area located in the 1929 addition of the Yale Union Laundry building has the most rich and detailed finishes found in the building. Upon entering the main door all the offices are obscured by a rich stained oak paneling which stretches the length of the entry and stairwell along the western wall. As with the rest of the building ceilings are vaulted and the windows provide the room with generous light. Walls carry the stained oak paneling throughout the lobby area. While the interior wall configuration of the offices appears to have changed over time, there is a vault located along the east wall of the main lobby area which appears to be original. A decorative wood screen matching the oak paneling is located at the northeastern corner of this level. Above the wooden paneling, walls and ceilings are plaster. There are three offices at this level. Floors are laminate. The lobby can also be accessed from the mezzanine level by stairs.

Directly east of lobby area, up a small stairway there are two offices. The finishes in these two rooms do not match the lower lobby. The mezzanine floors are laminate and the walls concrete block. There are two windows on the south wall. It is likely that these offices were created during a later tenant remodel. These offices lead to a hallway which leads out to the south side of the first floor on the main building. There is a large opening leading to the first floor of the 1927 addition on the east wall.

The first floor of the addition has a large garage door opening on the north side. The east wall has no openings. The northwest corner of the west wall is marked by a chute from the second floor which leads directly to the first floor of the 1927 addition. The interior west wall of the addition appears to retain the original 1908 window and door openings which existed on the original exterior eastern façade. A window and door have been covered and the original brick has been painted. Concrete block pillars have been added to the exterior to support heavy wooden crossbeams supporting the addition and water tower above. The south wall also has a garage door opening which leads out to SE Belmont, and there are several windows on either side of this door.

At the center of the west wall is a large opening leading to the main floor of the building. The main floor of the original building has tall vaulted ceilings and large windows with arched transoms that can be opened with pulleys. The space is big and open with brick walls. Ceilings are painted wood with wood cross beams. The floors are concrete on the south end and painted wood on the north end. The main customer entrance is now

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located along the west wall at the north end of the building. Stairs leading down to the basement are located on the north side of this room in the center across from the main customer entrance, and the current customer counter. The east wall has several smaller windows and a door leading to the parking lot. An elevator sits at the center of this wall near the opening which leads to the addition. The original lobby and stairs to the mezzanine and basement can be accessed at the southern end of this room.

The mezzanine is accessed from stairs leading up from the existing lobby or stairs leading down from the second floor of the 1927 addition. A third access directly from SE 10th Street has been blocked off, but the stairs still exist. There are three rooms on this level. Windows are along the south and western walls. Floors are wood. Ceilings are wood with crossbeams.

The second floor of the original building is remarkably light due to the bank of 22 large paired 2 over 2 windows along the west wall and the tall vaulted ceilings. There are windows which run the length of the ceiling can be which can be opened by a chained pulley. There is a functioning elevator on the north end of the east wall and another closed elevator at the south end of this wall. Along the center of the east wall is an opening to the 1927 addition and a pair of windows which originally opened into a central atrium which provided light and air between the two buildings. The floor and ceiling are wood and the interior walls are brick. Access to the 1927 addition is by a ramp through an opening in the center of the east wall.

A second access to this portion of the building is from a doorway and stairs from the mezzanine along the east wall or a stairwell from the first floor of the addition location at the northwest corner of this floor. The interior west wall has two large windows surrounding the atrium which was created when the addition was constructed. The windows can open and within the atrium there originally was a skylight which allowed access to light and air. These have now been closed off. Both the north and east walls have large two large windows in an A:B:A pattern. The east wall has three sets of these windows which are now blocked by a party wall. At the southeast corner of the addition is a men and women's room and a lunchroom. The south wall has four small 2 over 2 windows. The floor is painted concrete and the walls and ceiling are plaster.

The basement is accessed by stairs leading from the hallway between the lobby area and the first floor of the main building. These stairs lead down to the boiler room at the southern end of the building. This portion of the basement is at a lower elevation than the rest of the floor. Another smaller set of stairs run along the east wall, and there is a hallway which leads to another stairwell up to the first floor of the 1927 addition. An elevator which accesses both the first and second floors is located along this eastern wall to the north. The northern portion of the basement has large concrete square posts supporting reinforced concrete beams under the central portion of the first floor. At the northernmost end of the basement posts and beams are wood with steel brackets. A stairwell leading up to the main floor is located at the center of this portion of the basement. Floors and walls are concrete.

The Yale Union Laundry building is an excellent example of laundries that were built and adapted to meet the needs of the growing laundry industry. It was specifically constructed as a power laundry and it adapted over time as the industry grew. The original 1908 construction consisted of two floors plus a basement which contained the boilers used to heat the wash water. As was common for a purpose built laundry the walls are

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made of brick and the floors were made to withstand the use of heavy machines. The main area of the first floor was constructed with heavy beams to support the washers. The vaulted ceilings and prominent placement of windows indicate the need for light and ventilation. The first floor was also used for delivery and pick up, checking, marking, and sorting. The second floor was used for starching, drying, and ironing.

Over time, as the laundry industry grew the building was expanded. Two additions were added in 1927 and 1929. The garage door openings on the north side of the addition as well as the one opening on SE Belmont, indicate the need to accommodate the trucks that came to be used for home delivery. The 1929 addition included three bathrooms, one urinal and a drinking fountain as well as expanding the lobby area where some of the richest, detailed finishes in the building are still found today. The additions reflect the growing importance of the industrial laundry business in the early twentieth century. By 1947 the power laundry business had declined due to the availability of the home washing machine. At this time the business adapted to the building and became the City Linen Supply Company. In this way the building was still able to be used to clean products such as linens, towels and aprons for other commercial businesses such as hotels and restaurants.

Major Alterations

In 1927 an addition was made to the structure on the southeast side, replacing a smaller one story paint shop and garage. At this time several openings were added on the southern portion of the existing 1908 structure in order to provide easy access between the buildings. In 1929, both the north and south portions of the Yale Laundry Building were modified when SE Morrison Street was widened to accommodate a new street car line. Given the opportunity to either create a sidewalk arcade abutting the street or removing the rear portion of the building, the Owners elected to remove approximately 12 feet and set the north façade back adjacent to the sidewalk.² Based on the consistency in window design and masonry materials and setting techniques, it appears that new rear elevation was created from salvaged building material and replicated the original north facade. The portion of the building facing Morrison was cut off, and the front façade moved back twenty feet. It is likely that the original brick was salvaged and reused. The north façade on this portion of the building was reconstructed and many of the decorative features restored.

² See OHS photo negative # COP00739. 2001-09 Street Widening 1933. 12/4 0509-16/2 at Portland City Archives .The Yale Laundry Building is located at the corner of Morrison and E 10th Streets. Morrison Street was widened in 1929. This street was originally 60' wide. It was estimated that approximately 80-85% of the City's population was living on the east side, and yet needed to cross the river to get to the main business district. The street widening project included many streets throughout the City and spanned from 1917 through 1933. Most streets were planned to be expanded to 80', this included 56' for streets and 12' for sidewalks and curbs. Most streets were expanded from 60' to 80'. Over 2500 parcels of property were acquired from private owners. 328 people appealed to Circuit Court because they were dissatisfied with awarded damages or benefits made by the City Engineer and City Council.²This work caused a significant amount of alteration to buildings that were originally constructed right up to the property line which abutted the original right of way. In some cases the fronts of buildings were cut off and the front rebuilt. In other cases the 20' would be removed from the center of a building and then the original front moved back and joined with the rear portion. "In some instances buildings as high as five stories were moved several blocks and utilized in their new location without injury."²East Morrison was widened from 60'-84' in 1929 from Grand Avenue up to East 12th Avenue. 28 parcels were affected and there were five appeals. The total cost of the project was \$324,646.20. Ordinance 5362 granted the Home Service Company the ability to arcade the building on East Morrison between 10th and 11th Streets. The arcade was to be 10' high above the sidewalk and the distance from the outer piers of the building to the inner arcaded wall was to be 12'. The Ordinance was passed by Portland City Council on December 7, 1927 and was granted under the condition that the City of Portland could require that the arcading be removed.

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Also at this time, in 1929, a second two story addition was added to the south of the original 1908 building and to the west of the 1927 addition. This addition replaced an existing one story machine shop, prior to that time there was a horse barn located on this portion of the lot. The front entrance was moved from the corner of SE 10th and Morrison to this new addition at the south end of the building at the corner of SE 10th and Belmont, it was at this time that the significant cast stone decoration was added.³

The Yale Union Laundry Building has a high degree of integrity and there have only been minor alterations to the structure over the years. The alterations that have been made were completed soon after the Home Service Company purchased the building, and the architectural details and cast stone decoration convey the success this company was achieving in the laundry industry during this time period.

³ The 1909 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map indicates that the original 1908 structure was located on the northern portion of the block, and at the south end of the building at the corner of SE 10th and Belmont there was originally a four story wagon stable. The second story of the laundry connected with the fourth story of the stable. The original office and lobby for the laundry was located along the north end of the building, with the original entrance under an awning located along 10th near the corner of Belmont, similar to where the main public entrance to the building is today. It is noted that the laundry is on the first floor and the ironing was on the second floor. At this time the address appeared to be 500 E. Morrison. The 1924 Sanborn Map shows a similar internal configuration for the building with several major changes to the southern end of the building. Specifically, the horse barn was replaced by a one story machine shop for autos. In the area directly to the east of this was a small one story paint shop and garage with a capacity for 10 cars. It is noted that this garage had a concrete floor, truss roof and pilastered walls. The 1924-1950 Sanborn shows several significant changes, which still exist today. The building is noted as the Yale Union Laundry (previously it had been noted only as the Yale Laundry). The north side of the building has been moved back due to the widening of SE Morrison and the office moved to the south end of the building, at the corner of SE 10th and Belmont. At this time it is noted that there is a concrete floor on both the first floor and mezzanine and that there are steel beams and girders supporting these floors. The basement, located directly under the offices is fireproof and held two large generators. The smaller one story 1924 paint shop and garage is shown to have been replaced by the 1927 addition that still exists today. Also interesting to note is that this Sanborn is the first to note the raised side lights on the second floor of the original portion of the building, so perhaps this feature was added when all the other significant architectural features were added.

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Statement of Significance

Overview

The Yale Union Laundry Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significance in the area of Commerce. The Yale Laundry Company was associated with the Home Service Co., a holding company, which held ownership in many of the major commercial laundries operating in Portland from 1920-1950. The Yale Union Laundry Building is an excellent example of a purpose-built commercial laundry building constructed in the early twentieth century in Portland. It is typical of laundry buildings that were built to meet the demands of the growing laundry industry. This industry was significantly associated with historical trends such as industrialization and the advancement of technology, the women's labor movement and the rise of the middle class. The Yale Laundry building is located at 800 SE 10th Ave. It was built as a commercial laundry in 1908 in the Italian Renaissance commercial style and has Egyptian Revival elements. Two additions were constructed in 1927 and 1929, both of which expanded its use as an industrial laundry which served residents and businesses within the Portland community.

Yale Laundry and Laundries in Portland Prior to 1920

Households with the financial ability could hire washerwomen, servants or Chinese laborers. In the 1880's Chinese immigrants were subject to anti-Chinese sentiments and were even subject to restrictive legislation barring them from working in other industries. As a result, many Chinese were forced to take up work related to household service. Many Chinese opened laundries. Chinese laundries were often preferred by customers because they washed items by hand and took pride in their excellent finish work, especially for the stiff collars, cuffs and shirts which were popular during this time period. Many white laundry owners discriminated against the Chinese and openly criticized them by portraying them as unclean.

The Yale Laundry was built by Charles F. Brown. Charles Brown was born in Richland MI and entered the laundry business in 1892 in Superior, WI, he also built and operated an industrial power laundry in Duluth, MN. In 1908 he moved to Portland Oregon and built the Yale Laundry Company on SE 10th and Morrison as an industrial power laundry. Charles was married to Hester B. Brown and they had a son, D. Howard Brown who worked as Secretary and Treasurer of the Yale Laundry Company.

At the time the Yale Laundry was built in 1908, there were 68 laundries listed in the directories and the Chinese/Japanese laundries were not listed separately. In 1909 there were 29 white laundries and 37 Chinese/Japanese laundries. By 1913 the scales had tipped the other direction, and there were 43 white laundries and 35 Chinese/Japanese laundries. The Yale Laundry was growing during this period and in 1916 an article in the Portland Evening Telegram described an investment of \$140,000 in the company and 125 employees at the laundry.¹ The number of Chinese/Japanese laundries continued to decline and by 1920, after

¹ Oregonian, October. 20, 1916, p4

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the consolidation of the major Portland laundries, there were 33 white laundries and 25 Chinese/Japanese laundries.²

In Portland there was not a typical neighborhood or district where laundries were located. They were located throughout the City and ranged in size and capacity. Some of the larger factory laundries comprised at least half of a city block (100' x 200'), and often had significant large additions to accommodate an increased need for space. The Opera House Laundry initially constructed in 1906 and the Troy Laundry initially constructed in 1913 were of this type, as was the Excelsior Laundry(1906). These laundries were located throughout the City and were originally constructed for the operation of a commercial laundry business. Other laundries were smaller in scale, and either operated out of existing storefronts such as the laundry in the Pally Bldg (1915) or adaptively reused existing buildings such as the building at 1006 SE Grand which was originally constructed for office use by Arcoa Inc in 1915.

Home Service Company

In 1920 several power laundries in Portland were consolidated to form the Home Service Company. Through this consolidation, and their subsequent acquisition of additional power laundries, the Home Service Company was able to offer a larger number of people throughout Portland an affordable alternative to doing the laundry themselves at home. Delivery drivers from the Home Service Company would pick up the laundry at their homes and return the clothes washed, dried, pressed and starched. The Home Service Company owned and operated the largest combined number of power laundries in Portland between 1920 and 1950. The Yale Union Laundry building, originally constructed as an industrial power laundry in 1908, was one of the laundries acquired and subsequently operated by the Home Service Company from 1927 to 1950. Both Yale Union Laundry and the Home Service Company are associated with the development and operation of power laundries in Portland. Industrialization of the laundry process allowed power laundry owners to offer affordable laundry services to average middle class people and families for the first time. This improved the daily lives of people in early twentieth century Portland by relieving them of having to perform this time consuming, labor intensive process in their own homes.

The Home Service Company never advertised under this name. Instead, advertisements were made for the individual companies held by the Home Services Company which varied over the years. For example, Allyn's Cleaning and Dyeing Establishment listed three different locations in the Polk City Directories between 1937-1941, one was the location of the former U.S. Laundry at 1006 SE Grand, another was the former location of the Union Laundry at SW 3rd and Alder and a third was their location on NE 42nd and Sandy. They had locations throughout the city, unlike their competitors who only had one location. Their primary customers were middle class families, and they offered an inexpensive and efficient way for housewives to have the laundry done. Once the personal washing machine became affordable for families, their business declined. The

² City of Portland Polk Directories from 1908-1920

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Home Service Company subsequently focused on providing services to hotels and restaurants and ultimately sold the Yale Union Laundry to American Linen Supply Co. in 1950. The Home Service Company existed until October 11, 1976 when its assets were liquidated, at this time there were only two laundries still held by the company which included the Allyn's Cleaners and Troy Laundry.

History and Development of the Building

Yale Laundry Building- A Purpose Built Laundry Building

The Yale Union Laundry Building is an excellent example of laundries that were built and adapted to meet the needs of the growing laundry industry. When it was first constructed in 1908 it consisted of two floors plus a basement which contained the boilers which heated the water for the wash. The central portion of the first floor was constructed with heavy support beams underneath to support the heavy washers. Both the first and second floors were originally designed with large open windows to allow for light and circulation. A large addition was added in 1927 and another in 1929. The first addition coincides with the year in which the Yale Laundry was consolidated into the Home Service Company. The expansion was needed to accommodate the trucks that were used for home delivery. The addition also included a lunchroom and restrooms for the employees and was built to comply with established union concerns regarding wages and working conditions. A permit was obtained on November 15, 1927 by the Home Service Company to complete work on the addition at a cost of \$30,000. In 1929 an additional three bathrooms, one urinal and one drinking fountain were installed at the Yale Union Laundry. This addition included expanding the lobby area where some of richest, detailed finishes in the building are still found today. This is a reflection of the growing importance of the industrial laundry business during the early twentieth century.

The Yale Union Laundry Building is typical of a building that that was specifically constructed for the many tasks associated with the power laundry business. It is an example of a purpose-built building rather than a building designed for other purposes and then used as a laundry. A purpose built laundry typically has brick walls and its floors were made to withstand the use of heavy machines. It has several floors which were used for the various tasks. The main floor was typically used for laundry delivery and pick up, checking, marking, and sorting. The lower floors (either the basement or the first floor) was where the washing, extracting and shaking processes took place. The upper floor was used for mangling, starching, drying, and ironing. As described in the 1914 *Industrial Welfare Commission Report on Power Laundries in Portland*: "Laundries built for laundry purposes have the walls and floors constructed to withstand the jar of heavy machinery, to offer resistance to water, and to carry off heat and steam; laundries established in store or other business buildings lack these arrangements and usually have the added disadvantage of low ceilings. Twelve of the laundries are in buildings erected for laundry purposes, five are in buildings erected for other purposes. Two of these five are in hotel buildings, and are located, one in the basement, the other in the sub-basement. Six of the 17 laundries are in frame buildings; 11 are in brick. Two of the laundries in frame structures erected for other than laundry purposes have occupied these buildings for 12 and 13 years respectively. Four of the brick buildings erected for laundry purposes have been occupied for three years or less. Seventy-nine per cent of the

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*women employed are in buildings constructed for laundry purposes and 21 per cent are in buildings constructed for other purposes.*³

The Yale Laundry Building easily conveys its association with the developing and flourishing industrial laundry industry in the early twentieth century. It still retains the primary elements of its construction which identify it as a purpose built laundry building. Most exceptional are its decorative stone reliefs of laundry workers on the exterior. On the interior, its original use is conveyed most strikingly by the large belt conveyor which still exists running from an opening in the floor from the second floor to the garage area of the first floor. With its tall ceilings, it is easy to imagine the large windows which still have operating pulleys and several skylights providing laundry workers with much needed light and ventilation, especially notable on the wide open second floor where the finish work was originally done.

Home Service Company in Portland

The Home Service Company was incorporated in 1920 by L.E. Crouch, a Portland Attorney, on behalf of Percy G. Allen. The original Articles of Incorporation for the Company state eight objectives which encompass all aspects of operating a laundry business in the City of Portland Oregon.⁴ The Home Service Company's first objective was to: *engage in, conduct and maintain a general laundry, cleaning and dyeing business in the City of Portland, Oregon and in such other places as may seem advisable with the use of such buildings, machinery, appliances and other means as may be necessary or proper in connection with such business.* The initial capital stock for this company was \$1,000,000 divided into 6000 shares of common stock and 4000 shares of preferred stock. The holders of preferred stock were entitled to receive a 7% dividend of the company's profits every year.

The original companies to be consolidated by the Home Service Company were Troy Laundry, Allyn's Dyeing and Cleaning and Crystal Laundries, all originally owned by Percy G. Allen. In 1926 the Home Service Company purchased the Union⁵ Laundry. It then purchased Yale Laundry in 1927. Charles F. Brown founded the Yale Laundry. He was born in Richland MI and entered the laundry business in 1892 in Superior, WI. He also built and operated a plant in Duluth, MN. In 1908 he moved to Portland Oregon and built the Yale Laundry Company on SE 10th and Morrison. Charles was married to Hester B. Brown and they had a son, D. Howard Brown who worked as Secretary and Treasurer of the Yale Laundry Company.

The Yale Laundry Co. was also known in the beginning as Brown, Meyer Inc. Ralph P. Meyer was Vice President and manager of the Yale Laundry for many years. Ralph Meyer was born May 29, 1878 in New York

³ Gleason, Caroline J. *Report of the Industrial Welfare Commission of the State Of Oregon on the Power Laundries in Portland.* (State Printing Department, Salem Oregon) 1914. pp 13-14.

⁴ L.E. Crouch, Attorney at Law. **Articles of Incorporation for the Home Services Company.** April 12, 1920

⁵ Union Laundry was established in 1909 and located at 301 2nd Ave. in Portland. Union was managed by Lewis T. Gilliland until 1926 when management was taken over briefly by Charles W. Helms.

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City. Mr. Meyer joined the Yale Laundry Company in June 1912.⁶ In 1916 an article in the Portland Evening Telegram described an investment of \$140,000 in the company and 125 employees at the laundry. Charles F. Brown ran the Yale Laundry Co. until his retirement in 1926. In 1927 CF Brown sold his interest in the company to the Home Service Co.

Soon after, the Yale and Union Laundries were merged by the Home Services Company. During this time period the Home Services Company also purchased and operated the U.S. Laundry at 1006 SE Grand. The Home Services Company never advertised under this name. Instead, advertisements were made for the individual companies held by the Home Services Company which varied over the years. For example, Allyn's Cleaning and Dyeing Establishment listed three different locations in the Polk City Directories between 1937-1941, one their location on NE 42nd and Sandy, another was the location of the former U.S. Laundry at 1006 SE Grand, another was the former location of the Union Laundry at SW 3rd and Alder.

Additional power laundries were bought and sold during this time period depending upon the needs of the company and the decisions made by the Board of the Directors of the Company. Including the Yale Laundry Building, there are ten laundry buildings which still exist in Portland today. They were identified by the Portland Historic Survey which was completed in the late 1980's. None are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They are Superior Service Laundry (1928) located at 710 NE 21st, Pallay Building (1915) at 221-223 NW 3rd, National Laundry Bldg (1925) at, Excelsior Laundry (1906) at 325-835 NW Davis, Opera House Laundry (1906,1925) at 217 NW Everett, the US Laundry Company Bldg (1915) at 1006 SE Grand, the Troy Laundry Bldg (1913,1953) at 1025 SE Pine, the Portland Laundry Co. Bldg. (1920,1928) at 1740 SE Union and the building at 2774 NW Thurman (1921). Of these extant buildings it has been verified that at least three were owned and operated by the company.⁷

One of the largest of the laundry companies owned and operated by the Home Service Company was the Troy Laundry Company which was founded in 1885. In 1918 Percy G. Allen bought the Troy Laundry Company. The Troy Laundry Company had 32 service trucks and served 30,000 homes in Portland. The company processed 800,000 pieces of laundry per week and employed 350 people. Troy Laundry utilized only metal washing machines which were purchased for one million dollars.

Percy G. Allen also founded several other laundries in Portland, including Crystal Laundry and Allyn's Dyeing and Cleaning which were held by the Home Service Company. Allyn's served about 20,000 homes in Portland and had three different locations in the City, one downtown at 3rd and Alder, one on NE 42nd and Sandy and one at 1006 SE Grand which is also known as the US. Laundry Company building. Twenty-one service trucks were owned by Allyn's and the company employed 250 people. The Yale Union Laundry had approximately ten

⁶ Ralph Meyer continued to work at the Laundry even after it was sold in 1950.

⁷ Additional research is required to determine a precise timeline and total accounting of all the laundries owned, merged and operated by this company.

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service trucks and was able to service about 10,000 homes. To further facilitate the success of their business, The Home Service Company decided to combine the assets of many different laundries in order to reduce the overhead costs and increase profit.

Commercial Laundries in the United States in the early Twentieth Century.

Prior to the invention of the steam laundry in the mid-nineteenth century domestic washing was done primarily by women at home. The earliest washing 'machine' was the scrub board invented in 1797. This board was typically used in a large (usually wooden) wash tub. The clothes were then put through a ringer to get rid of the excess water and hung a line to dry. In 1858 Hamilton Smith patented the first rotary washing machine. Households with the financial ability could hire washerwomen, servants or Chinese laborers.

In the 1880's Chinese immigrants were subject to anti-Chinese sentiments as well as restrictive legislation barring them from working in other industries. As a result, many Chinese were forced to take up work related to household service. Many Chinese opened laundries. Chinese laundries were often preferred by customers because they washed items by hand and took pride in their excellent finish work, especially for the stiff collars, cuffs and shirts which were popular during this time period. Many white laundry owners discriminated against the Chinese and openly criticized them by portraying them as unclean.

In the late nineteenth century laundry began to be industrialized with the invention of the steam laundry machine. These machines got their name because steam engines heated the water and drove machinery.⁸ The steam laundry needed an appropriate building. Proper drainage and ventilation, a good source of light, floors sound enough to hold machinery and fireproofing were all necessary components of an industrial laundry building.

Between 1880 and 1900 technological advances affected the laundry processes at these new factories. Machines were invented which would perform the least specialized and most physically demanding tasks such as washing and wringing. Between 1900 and 1910 machines were invented which could perform more specialized tasks like ironing and starching.⁹

By the turn of the century laundries within cities were becoming more common. They ranged from shop front establishments with less than five employees to large factory laundries which employed over 200 people. The first census of factory laundries was taken in 1909. Only those laundries with power driven machinery were counted. At this time there were 5,186 factory laundries in the United States with 124,214 workers. Of the

⁸ Mohun, Arwen P. "Why Mrs. Harrison Never Learned to Iron: Gender, Skill and Mechanization in the American Steam Laundry." *Gender & History* 8, no2 (1996): p 231

⁹ Mohun, Arwen P. *Steam Laundries: Gender, Technology, and Work in the United States and Great Britain, 1880-1940*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999. p 70

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laborers that worked at these laundries 71.2% of them were women.¹⁰ The laundry business continued to grow. Between 1909 and 1914 the number of workers employed at mechanized laundries increased by 19.3%.¹¹ The Yale Union Laundry Building, which was originally constructed in 1908 to house the Yale Laundry, was part of this growing business.

A majority of the large factory laundries were owned and managed by white men. These white laundry owners continued to discriminate against the Chinese and even advertised that it was better to take laundry out of the hands of undesirable and unclean Chinese workers and have it washed by their new modern machines. White managers would not hire Chinese to work in their factories, but would typically hire women.

Many homes or apartments in urban centers did not include space for the type of laundry equipment that existed at the time. Also, the fashions of the time required extra stiff collars and cuffs. Many housewives in the middle class preferred to send menswear out for a professional touch. In fact many of the first 'factory' laundries did primarily men's shirts and collars as well as linens from ships or hotels. Some of the smaller, store front laundries also subcontracted the washing to the large factories that were able to process up to 50,000 pieces a day. The smaller establishments would then do the ironing finish work by hand.¹²

In 1928 a promotional campaign developed by the Laundrymen's National Association published documented tours of skeptical female customers through large laundries. These were published in magazines like *Good Housekeeping*. The goal was to attract new customers, especially from the middle class. Many laundries were interested in doing the family wash on a regular basis and would offer reasonable rates.¹³ Technology improved during this time period. At the factories conveyor belts were added so that articles no longer needed to be driven from room to room. Tumble driers became more common, and electric irons were introduced. By 1931, over 80% of services provided by a majority of industrial laundry companies were for family wash.¹⁴

Laundry typically was picked up at individual's residences or at hotels, restaurants or ships. The laundry was then checked and marked with the owner's name. Immediately upon arrival to the laundry building the dirty laundry was removed to the back of the building, away from the front lobby, since the soiled laundry often had a terrible smell. After the laundry was checked and marked it was sorted by color and fabric type. It was then brought to where the washing machines were located. Most laundries made their own soap until detergents

¹⁰ Ibid, p50

¹¹ Wang, Joan S. "Race, Gender, and Laundry Work: The Roles of Chinese Laundrymen and American Women in the United States 1850-1950." *Journal of American Ethnic History*. (Fall 2004): p 67.

¹² Ibid, p60.

¹³ An ad placed in the "Portland Labor Press" Labor Day 1914: "All the horrors of family washday have been removed by the establishment of Ideal Wet Wash Laundry at East forty-third street and Hawthorne Avenue. Mr. Smith, the popular manager for 18 months, is an experienced laundryman, and his knowledge of the business insured his customers perfect satisfaction. Family laundry is called for and delivered all read for the ironing board, and thus cheaply and satisfactorily the household linen is kept neat and clean. Let the laundry assist you in doing away with "blue Monday," the weekly washday. Fifty cents pays for all the clothes one can pack in a hundred pound flour sack."

¹⁴ Mohun, Arwen P. *Steam Laundries: Gender, Technology, and Work in the United States and Great Britain, 1880-1940*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999. page 149

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were invented in the 1930's. Washing machines were typically located in the basement or ground floor to prevent additional stress on floor boards and to minimize the potential for rotting or collapsing ceilings. Machines splashed water out, and wooden ones would rot and break. Poorly draining basements often had floods of foul water across the floor. Workers often had to wear rubber boots.¹⁵

The most difficult part of washing the laundry was removing the wet clothes from the washing machines and placing the pieces in the centrifugal extractor. Strong men were often hired to do this part of the work. The machine consisted of a drum with a basket that removed excess water by centrifugal force, similar to the 'spin cycle' used in most home washing machines today. This was the most dangerous machine in use at the laundry factory, especially in the days before legislation required locking lids on the machines. Workers would often get pieces of their clothing caught in the machines resulting in injury and in some cases even death. Both men and women did this job.

The extractors left the clothing tightly wound and the articles needed to be shaken out to get rid of any remaining water. Most laundries employed young girls to shake the items out, since this job required the least amount of expertise. Mangle machines pressed out wrinkles and began drying items. Laundry was fed by operators into the mangle machines which typically consisted of a series of rollers padded with fabric and heated by steam or gas flames. Operators were typically women, and injuries consisting of burned or crushed fingers were common. Starch was then applied. Laundries often made their own starch, and before 1910 the starch was applied by hand. Starching was mechanized after 1910.

After the items were starched they were brought to the drying closets. These were enclosed boxes with heating elements which were usually pipes from the boiler. Rotary and tumble dryers were available after 1912, but many commercial laundries continued to utilize the drying closets since they were quite effective. The next step of the process was ironing. This was the most skilled and highest paying job and the last step to be mechanized since the ironing was very specialized and depended on the type of garment which needed finishing. The last step of the process was folding and stacking the laundry in preparation for pickup or delivery. Laundry was typically wrapped or bound with brown paper during this step. Some of the smaller storefront laundries would subcontract out the washing and drying services to the commercial laundries and then complete the finish work at their own establishments.

During the Great Depression, the factory laundry began to decline in use around the country. Sending laundry out to be done seemed to be a luxury few could afford. After WWII the use of factory laundry declined even further within the general population. The first electric washing machine, "The Mighty Thor" was introduced in 1908 by the Hurley Machine Company of Chicago Illinois. Maytag and Whirlpool also began to produce electric motor driven wringer washers after 1911. Electric dryers were also developed during this time period. However, when they were initially introduced the dryers were too expensive for the average family. Electric washing machines and dryers designed for private home use became increasingly affordable after WWII. In the

¹⁵ Ibid, p84

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1940's and 1950's the increased availability of consumer credit made it simple and attractive for the middle class family to purchase a washing machine and dryer for their home. Factory laundries adapted their services during this time period and began offering specialized services which focused on diapers or linens. It is interesting to note that just as white laundry owners had used racism as a reason patrons should choose them over Chinese laundries, domestic washing machine makers suggested that patrons should not trust their private wash to lower class factory workers, and instead do their laundry in the privacy of their own home.

Commercial Laundries in Portland Oregon and the Birth of the Home Service Company

The Home Service Company was formed in response to labor trends that were occurring in Portland and elsewhere at the time. In order to understand why the Home Service Company was formed, it is necessary to examine more closely what was happening in Portland at the power laundries in the years leading up to its formation in 1920. It is especially useful to understand the concerns of the women who worked at the laundries. Most of the tasks involved in the commercial factory laundry with the exception of delivery drivers, washers/extractors and managers were done by women. As mechanization of the processes increased, the highest paid job for women changed from ironers to the clerical work which involved the checking and marking of the laundry as it came in.

In 1903 Oregon passed a State law which established a ten hour work day for women. In 1905 Curt Muller required a laundry worker to stay over ten hours, which resulted in the Supreme Court Case *Muller v Oregon*¹⁶. In 1908 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states have a right to limit the hours a woman may work. In the years between 1911 and 1913 there was a nationwide drive by labor activists for hourly wages and an eight hour work day for both men and women. In 1912, when Massachusetts passed the nation's first minimum wage law (which only applied to women workers) eyes turned toward Oregon to pass similar legislation. National Organizations such as the National Consumer's League (NCL) and the Association for Labor Legislation appointed a special committee to study the minimum wage situation in Oregon.¹⁷ This resulted in the Rev. Edwin O'Hara Social Survey Report which was completed in 1913.

¹⁶ *Muller v. Oregon* (1908) was one of the most significant Supreme Court cases of the Progressive Era, as it provided constitutional legitimacy to women's protective labor legislation for the first time. Curt Muller decided to test the 1903 Oregon law the same year that the Court, in *Lochner v. New York* (1905), rejected a ten-hour law for bakery workers on the basis that the law interfered with freedom of contract. In contrast, the Court in Muller ruled that in the case of women and work, freedom of contract could legitimately be limited because health, public safety, and morals were at stake. The Court was moved by the testimony of Louis D. Brandeis, lawyer for the State of Oregon, who described how long hours of arduous labor may be detrimental to the health of future mothers, and therefore, to society at large. In more recent years the decision has undergone much criticism for its unequal treatment of men and women. However, at the time the decision was touted by reform activists as humane and democratic because it sought to improve conditions for working class women. Woloch, Nancy. *Muller v. Oregon: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston, 1996; Johnston, Robert D. *The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland, Oregon*. Princeton, 2003.

¹⁷ Johnson, Elaine Gale Zahnd. "*Protective Legislation and Women's Work: Oregon's Ten-Hour Law and the Muller v. Oregon Case, 1900-1913*". Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, 1982, page 197

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In this report, a survey of 509 earning women in Portland revealed that the typical woman in Portland sent their laundry out to be done. In 1913 the average annual cost for this service ranged from \$7 to \$25 a year depending on the volume of laundry serviced.¹⁸ Portland had a Laundrymen's Club which was a social organization consisting of about twenty-five of the leading laundrymen of the City. It was formed in 1914. The O'Hara report studied nineteen laundries in Portland. Seventeen reported an average workday of 9 to 10 hours a day. Two of the laundries reported a workday of less than 9 hours.

In 1913 the following wages were reported for different commercial laundry jobs in Portland:

Job	Pay rate in Portland Oregon- 1913 ¹⁹
Markers	\$1.50/day
Manglers	\$1.50-\$2.00/day
Starchers	\$1.00-\$1.50/day
Ironers	\$1.50-\$2.00/day
Folders	\$1.25-\$1.35/day
Stackers	\$1.25-\$1.35/day

Both the Vice Commission Report²⁰ and the O'Hara report concluded that \$10 a week was what single women needed to earn to live reasonably without resorting to vice for extra income. The Vice Commission Report of 1913 described an investigation of eight laundries of the city (names withheld). The heavy lifting, the foot and leg work on the machines, the bad ventilation and the high temperatures all contributed to making this particular work severe and over taxing. In every laundry investigated there were complaints regarding bad ventilation. In one laundry within a period of two weeks (in the summer) six girls were carried out, having fainted, or been overcome with heat.²¹

The O'Hara Report found similar conditions. Of all the industries laundry scored the worst on the "too great heat" category. Work was difficult because the steam laden atmosphere often averaged 135 degrees and fainting was common. Other worker complaints concerned the strong odors from the soiled laundry and chemicals as well as the poor plumbing facilities.²²

¹⁸ O'Hara, Rev. Edwin, ed. **Report of the Social Survey Committee of the Consumer's League of Oregon on the Wages, Hours, and Conditions of Work and Cost and Standard of Living of Women Wage Earners in Oregon with Special Reference to Portland.** Portland: Keystone Press, 1913, p 65

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ City of Portland. Report of the Vice Commission to the Mayor and City Council, 1913.

²¹ Ibid, page 189

²² O'Hara, Rev. Edwin, ed. **Report of the Social Survey Committee of the Consumer's League of Oregon on the Wages, Hours, and Conditions of Work and Cost and Standard of Living of Women Wage Earners in Oregon with Special Reference to Portland.** Portland: Keystone Press, 1913, p 47-52.

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On June 3, 1913 the minimum wage act for women and minors established the Industrial Welfare Commission to regulate the hours, wages and working conditions of workers in Oregon. Soon after the establishment of this Commission on July 14, 1913, C.F. Brown of Yale Laundry contacted the Commission and asked them to investigate laundries in Portland because he was concerned about his own laundry workers becoming agitated or inspired by the strikers at a nearby cannery, the Oregon Packing Company. He was specifically interested in finding out what changes he might make at his laundry in order to avoid a similar situation among his laundry workers. Brown stated that he did not belong to the Laundrymen's Association. He reported the following working conditions at the Yale Laundry: "*Employs women for 9.5 hours a day. There is no restroom, no lunchroom, no stools at the tables. The girls prefer shorter lunches, half hour rather than an hour.*"²³

The following day, on July 15, 1913 the Industrial Welfare Commission held a meeting of the laundrymen in Portland. The following laundries were represented: Troy, Union, Yale, Opera House, National, Portland, Independent, Pacific, U.S. Laundry, State, Lace House, American, International, and Star. They were formally requested to submit their payrolls to the Commission, so that they could be evaluated and a report prepared which would recommend a minimum wage for laundry workers that would be acceptable to everyone.²⁴ In 1914 Caroline J. Gleason prepared a *Report of the Industrial Welfare Commission of the State of Oregon: "Power Laundries in Portland"*.²⁵ This report was written in order to evaluate the conditions of employment for women in Power Laundries in Portland during this time period. The report found that six wet wash laundries existed at the time. These laundries would wash and wring the clothes only and return them to their owners in a wet condition. Six hand laundries employed a total of twelve women. In three of these, power machines were used for washing and extracting water, but the other processes were done by hand. Thirty-five of the laundries were found to be Chinese and an additional three were Japanese. It was found that only Asian employees worked at these laundries. One 'white' laundry was operated in connection with a shirt factory as the last process before shipment. Two laundries were operated by hotel companies in hotel buildings. One laundered linens of hotel patrons and house linens only. The other did these essential tasks, and also solicited business from other city residents.

The fifty-two page report is substantially devoted to evaluating the working conditions at the identified 17 power laundries in the City of Portland in 1913. These laundries employed a total of 1,157 people, 768 of which were women. The study found that 7/8 of the women were American born, 1/8 were German born and 1 woman was African American. The women ranged in age from 16 to 60 years old, and 36% of the women were married, 50% were single and 13% were widowed.²⁶ While none of the laundries are mentioned by name,

²³ Oregon. Industrial Welfare Commission. **Minutes of the Industrial Welfare Commission of the State of Oregon 1913-1916.** Portland, Oregon: Oregon Historical Society, pp 21-29. Interestingly, permit records show that the original 1908 structure was built with toilets, so they were available on the premises, but clearly not made available to employees.

²⁴ Ibid, page 30.

²⁵ Gleason, Caroline J. *Report of the Industrial Welfare Commission of the State Of Oregon on the Power Laundries in Portland.* (State Printing Department, Salem Oregon) 1914.

²⁶ Ibid, pages 49-50.

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general descriptions of building types are mentioned: *“Laundries built for laundry purposes have the walls and floors constructed to withstand the jar of heavy machinery, to offer resistance to water, and to carry off heat and steam; laundries established in store or other business buildings lack these arrangements and usually have the added disadvantage of low ceilings. Twelve of the laundries are in buildings erected for laundry purposes, five are in buildings erected for other purposes. Two of these five are in buildings erected for other purposes. Two of these five are in the hotel buildings, and are located, one in the basement, the other in the sub-basement. Six of the 17 laundries are in frame buildings; 11 are in brick. Two of the laundries in frame structures erected for other than laundry purposes have occupied these buildings for 12 and 13 years respectively. Four of the brick buildings erected for laundry purposes have been occupied for three years or less. Seventy-nine per cent of the women employed are in buildings constructed for laundry purposes and 21 per cent are in buildings constructed for other purposes.”*²⁷

It was clear that laundries were not located in one particular location in the City. In Portland there was not a typical neighborhood or district where laundries were located. They were located throughout the City and ranged in size and capacity. Some of the larger factory laundries comprised at least half of a city block (100' x 200'), and often had significant large additions to accommodate an increased need for space. The Opera House Laundry (1906,1925), Troy Laundry (1913,1953), Excelsior Laundry(1906), Portland Laundry (1920,1928), and Superior Service Laundry (1928) were of this type. These laundries were located throughout the City and were originally constructed for the operation of a commercial laundry business. Other laundries were smaller in scale, and either operated out of existing storefronts such as the laundry in the Pally Bldg (1915) or adaptively reused existing buildings such as the building at 1006 SE Grand which was originally constructed for office use by Arcoa Inc in 1915, but was subsequently used by Allyn's Laundry as well as the US Laundry Company.

The report describes in great detail the occupations involved in getting the laundry done. As described earlier they include: marking, sorting, washing, shaking, mangling, starching, drying and ironing. It was noted that the laundry business required efficiency and speed in its workers: *“The laundry industry is a business the “trade” of which will brook no delays. Hence, the necessity of system and efficiency in the management, of devices for saving time in the transit of work within the plant, and of machinery and processes which will produce the best work in the shortest time. The processes through which an article must go from the time it leaves its owner until it is delivered again are unknown to nine out of every ten housewives, who are depended upon ultimately to keep the industry in existence.”*²⁸

Special analysis was made regarding the provisions made for the comfort, health and well being of the women workers, as well as the important issue of whether these women were able to make a living wage and whether they had a reasonable work week. The 1914 report summarized a list of eight recommendations suggested for Portland Power Laundries:

²⁷ Ibid, page 14

²⁸ Ibid, page 17.

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- “1. Reduce the temperature and humidity of the work rooms to a normal degree by use of exhaust fans, exhaust hoods over machines and any natural or artificial means available.*
- 2. Arrange departments and machinery so that the warmest and most exacting occupations will derive the greatest benefits from the ventilation.*
- 3. Furnish heat-deflecting devices for machines on which they may be used, e.g. body ironers.*
- 4. Install pneumatic attachments on press machines which women are expected to operate.*
- 5. Shift employees at work so that the heat and strain of the difficult occupations may be distributed.*
- 6. Furnish padding or mats for women to stand on, who work on concrete floors.*
- 7. Permit stools at work in many departments where they are not at present supplied.*
- 8. Maintain toilets, dressing rooms, and the laundry as a whole in a clean, well-swept condition.”²⁹*

It was found that 254 of the 768 were employed as manglers and that a majority of these women (212) received less than \$9 a week for working a nine hour day five days a week. As a result of this study the Industrial Welfare Commission established a minimum \$8.25 weekly wage for women workers in this Industry in Portland. On February 7 1914, the Industrial Welfare Commission ruled that women could not work in laundries over 54 hours a week.

On February 27, 1914 laundry owners in Portland announced that they were raising their prices for large scale work to cover the cost of having to comply with the Industrial Welfare Commissions rules. The Oregon Journal reported that laundry owners significantly raised the price of flatwork (linens) they charged hotels, restaurants and boarding houses. The laundry owners justified the twenty percent price increase based upon a ruling by the Industrial Welfare Commission that workers were only to work 9 hours rather than 10 hours a day. Prices for family work did not rise at this time.³⁰

By September 1917 an 8 hour workday was required and laundrymen were becoming increasingly concerned about the rising costs of their business combined with the rising wages of employees. The Oregon Labor Press reported that laundry workers were organizing a union and in October 1917 Yale laundry workers were fired for being union members. Discharged workers were blacklisted.³¹

The Oregonian reported in 1916 on a preliminary report by the census, which summarized growth in the industry. It showed an increase in steam laundries in Oregon between 1909 and 1914. In 1909 there were 58 ‘power laundries’ in the State of Oregon. By 1914 there were 31 in Portland and 78 in the state. ‘Power Laundries’ were defined as laundries that required some sort of power source (other than physical labor) to operate. Most operated by steam, but many used both steam and electric power.³² By 1917 there were 70 laundries operating in Portland, 33 of which were Chinese or Japanese.

²⁹ Ibid. page 35

³⁰ “Laundry Prices Up 10 Per Cent.” *Oregonian*, 17 Sept. 1917

³¹ “Laundry Workers Union Adds Many New Members”. *Oregon Labor Press*. 22 Sept. 1917.

³² “Laundry Statistics for Oregon Given by Department of Commerce.” *Oregonian*, 23 Jan. 1916

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As early as 1917, the *Oregonian* reported that the owner of the U.S. Laundry, John Dannells, was planning on consolidating the eight largest laundries in Portland. Later, Percy G. Allen and the Home Service Company purchased the U.S. Laundry.³³ The consolidation of Portland Laundries would create a large corporation with over \$1,000,000 in capital. The goal of consolidating was to reduce overhead expenses. They expected to save about ½ of their expenses in overhead.³⁴

In 1919 the laundry workers in Portland went out on strike. As the *Oregon Labor Press* reported: “*Recognizing the conditions under which the girls have been working and fully aware of the strong combination which must be whipped, the delegates voted the appointment of a committee of twelve members to cooperate with the laundry workers in conducting the strike... A strike of twenty unorganized laundry workers at the National Laundry Friday of last week has spread until it takes in all the laundries in the City except Liberty, Very Best and the Mechanics, which are running under Union conditions.. The laundries affected, all members of the Laundrymen’s Association, are: American, Crystal, Crescent, Imperial, National, Opera House, Oregon, Palace, Portland, State, U.S., Union and Yale.*”³⁵ Feelings in the City were running high and many housewives were encouraged not to have their laundry done by laundries who were unsympathetic to the union: “*A few wealthy laundry owners will continue to pile up their dollars ground out of the lives of women for the City, for most of the laundry workers are women.*”³⁶ Some of the laundries tried to launch their own counter campaigns. For example, Union Laundry placed an ad in the February 15, 1919 issue of the *Oregon Labor Press*. This was not to be effective, however, and in September 1919, the Press noted that although the striking laundry workers considered Union to be the most unfair, its name fooled many unsuspecting customers who thought they were patronizing a fair laundry.³⁷ During 1919 it was estimated that laundries in Portland were operating at only 50% because of striking workers, and the boycotting public. The *Oregon Labor Press* reported on October 18, 1919 that all the laundries were suffering as a result of the strike, but that Opera House, Portland and Union laundries were the worst hurt by the strike. In November of 1919 it was announced by the union that a laundry to be known as the “Victory Laundry” was going to open on 69th and Foster Rd., and would be operated by organized labor.³⁸ Strikes continued to spread throughout Oregon, with laundry workers striking in Bend and The Dalles.

In direct response to the difficulties they were facing from their workers, the laundry owners formed a State Association in 1920. An event was held at the Benson Hotel in Portland with the organization establishing a

³³ An 1938 advertisement for Allyn’s Cleaning and Dyeing lists one of its locations as that of the former U.S. Laundry. Percy Allen owned Allyn’s and therefore must have purchased the U.S. Laundry subsequent to 1917.

³⁴ “Big Merger is Plan.” *Oregonian*, April 1, 1917

³⁵ “Laundry Workers Fight Big-Combine”. *Oregon Labor Press*. September 20, 1919, p1.

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Strike Grows- Laundry Workers Flocking to Union-Non Union Workers Still Coming Out- Support by Labor is Greatest in Local Labor History”. *Oregon Labor Press*. 27 Sept. 1919.

³⁸ “Laundry is Ready For Business.” *Oregon Labor Press*. 7 Feb. 1920.

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Section number 8 Page 15

mission for: “*the protection of the industry against unjust competition and discrimination.*”³⁹ Percy G. Allen was elected temporary chairman of this organization.

The Home Services Company was founded in 1920 by Percy Allen in part as a direct response to the challenges laundry owners faced from their workers. They also consolidated to save money on overhead expenses as well as to increase potential profits. They were very successful in achieving their goals. Various changes were made to the Articles of Incorporation over the years mostly related to the redistribution and increase of common and preferred stock as the company became more successful. By 1937 the Home Service Company had 62,468 shares of prior preferred stock and 20,000 shares of common stock. In the late forties the company started to decline due to the decreased demand for their services, and increased availability of the personal washing machine. Beginning in 1947 the Yale Laundry Company became known as City Linen Supply Co. and advertised that they specialized in cleaning products like linens, towels and aprons. In 1950 the Yale Laundry Company was sold to the American Linen Supply Company. Robert D. Pollock was their general manager. In 1959 the company began operating Perfect Fit Manufacturing, which still operates in the building today.

On February 1 1962 the Home Service Company cancelled through purchase 700 shares of its issued and outstanding preferred stock. At this time the Company had a total of 1,210 shares of preferred stock, and 14,682 shares of common stock, with a total value which was less than the original \$1,000,000 investment. The Home Service Company existed until October 11, 1976 when its assets were liquidated, at this time there were only two laundries still held by the company which included the Allyn’s Cleaners and Troy Laundry.⁴⁰

³⁹ “Laundry Owners Gather to Form State Association.” *Oregon Journal*. November 6, 1920.

⁴⁰ Articles of Dissolution. “Allyn’s Cleaners and Troy Laundry Inc.”. Oct. 1976.

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Summary and Conclusion

The Yale Laundry Building located at 800 E 10th Ave. is representative of commercial laundry buildings that were built and operated in Portland during the early twentieth century. In 1920 several Portland laundries were consolidated into one large corporation called the Home Service Company, which continued to acquire additional power laundries throughout the city. From 1927-1950 the Yale Laundry Building was one of the businesses held by this company. Technological advancements allowed the laundry industry to grow which led to the employment of more people. Many of those employed were women who often worked long hours under harsh conditions. As a result of the U.S Supreme Court case Muller vs. Oregon (1908) female laundry workers became symbolic of the need to enforce state labor laws. Organized labor and unions grew in Portland and directly affected the ability of power laundries to conduct business. The Home Service Company was a local manifestation of the response of industrial laundry owners to the actions of the organized women's labor movement in Portland. The alterations that were made to the building after it was purchased by the Home Service Company and the merge of Yale with the Union Laundry clearly convey the financial success that the Home Service Company achieved in the industrial laundry business in Portland during this time period. Only after this building was purchased by the Home Service Company did the building acquire the distinctive architectural features that still exist today.

Since the Yale Union Laundry Building remains intact, its ability to convey information about the industrial laundry business in the early twentieth century is excellent. For this reason the Yale Union Laundry Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

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Yale Union Laundry Building
Name of Property

Multnomah County, OR
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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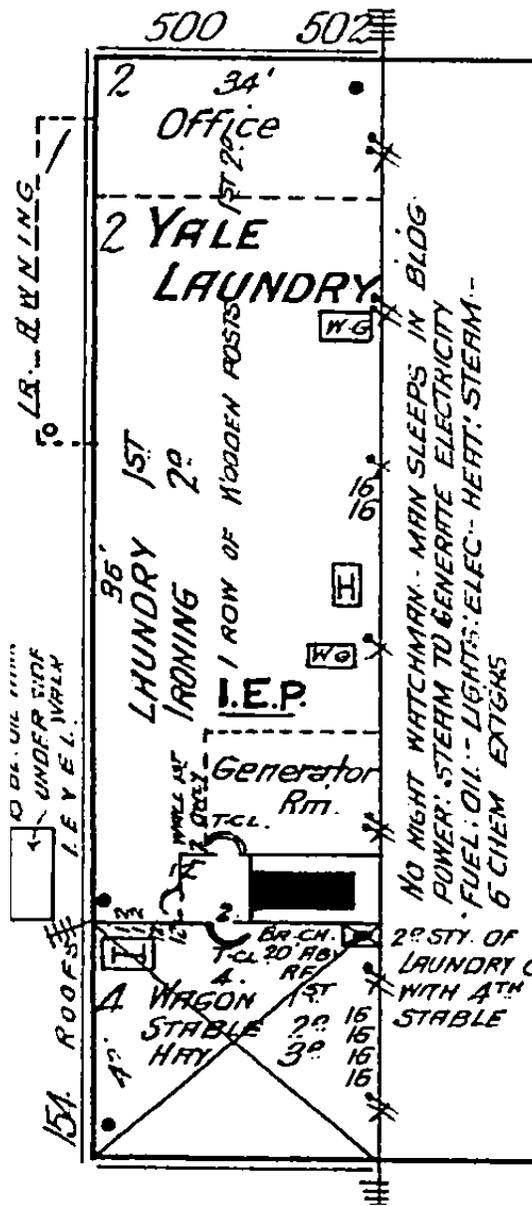
Section number 10 Page 1

The Yale Union Laundry Building is located in Portland, Oregon in East Portland on the southwest corner of the block at the intersection of 10th and Morrison. The boundary was determined by the lots lines of lots 1, except for the north 12' which is part of E. Morrison Street, and lots 2-4 of Block 18 of the East Portland Addition. The tax lot identification number for this property is #R150452.

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Section number Supplemental Information Page 1

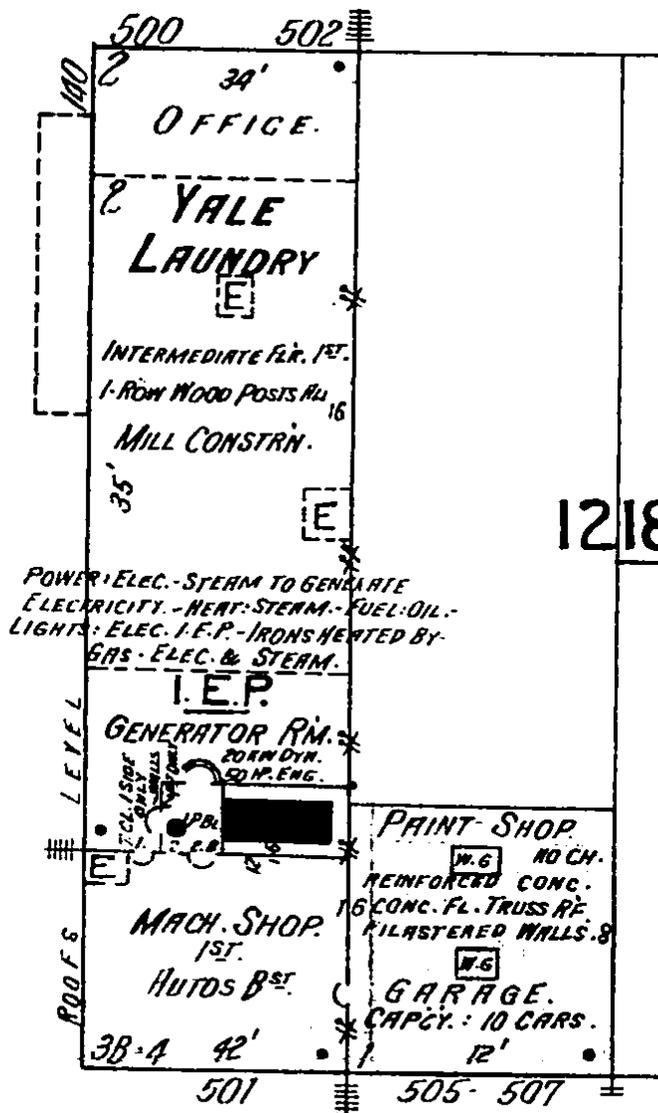
Sanborn 1909, Vol 4, sheet 401



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Sanborn 1924, Vol 7., Sheet 729



National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

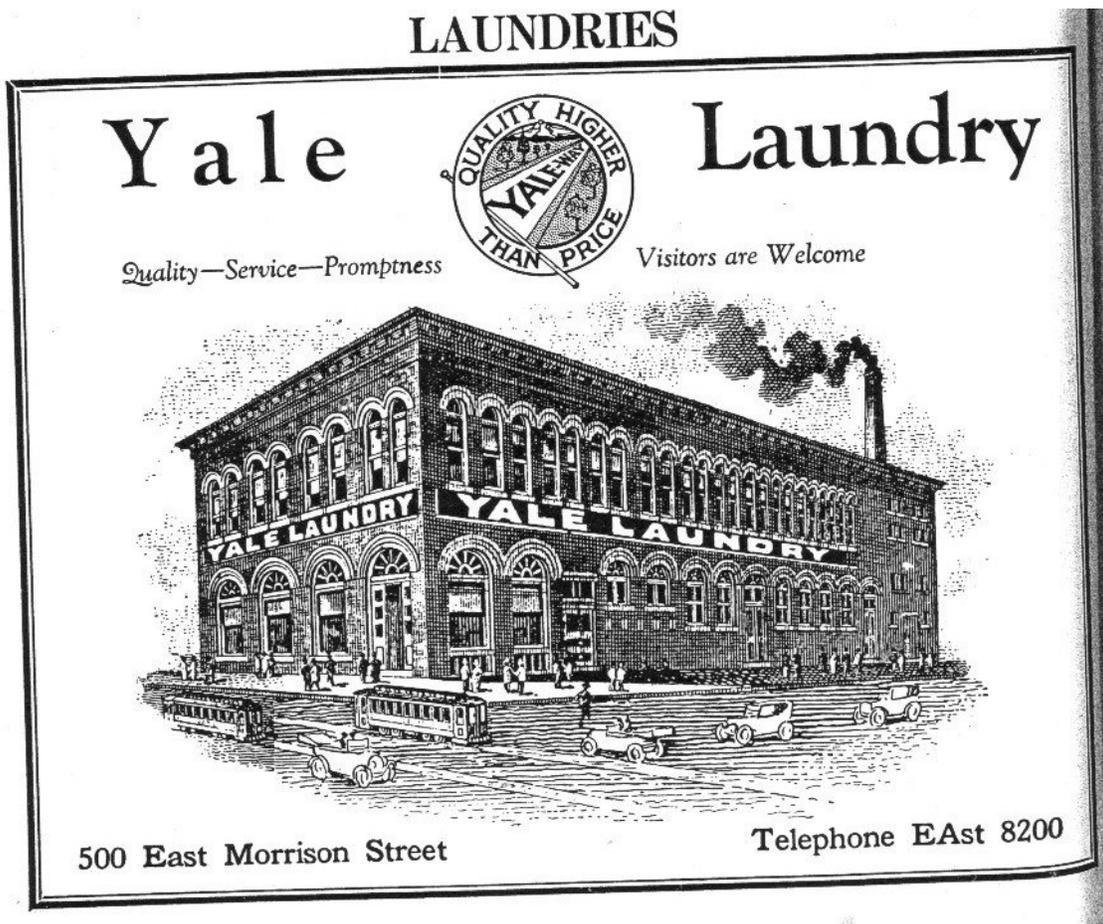
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Yale Laundry Ad- 1922 Polk Directory, Portland Oregon

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Yale Laundry Ad, Polk Directory, Portland Oregon, 1923-1924

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SE Morrison circa 1929
OHS Negative # COP 00739
Photograph to be used for reference use only

Yale Union Laundry Building
Name of Property

Multnomah County, OR
County and State

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OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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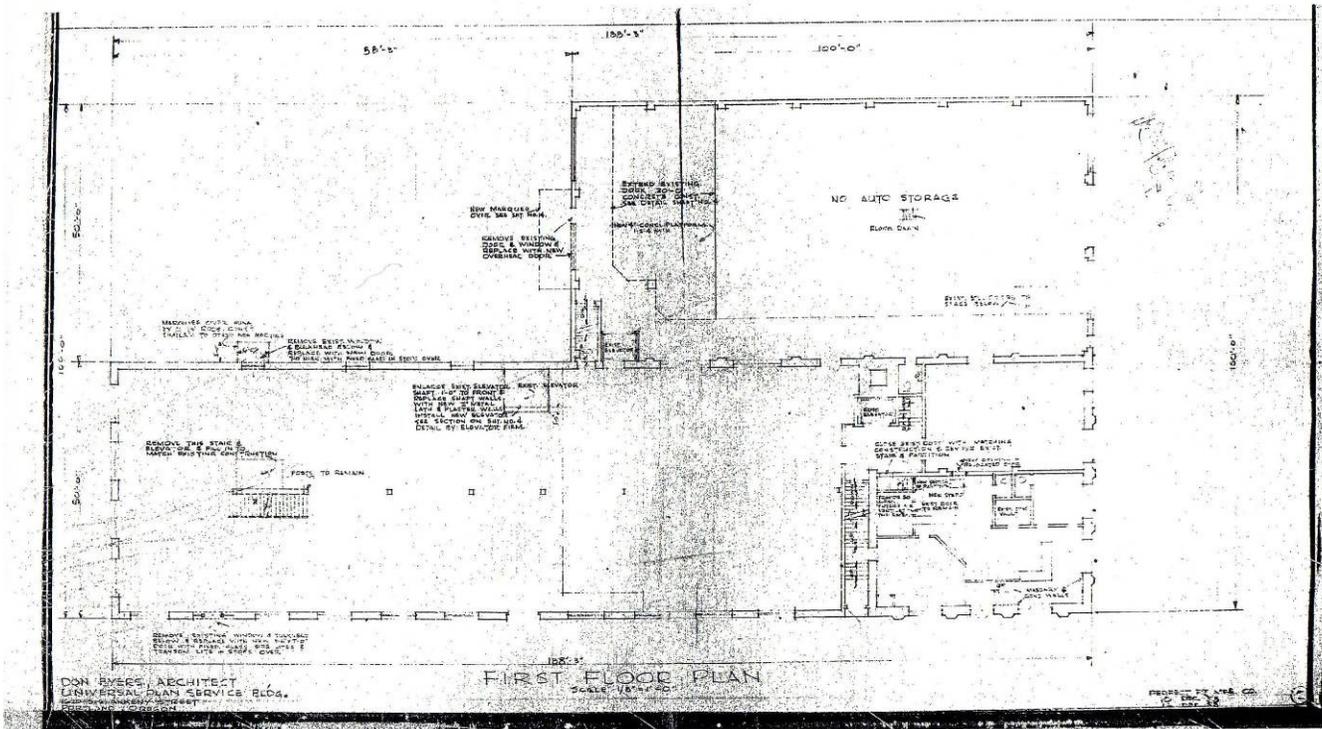
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Yale Union Laundry Building, circa 1950
OHS Negative # CN 006589
Photograph to be used for reference use only

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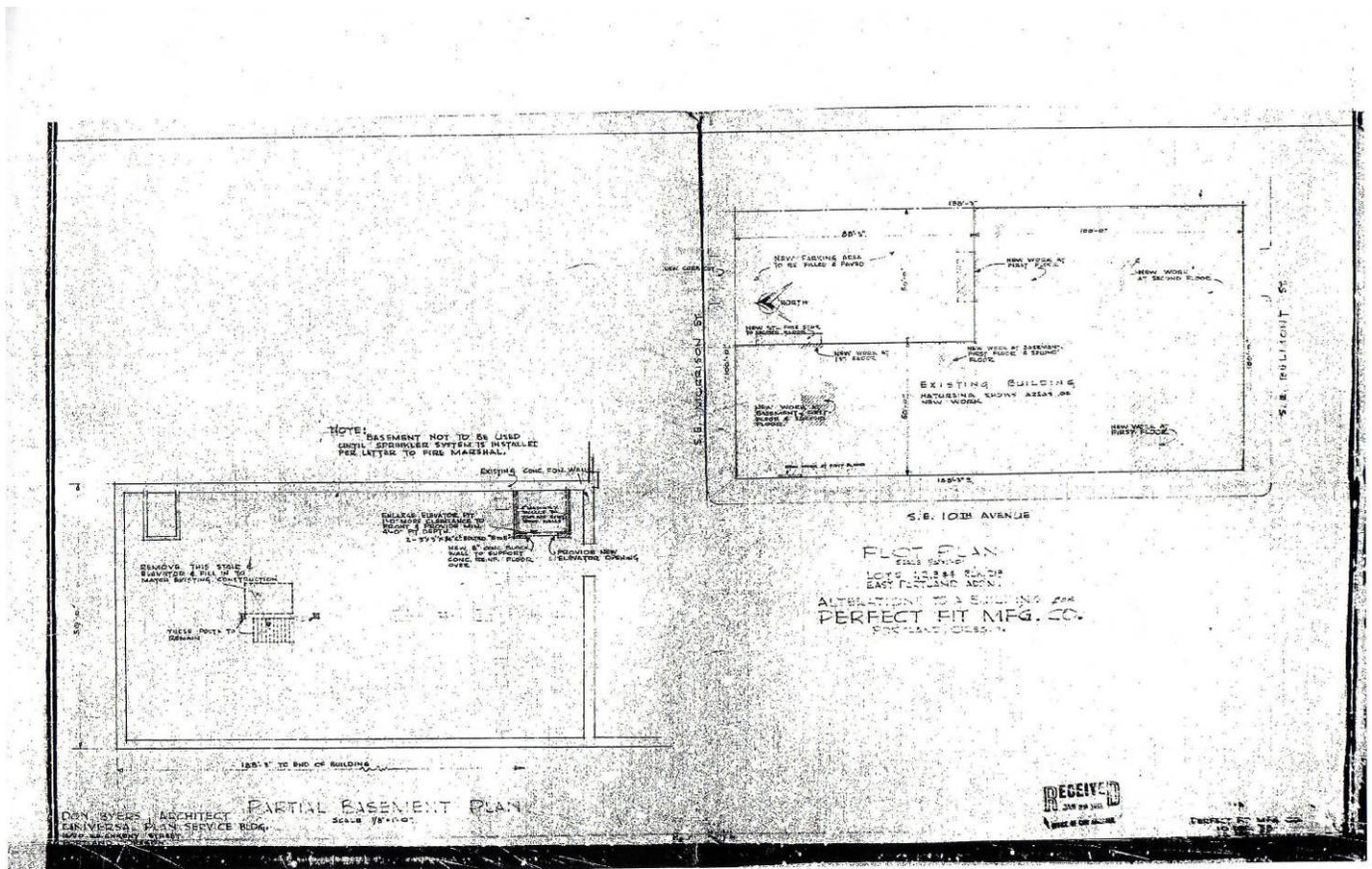
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Yale Union Laundry Building, First Floor plan

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Yale Union Laundry Building, Partial Basement Plan and Plot Plan

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Section number Supplemental Information Page 11

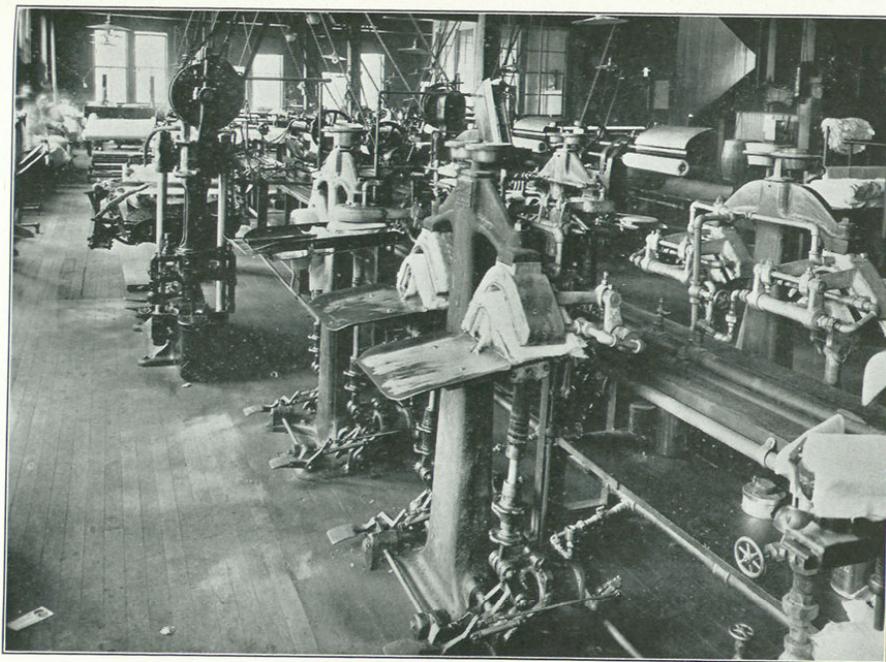
Typical Commercial Laundry Work Process¹

Step	Typical Location	Task	Type of Equipment/Machinery	Worker/Gender (typical)
Arrival	Front lobby or delivery entrance	Delivery/drop off of goods	Delivery truck	Delivery man/male
Checking	First floor (away from lobby)	Inventory of what was brought in	None	Checker/female
Marking	First floor (away from lobby)	Laundry marked to identify owner	Invisible ink, thread, pin	Marker/female
Sorting	First floor (away from lobby)	Laundry separated into categories: black, white, colored or fabric type	None	Sorter/female (skill required to determine fabric types)
Washing	Basement/first floor	Laundry washed	Washing machine; most machines belt driven with an internal perforated metal cage.	Washer/male & female (most difficult job-moving wet laundry to extractor)
Extracting	Basement/first floor	Excess water removed from laundry	Centrifugal extractor: removed excess water by centrifugal force (most dangerous machine)	Extractor/male & female (job with highest level of fatalities and injuries)
Shaking	Basement/first floor	Laundry is shaken out	None	Shakers/female (typically young girls-easiest job to get)
Mangling	Second floor	Laundry is pressed out	Mangle machine (rollers padded with fabric and heated by steam or gas)	Mangler/female (burned or crushed fingers common)
Starching	Second floor	Laundry is starched	Starching machine (post 1910)- prior to that starch applied by hand	Starcher/female
Drying	Second floor	Laundry is dried	Drying Closet: enclosed boxes with heating elements (usually pipes from the boiler).	Dryer/female
Ironing	Second floor (area with most light)	Laundry is ironed	Hand ironing with gas irons, last process to be mechanized	Ironer; female (highest paid job, required the most skill)
Folding & Stacking	First floor/pickup area	Laundry is folded and stacked, made ready for delivery or pickup	none	Folder/Stacker/female

¹ Mohun, Arwen P. Steam Laundries: Gender, Technology, and Work in the United States and Great Britain, 1880-1940. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999, page 85-88.

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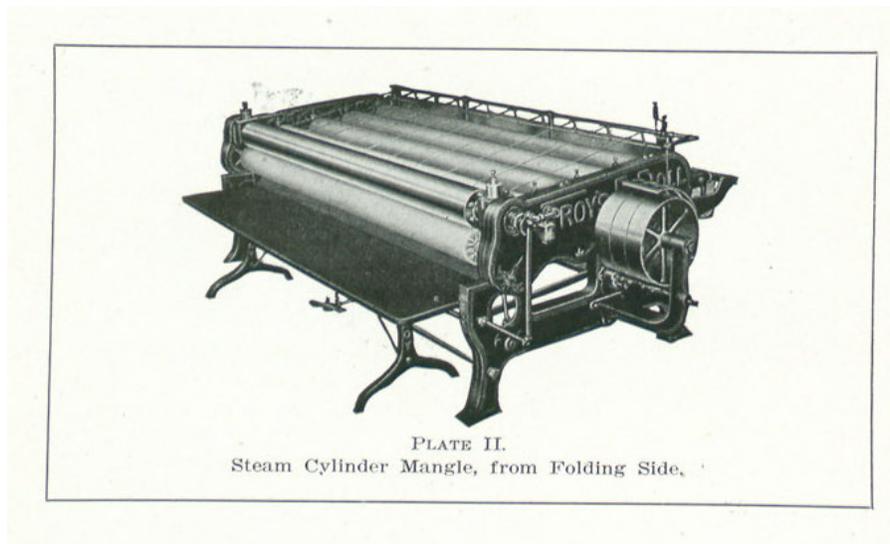
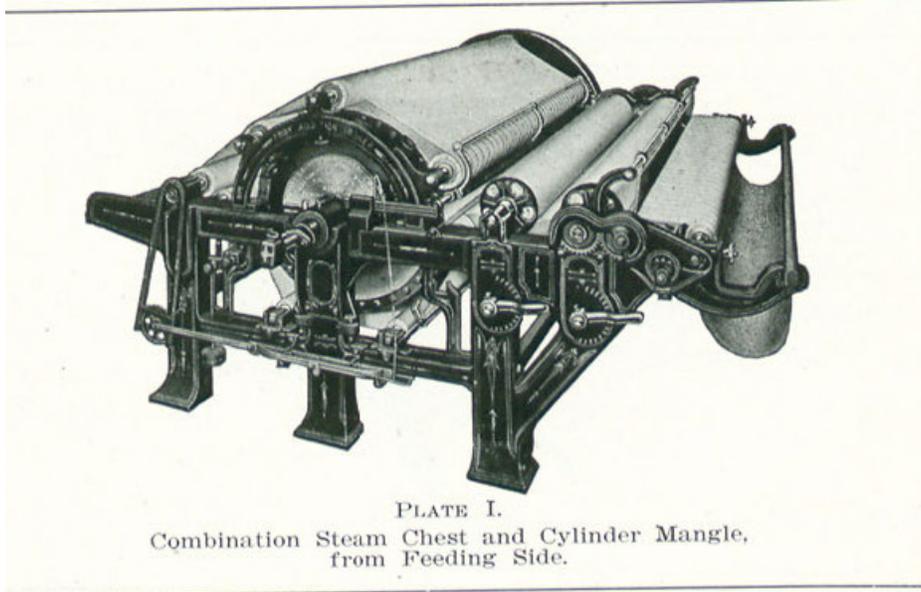
FRONTISPIECE
Body Linen Ironing Room. Showing 14 Press Machines and Body Ironers Equipped with Pneumatic Treadles,
Union Laundry, Portland.

Press Machines and Body Ironers Union Laundry, Portland, circa 1913

Gleason, Caroline J. *Report of the Industrial Welfare Commission of the State Of Oregon on the Power Laundries in Portland.* (State Printing Department, Salem Oregon) 1914. p Frontispiece

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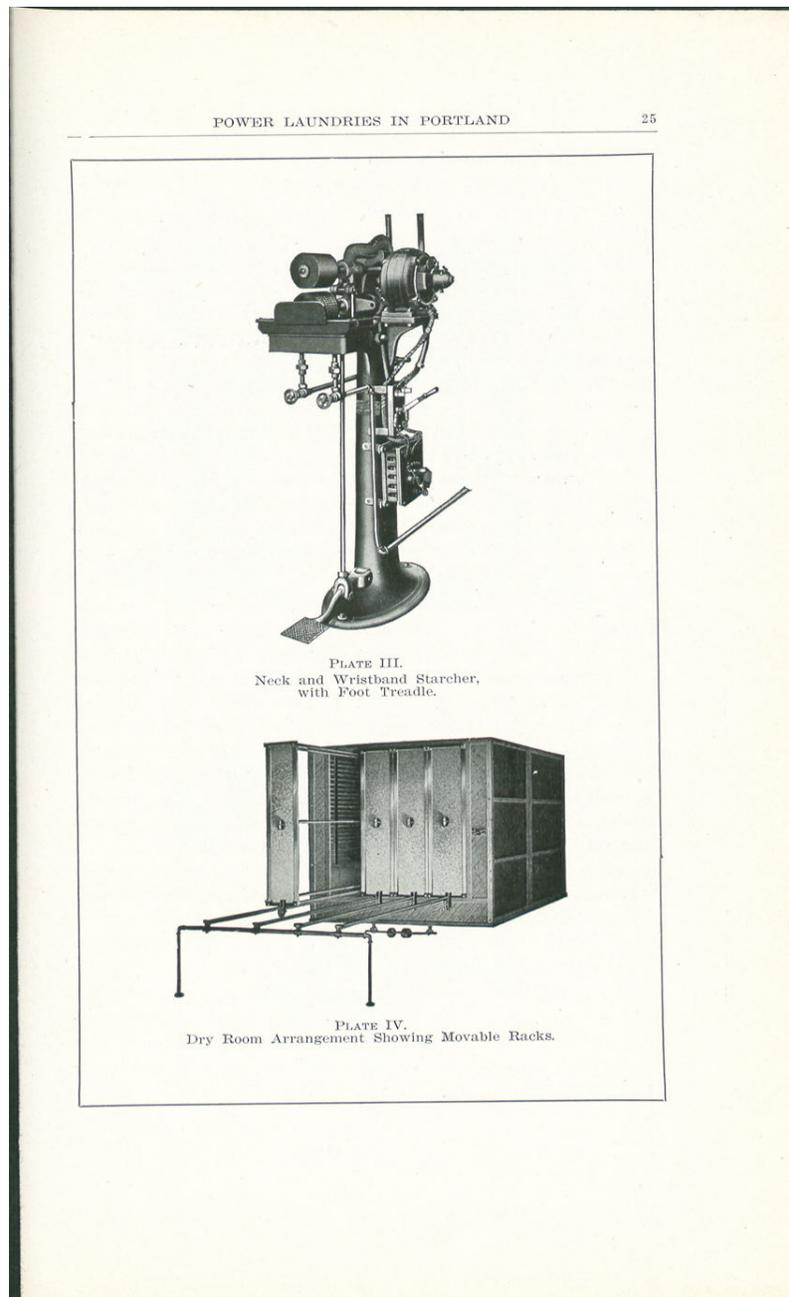
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Mangle

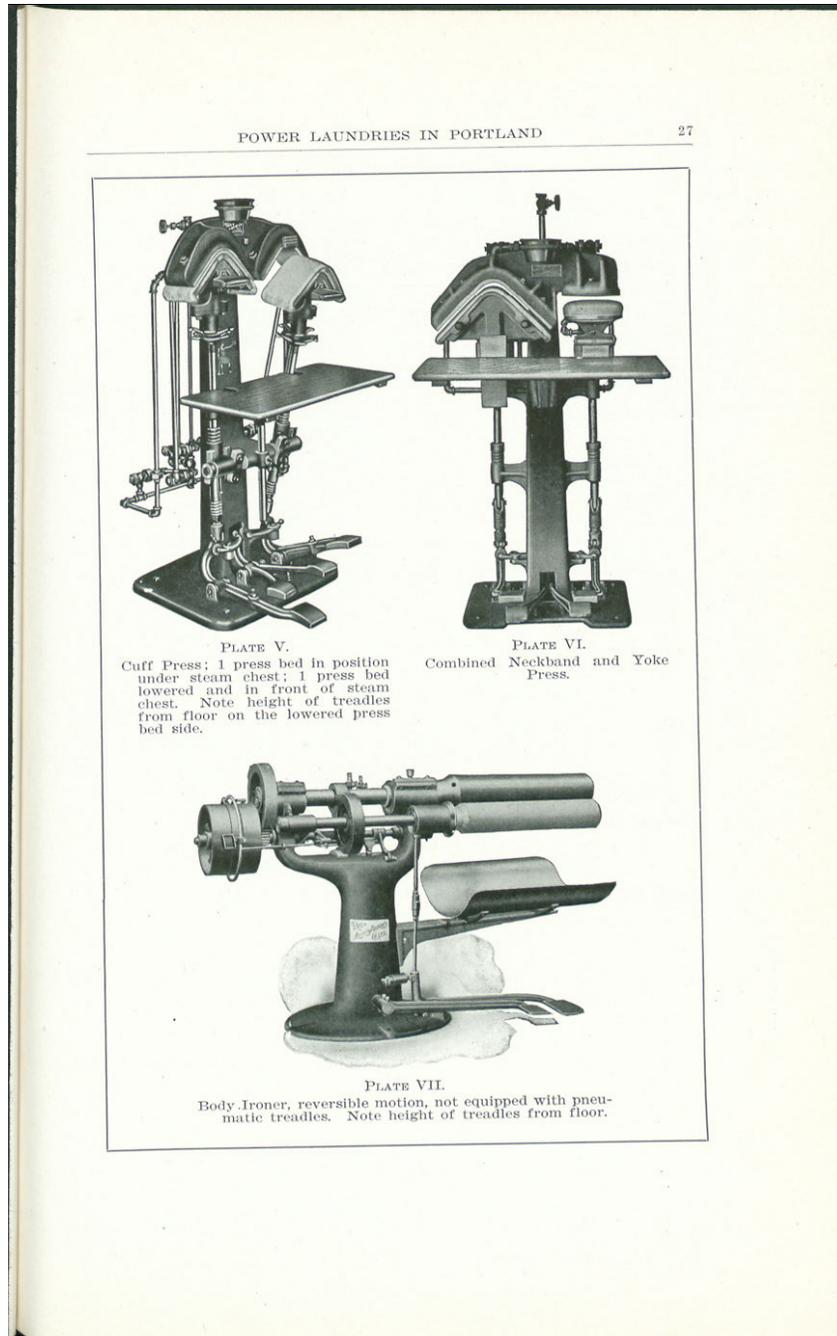
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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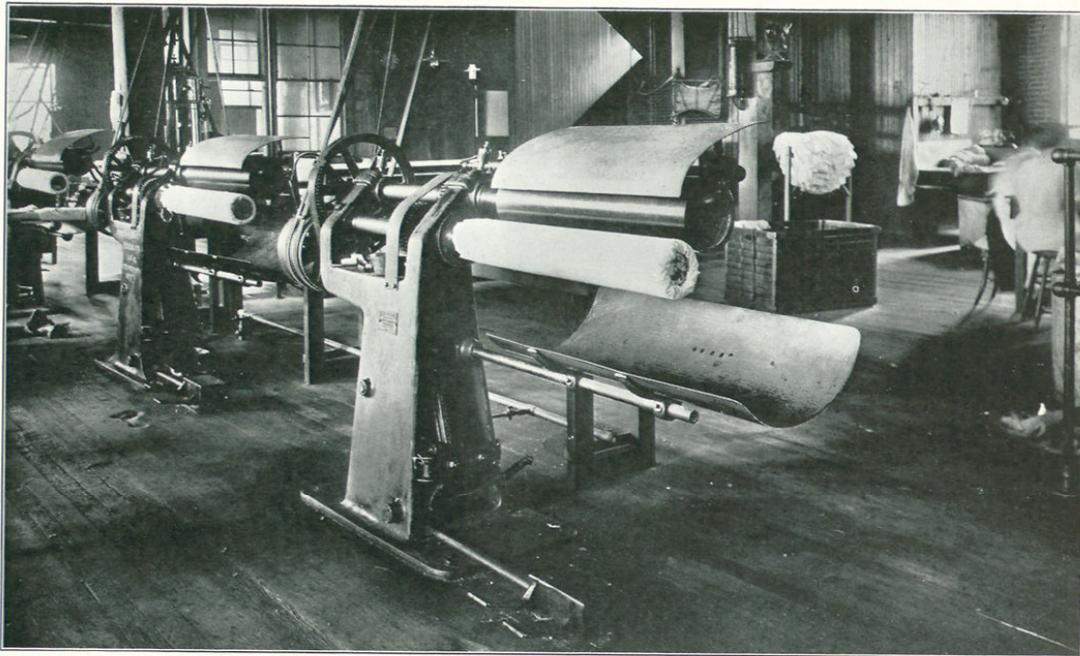


PLATE VIII. Body Ironers in Portland equipped with Pneumatic Treadles.

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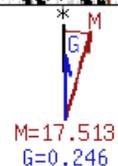
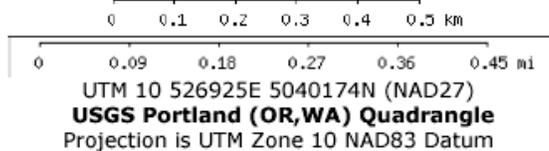
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Aerial Photograph of the Yale Union Laundry
Portland Map Collection
Yale Union Laundry

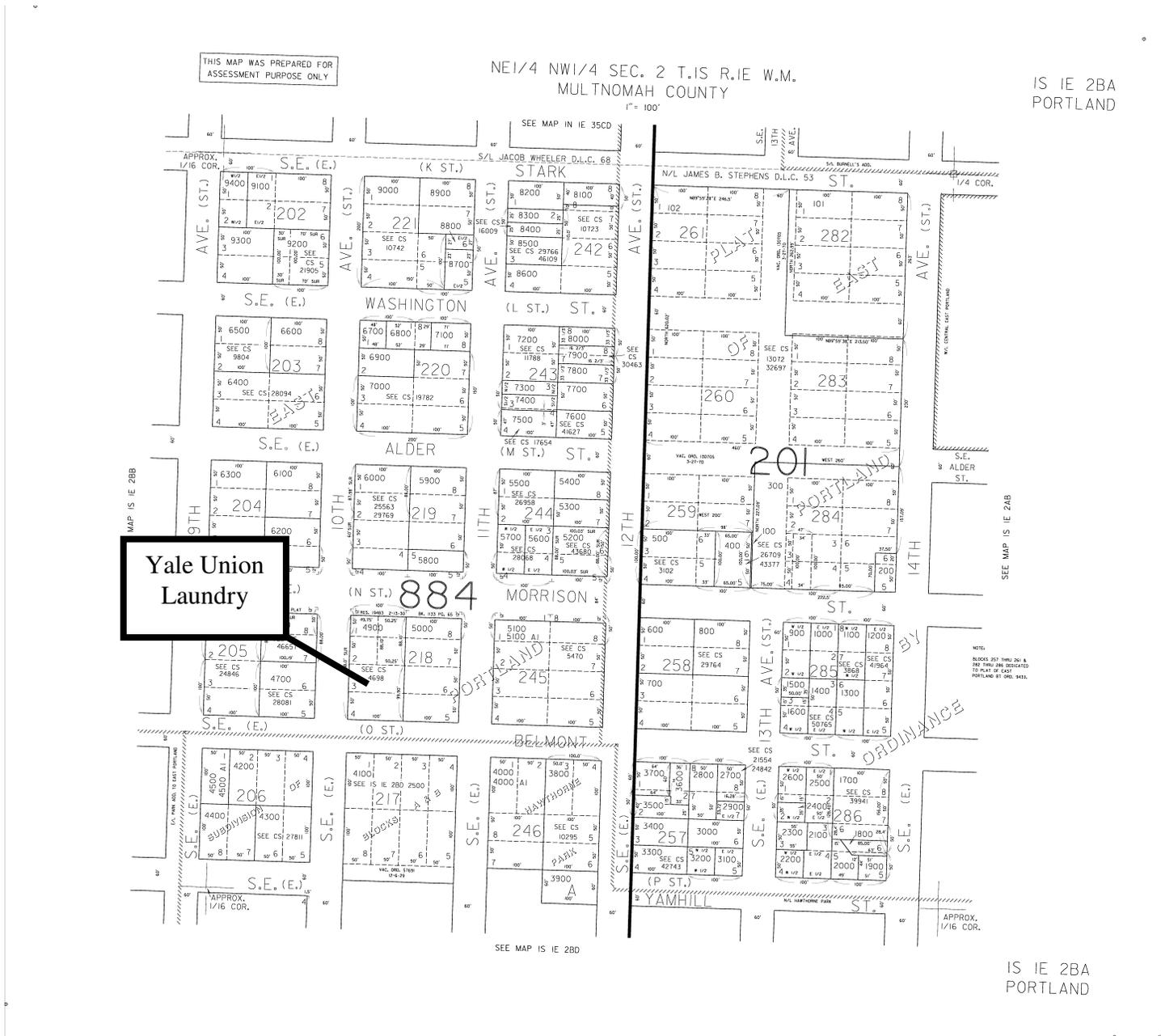
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Supplemental Information Page 20



National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Photographs

Yale Union Laundry Building
800 East 10th Street
Portland, OR

Photographer: Margaret Marcusen
Ink and paper: Cannon Chromalife 100 Ink and Cannon Photo Paper Plus Glossy
Date: October 2006

Photo List

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|--|
| #1 | Exterior View: | Looking NE at Southwest Façade |
| #2 | Exterior View: | Looking E at Northwest Facade |
| #3 | Exterior View: | Looking E at West Façade, carving detail |
| #4 | Exterior View: | Looking SE at West Façade carvings |
| #5 | Exterior View: | Looking SW at Northeast Façade and water tower |
| #6 | Exterior View: | Looking SW at water tower detail |
| #7 | Interior View: | First Floor: Looking NW at current entry and NW corner |
| #8 | Interior View: | First Floor: Looking S from front entry toward warehouse |
| #9 | Interior View: | First Floor: Looking NE at front office and NE corner |
| #10 | Interior View: | First Floor: Looking N at office and floor detail |
| #11 | Interior View: | First Floor: Looking S at warehouse and chute |
| #12 | Interior View: | First Floor: Looking E at elevator with door open |
| #13 | Interior View: | First Floor: Looking S at loading dock with scale |
| #14 | Interior View: | First Floor: Looking W under stairs and chute |
| #15 | Interior View: | First Floor: Looking S at warehouse toward South office |
| #16 | Interior View: | First Floor: Facing SE at Southeast office |
| #17 | Interior View: | First Floor: Facing SW at Southwest office |
| #18 | Interior View: | First Floor: Facing SE at 2 nd Southwest office |
| #19 | Interior View: | First Floor: Facing S at SW entry to office |
| #20 | Interior View: | First Floor: Facing NE lattice and stairs to SE office |
| #21 | Interior View: | First Floor: Facing E at stairs to 2 nd level and chute |
| #22 | Interior View: | Second Floor, level 1: Facing SE and Ironing room |
| #23 | Interior View: | Second Floor, level 1: Facing N, lunch room |
| #24 | Interior View: | Second Floor, level 1: Facing W, ramp to 2 nd level |
| #25 | Interior View: | Second Floor, level 2: Facing SW, large room |
| #26 | Interior View: | Second Floor, level 2: Facing E, open elevator door |
| #27 | Interior View: | Second Floor, level 2: Facing N, big room |
| #28 | Interior View: | Basement: Facing SE, concrete platforms |
| #29 | Interior View: | Basement: Facing NW, boiler room |
| #30 | Interior View: | Basement: Facing N, hallway |

Yale Union Laundry Building
Name of Property

Multnomah County, OR
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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- | | | |
|-----|----------------|--|
| #31 | Interior View: | Basement: Facing SE, Elevator and service |
| #32 | Interior View: | Basement: Facing N, Storage / work room |
| #33 | Interior View: | Basement: Facing NW, under stairs, NW basement corner |
| #34 | Interior View: | Basement: Facing N: Stairs to front office from basement |

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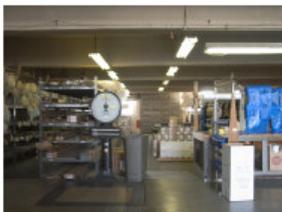
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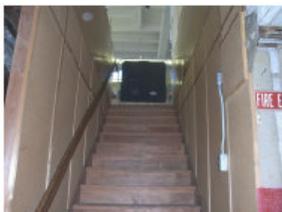
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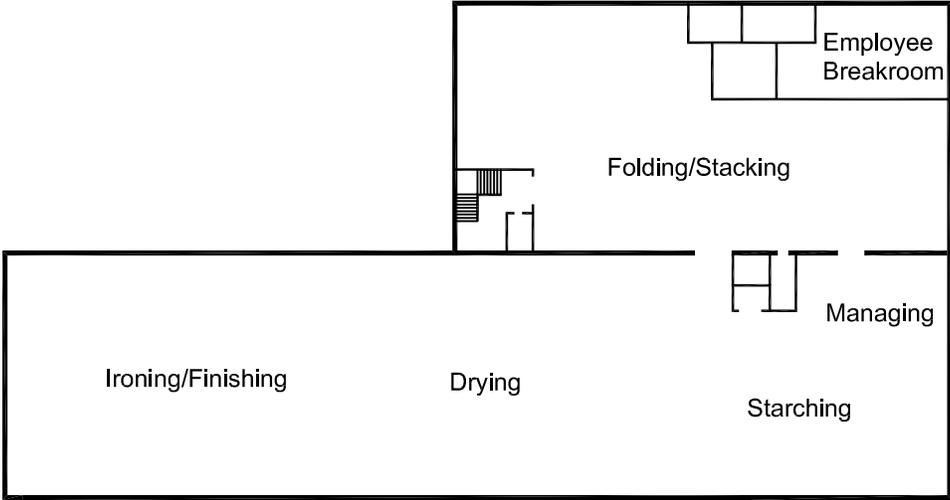
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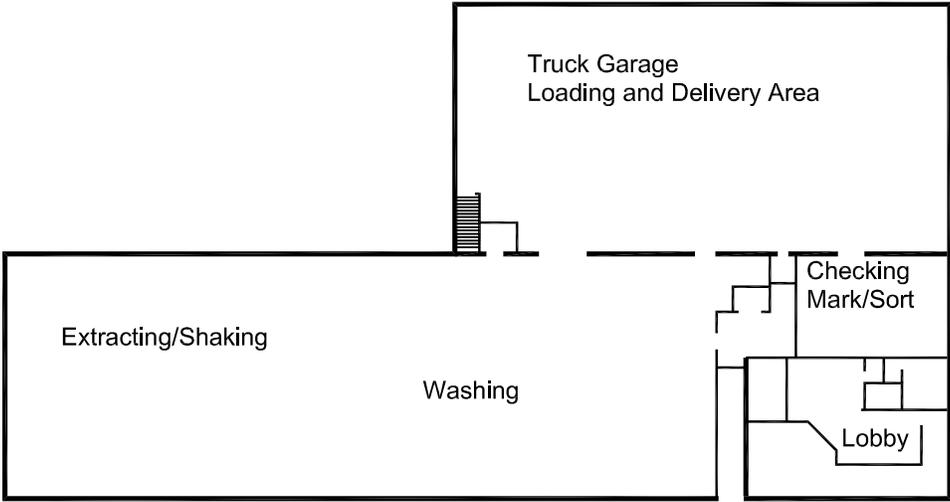
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Yale-Union Laundry Building

Work Process



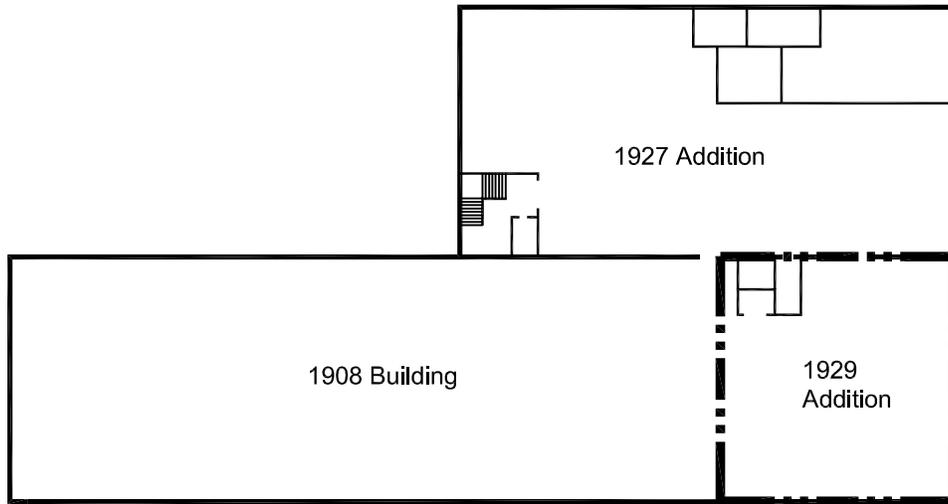
Second Floor



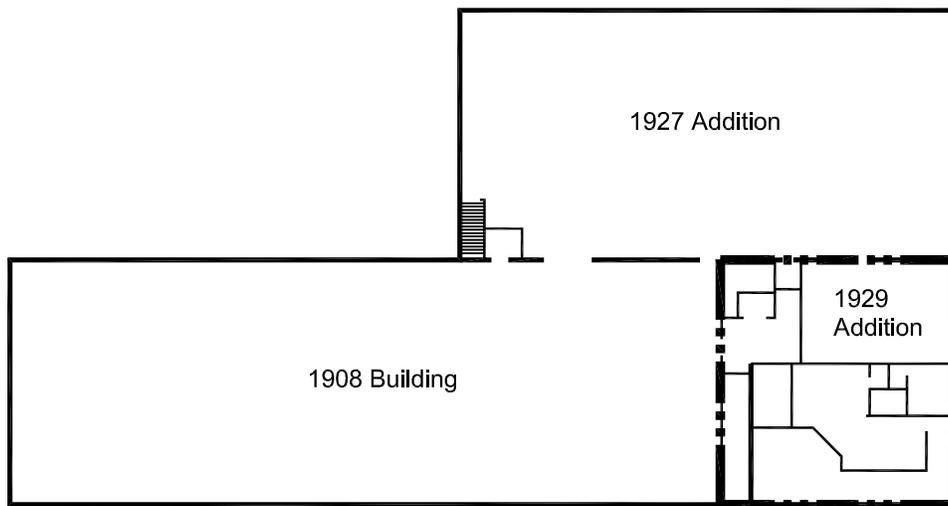
First Floor

Yale-Union Laundry Building

Building Evolution



Second Floor



First Floor