

Student Handout 4-Washing at the Bosh

The effects of working in the heat are noticeable. On a street car the men who are employed where the heat strikes their faces can often be singled out because of their peculiar complexion. Sometimes their faces are red, sometimes covered with pimples, and the skin is nearly always rough. Many people, including steel workers themselves, believe that copious perspiration is healthful under such conditions of temperature. The mill men drink great draughts of water and sweat freely. This may be healthful within certain limits, but beyond these limits it is weakening to the whole system...

The abnormal heat of the mills may lead directly or indirectly to other ailments, some of which could be avoided by precaution on the part of the men, and some of which are inevitable. It should be remembered that there is great heat even in the winter months; as much physical exertion is required then as at any other time, and the men perspire freely in the coldest weather. No man, with his work clothes in such condition, can go from the atmosphere of the mill out into the cold winter air without incurring great risk. To be safe, every man ought to take a bath and make a complete change of clothing before leaving the mill. This, however, is impossible because of the lack of bathing facilities and privacy in most of the Pittsburgh mills.

Source: *The Pittsburgh Survey, Chapter VII: Accidents and Health in Steel Making*, pp. 60-61.



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Credit: Fitch, John A. *The Steel Workers: The Pittsburgh Survey findings in six volumes*, ed. P.U. Kellogg
New York: Charities Publications Committee, 1910.

Photography by Lewis Hine