

**THE LIVING WAGE OF WOMEN
WORKERS: A STUDY OF
INCOMES
AND EXPENDITURES OF 450
WOMEN IN THE CITY OF BOSTON**

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The Living Wage of Women Workers: A Study of Incomes and Expenditures of 450 Women in the City of Boston by Louise Marion Bosworth & F. Spencer Baldwin

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LOUISE MARION BOSWORTH & F. SPENCER BALDWIN

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A STUDY OF INCOMES AND EXPENDITURES OF 400 WOMEN IN THE
CITY OF BOSTON

BY

LOUISE MARION BOSWORTH

PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH
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Minimum Wage For Women

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PREFATORY NOTE

PLAN AND SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION

A tentative beginning of this investigation was made in September, 1906, when the Department of Research of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union attempted to gather data concerning the cost of living for working girls dependent on their own resources through inquiries among lodging-house proprietors. The few schedules that were filled out by this means were so inadequate, however, that they were found to be useless for the purposes of the present report.

In January, 1907, the work of investigation was taken up by Miss Jane Barclay, who had received training in welfare work in a Boston department store. The method followed at this time consisted in the distribution of schedules to be filled out by women workers, assisted through personal visits by the investigator. In this way 100 schedules were started.

After several months it became clear that authoritative information as to minor expenses could not be obtained in this fashion. In order to secure such information the Department of Research prepared and printed a classified account book for the use of the women workers dealt with in the investigation. At this point the work was taken up and carried forward to its conclusion by Miss Bosworth, who held a fellowship for the years 1907-1909. Account books were distributed to the 100 women already engaged in filling out schedules. The result was an immediate depletion in their ranks. The interest of others also gradually waned. In fact, most of the women had been interested in the beginning only through the vision of higher wages, and when they found that the investigator could not promise them living wages immediately on the completion of a year's accounts, they decided that the bother of account keeping was not worth while. Thus, one by one, they dropped out.

The investigation was then extended along different lines. In various ways the investigator got into touch with working girls—through the medium of clubs, unions, settlements, department stores, and through addresses furnished by societies, institutions