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F. Billerica Historical

INFORMATION PERTINENT TO CONSIDERATION
OF JOHN MANVILLE'S BILLERICA FACTORY FOR AWARD
OF MARITIME COMMISSION "F"

1. Name of firm:

Johns-Manville Products Corporation of Massachusetts, North Billerica, Mass.

S. A. Williams, President
A. R. Fisher, Vice President
Roger Hackney, Treasurer
Vandiver Brown, Secretary

This corporation is a subsidiary of the Johns-Manville Corporation,
22 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y.

2. Name, address and title of principal officials of the company:

Lewis H. Brown, President,	22 East 40th Street, New York, N.Y.
R. W. Lee, Vice President,	" " " " " "
S. A. Williams, Vice President,	" " " " " "
L. R. Hoff, Vice President,	" " " " " "
C. F. Hassweiler, Vice President,	" " " " " "
Roger Hackney, Treasurer,	" " " " " "
Vandiver Brown, Secretary,	" " " " " "

3. Name, address and title of official in Charge of Public Relations:

John P. Syne, 22 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y.

4. Location of plants now working on Maritime contracts:

The other Johns-Manville plants engaged in supplying products to the Maritime Commission are located at Manville, N. J.; Richmond, Indiana; Alexandria, Indiana; Redwood City, California, and Waukegan, Illinois.

5. Location of Home Office:

22 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y.

6. Number of employees now working on Maritime contracts. (Note: This would apply, in this case, only to Billerica employees, since the application is for that plant only.)

120 employees - the total personnel of Billerica Factory.

7. Brief history of firm, describing production in peacetime:

The Johns-Manville Corporation owns and operates asbestos mines in Asbestos, Quebec and Chrysotile, Arizona, and fourteen factories located in the United States. The company has been in existence for eighty years and is the leading manufacturer of asbestos products. At the present time about 80% of the products are going directly or indirectly into war effort. The principal products are all forms of insulation, pipe, acoustical materials, friction materials, asbestos textile, insulating and filtration products.

Made from diatomaceous earth. The Johns-Manville Corporation is professionally managed and owned by more than 8,000 stockholders. In addition to the mines and factories, it maintains a large research department at Manville, N. J. Because of the general nature of Johns-Manville products and their immediate applicability to war uses, practically no time was lost in converting to war work. The factory at Manville, N. J. has already been awarded the Army-Navy "E" for its production record, and several other factories have been requested by their local Army and Navy inspectors to submit data to the Army-Navy Award Board for similar awards.

Billerica Plant, Marinite and Marine Sheathing Development

Johns-Manville started research on fire-proof bulkheads for ships directly after September 8, 1934, the date of the "Morro Castle" fire.

Through research and cooperation with Mr. Geo. C. Sharpe committee, appointed by the President we submitted specially developed materials in the following order:

- (1) Cellular asbestos panels of special design.
- (2) Solid asbestos panels, Marine Sheathing type weighing 70 lbs. per cu. ft.
- (3) Solid asbestos panels of the Marinite types weighing 40 lbs. per cu. ft.

Numbers (2) and (3) were approved by Sharpe's committee after fire tests on the "S.S. Nantasket".

Later research and development brought Marine Sheathing and Marinite weights down approximately 10%. Production was started on these materials at our Nashua, N. H. factory in 1937 and carried on there until 1939. On February 20, 1939, J-M Officers Board approved the Billerica, Mass., plant for the exclusive production of Marinite and Marine Sheathing and this plant was shipping in another four or five months. Plant was designed for a production of 2,000,000 board feet of these materials per year. By the middle of 1941 this production was brought up to 2,400,000 board feet or 4,000,000 square feet per year which rate was maintained through 1942. For the first quarter of 1943 a rate of 2,800,000 board feet has been maintained and we expect to boost this up to well over 3,000,000 board feet by the latter half of the year due to some additional equipment, removing bottle necks, etc.

8. Description of materials supplied to the Commission and/or the prime contractors ... how it is used, etc.

Two Materials Supplied

(1) Marinite

A light-weight, fire resistant, homogeneous sheet material for high insulating value, made of asbestos fibre with an inorganic binder with proper preservative treatment it can be painted, decorated and veneered with all the conventional finishes.

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(2) Marine Sheathing

Similar in appearance and composition to Marinite but heavier and stronger. Will take same finishes as Marinite.

Both are used as marine joiner materials for fire-proof bulkheads, outboard lining and ceiling assemblies. Both are excellent for cutting, drilling and painting.

9. Size and amount of present contracts:

Orders for this year total over 4,000,000 board feet of the combined materials with more important joiner contractors among whom are the following:

Hopeman Bros., Inc., 19 East 47th Street, New York City
W. and J. Sloane, 5th Avenue and 47th Street, New York City
Actna Sales Corporation, 50 Church Street, New York City
James McCutcheon & Co., 5th Avenue and 49th Street, New York City

A number of small repair yards as well as limited sales to the U. S. Navy direct.

10. Date of first contract:

Our first contracts for these materials were small jobs started in 1936 such as 30 state rooms on the S. S. Catherine, Bull Line; from lake ships for Henry Ford; three ships for the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Co., and fire-proof officers and crew quarters in a number of tankers. The largest early job was the complete joinery work on the S. S. America, now the transport West Point, furnished in 1938 to the Newport News Shipbuilding Corporation.

11 & 12. Date of first deliveries and where:

The first deliveries from Billerica were in the middle of the year 1939 to Hopeman Bros. at their Hayes, N. Va., plant.

13. How does company (plant) stand with reference to meeting delivery schedules:

Billerica factory has an almost perfect record of meeting delivery schedules. There have been many instances when it has been necessary for the men in the plant to work double shifts in order to meet rearrangements of shipping schedules caused by emergencies arising from the Maritime Commission's alterations of construction plans.

The following are the prime contractors who have been supplied with Marinite and Marine Sheathing by the Billerica factory through Hopeman Brothers, a sub-contractor:

Moore Dry Dock Co., Oakland, Calif.
Ingalls Shipbuilding Corp., Pascagoula, Miss.
New Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co., Chester, Pa.
Bethlehem Steel Co., St. George, Staten Island; Sparrows Point, Md.; Quincy, Mass.

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Federal Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co., Kearney, N. J.
 Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corp., Tacoma, Wash.
 Pussey & Jones Corp., Wilmington, Delaware
 Kaiser Co., Inc., Richmond Shipbuilding Corp., Richmond, Calif.
 Todd-Bath Iron Shipbuilding Corp., So. Portland, Maine
 Baltimore Dry Dock Company, Baltimore, Maryland

The following prime contractors have been furnished direct or through
 joiner contractors:

Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co., Newport News, Va.
 The American Shipbuilding Co., Cleveland, Ohio
 Great Lakes Engineering Works, River Rouge, Mich.
 Bath Iron Works Corp., Bath, Maine
 Marietta Manufacturing Co., Point Pleasant, W. Va.
 Western Pipe & Steel Co., San Francisco, Calif.
 Consolidated Steel Corp., Los Angeles, Calif.
 Alabama Dry Dock & Shipbuilding Corp., Mobile, Ala.
 Walter Butler Shipbuilding Co., Superior, Wisc.

It will be noted from the above list that a good many of these prime
 contractors have been serviced through Hopeman Brothers, one of the
 larger joiner contractors. We contacted Mr. B. C. Hopeman of Hopeman
 Brothers and asked him if he felt that our service had been satisfactory
 and if we were safe in saying that we had met all schedules with them
 promptly. Mr. Hopeman's reply was that we had and that even though
 it had been necessary to change shipping schedules a great many times
 due to emergencies in the ship construction program, we had completed
 our job 100% in furnishing them material on time.

14. Estimate present rate of production and percentage of production increases
 of the period of work on Maritime Commission or prime contractor contracts:

A comparison of production rates of Marinite and Marine Sheathing before
 Pearl Harbor and for the year 1942 follows:

	Before Pearl Harbor	1942	% Increase
Marinite	463 Bld. Ft./Yr.	567 Bld. Ft./Yr.	22%
Marine Sheathing	202 " " "	230 " " "	14%

This increase in production rate has been accomplished with no additional
 equipment and still further increases during 1943 are indicated. Many
 small improvements in machine operation and production procedures, combined
 with increased effort by the men of the factory, have brought about the
 increase.

15. Are there any special features of conversion, design, special processes used
 in the plant or contributed by the company to the Maritime Commission
 shipbuilding program:

No special features of conversion, design, nor special processes have
 been necessary to adjust our production to the Maritime Commission ship-
 building program because our peacetime production was shipbuilding
 panelboard.

16. How have old experience and/or new employees been adapted to the work on Commission contracts?

It has been unnecessary to adapt old or new employees to special wartime processes. Approximately 30% of our pre-war employees have been drafted or volunteered. Our turnover rate in 1942 was 47.4% compared to the national average of 62.62%, which indicates better than average employee relations.

The training of new employees in 1942 was a continuous problem. Through cooperation of labor and management, the new men have been rapidly trained to fill vacancies without loss of production.

17. Other pertinent information:

This factory operated during the last half of 1942 without "Lost Time" accidents. Since the factory began operations in January 1939, there have been no lives lost. To date, we have a record of no infections from cuts or minor abrasions. This, we believe, is an outstanding record. Labor and management through organized Safety Committees have cooperated to bring out these results.

- a. Labor Relations at Billerica Factory have been generally good. The company negotiated and signed a contract with United Mine Workers of America, Local Union 12282, on Sept. 26, 1941 and a second contract on April 13, 1942. There were several conferences for a contract in 1943, but no agreement was reached on the following issues:

Wages, Union Security and Check-Off. A compromise agreement was reached on vacations subject to approval by the National War Labor Board.

- b. The only work stoppage of any importance occurred on January 28, 1943, when approximately 40 men stayed out one day, presumably in protest for the delay of the National War Labor Board to render a decision on a wage question, for several months before the Board.
- c. Our first War Bond Drive went over the top with 100% of the men subscribing through payroll deduction or otherwise.
- d. In this new factory, there was naturally very little metal scrap available. We collected all there was and same was sold through regular channels.

Production scrap has always been a minor problem at this factory and continues thus. However, with the cooperation of our Sales Department we have disposed of the major portion of our production scrap through our regular customers.

- e. This factory organized a War Production Drive Committee in May 1942. This was the first such committee in the local area and one of the first in the state.

It has functioned with good results. Although no major accomplishments resulted, it had a good share in the production increase. The committee received 72 suggestions in 1942, of which 60 were accepted as contributing to increased production.

On August 2, 1942, the committee put on a Rally with outside speakers. A program is appended. The public was invited and we believe accomplished its purpose of bringing home the need of increased war effort to our men.

In March 1943, the committee organized a chicken dinner during the noon hour for all employees. The occasion was a drawing of War Bonds in which all men contributing accepted suggestions in 1942 participated. At the same time we received a Safety Award.

- f. The Industrial Relations Department, cooperating with the Financial Department and other sections of the business, administers a variety of benefit plans for employees. Some important examples are:

- (1) A Group Life Insurance Plan in which currently 75 hourly paid employees are covered by \$140,000 of life insurance. Approximately 40 relatively new employees not yet eligible for the Plan will become participants within the next four months.

- (2) An Accident and Health Insurance Plan is provided for factory hourly wage earners. It assures them \$16.00 per week in benefits while absent from work, when they would otherwise receive no pay, because of illness or non-industrial accidents.

- (3) A Retirement Plan providing for retirement income in addition to Social Security benefits. Approximately 97% of those eligible are participants.

- (4) To better relations further, we usually have two or more social get-togethers annually. In 1942 we had an Outing in celebration of our successful War Bond Drive, at which time we received the Nightingale Flag. In December 1942, we had a Christmas Dinner with paid entertainment.

- g. There have been many instances of special efforts on the part of employees to meet emergency orders. On presentation of the need by management, the employees involved have rushed orders through to completion by unusual individual effort. We have had many instances of willingness of employees to work unusual emergency overtime.

- h. An indication of the attitude of the men of this factory is to be found in the response to the War Production Drive rally, at which time the Maritime "Y" pennant was hoisted and speeches by a Naval officer and Mr. Lawrence Iapy were made. After the ceremony the employees met and voluntarily agreed to increase production by 10% - and they kept their promise.

The job that is being so consistently performed by the men of this factory is not a spectacular one. They have risen above the handicap of what would appear to be a very remote connection with the war. It is difficult for them to realize the importance of the products they are making. This difficulty will to a large measure be eliminated by the unmistakable recognition which derives from the Maritime Commission's "M" Award.

R. M. WOODWARD
Factory Manager

5/12/43