FILE NAME: Abex (ABX)

DATE: 0000

DOC#: ABX013

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Medical Report - American Brake Shoe Company Medical Dept

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT
AB-160

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

AMERICAN BRAKE SHOE COMPANY

Following a meeting in Chicago in 1941 with Mr. W. E. Crocombe, Mr. Morris Trainer, Mr. Donald Cummings, and Dr. Hamlin, the American Brake Shoe Co. established the present Medical Department. A modest start was made at Chicago Heights where office space was furnished by the American Manganese Steel Division. The department then consisted of a Medical Director, Industrial Hygiene Engineer, an X-Ray and Laboratory Technician, and one secretary. The department was included in the Headquarters Division of the Brake Shoe Co. under the direct supervision of Mr. Arthur Aigeltinger. His sympathetic and generous cooperation did much toward getting the program initiated.

A review of the situation indicated the need for setting up standard preemployment and periodic health examinations throughout the many plants and also the desirability of instituting a modern program of plant hygiene which not only would discover health hazards in the plants but would offer adequate and practical recommendations for their correction.

The department has developed very rapidly and results have justified expansion of the program to its present extent.

A pre-employment physical examination is given to people applying for work at all our plants. It is not for the purpose of keeping men who may have physical defects from getting a job but rather to determine if these defects will permit them to work with safety to themselves and their fellow workers. Often, unsuspected illnesses are discovered -- about which the applicant knows nothing -- and he is then able to get proper treatment before it is too late. One of the most important features of the examination is the chest x-ray. Since the program started there have been numerous instances where tuberculosis has been discovered in persons who never had the slightest idea they had it. It is well known that this disease can

be present, even in well advanced stages, without showing any symptoms or signs and very often it cannot be detected by the doctor on physical examination. We have been able to render a considerable number of applicants for work this valuable service so that they have been able to seek immediate treatment before the disease progressed too far.

In addition to the preplacement examination, periodic health surveys are carried out as a service to Brake Shoe employees. The examination is complete and confidential. It includes a chest x-ray and blood and urine tests, and the employees are told of the results of the examinations so they can take steps to have defects corrected. No employee is ever discharged because of any findings brought to light through the examination. He may be advised to accept other work in the plant in the interests of his health and in the event something is found which requires immediate attention, every effort is made to assist him in getting the best medical care.

All pre-employment and survey examinations and x-rays for the entire Brake Shoe Co. are checked and filed in the Medical Department in Chicago. Advice is given not only to management concerning the placement of workers but frequently to employees themselves. A follow-up file is kept to recheck those employees whose films have shown suspected disease by repeated chest x-rays or examinations every three or six months, or as often as seems indicated. In this way any increase in activity of infection can be noted and brought to the employees' attention and suspected cases can be followed until it is decided that the disease is healed or inactive. The Medical Department notifies the plant when recheck x-rays are due and the service is carried out at company expense. At the employees' request the Medical Department cooperates with personal physicians in furnishing any helpful information which may assist in treating the case. Employees are told if they have high blood pressures, hernias, poor teeth, defective vision, heart trouble, deafness, tuberculosis, diabetes, or any other condition. They are advised to go to their doctors at once for treatment.

For carrying out x-ray surveys at the plants, a mobile x-ray machine has been used which takes full sized chest films. This instrument has been designed to fit in three carrying cases so that it can be transported in a station wagon and set up in the plant. A large number of surveys, approximately 45, have been completed in this manner with much saving in time and inconvenience to the plants.

Blood tests and examinations of urine are made at the time the doctor visits the plants to do the physical examinations.

Early in the program it was evident that nurses in the plants would be a most valuable and desirable addition where the number of employees justified their employment. Starting out with one nurse, Miss Mathews at our largest plant in Chicago Heights, Brake Shoe now has nurses in the following locations:

American Brakeblok Division	- Detroit
American Forge Division	- Upset Drop
American Manganese Steel	- Chicago Heights Denver Los Angeles New Castle St. Louis
Brake Shoe & Castings	- Baltimore Chicago Denver Mahwah Melrose Park Meadowlands Toledo
Engineered Castings	-Rochester
Kellogg	- Rochester
National Bearing	- Meadville St. Louis
Ramapo Ajax	- Chicago E. St. Louis Los Angeles
Southern Wheel	- Rochester Toledo

The nurses have amply demonstrated their worth and have earned the respect and esteem they now command. Their duties are many and varied and the fact that those plant superintendents who have employed nurses wonder how they ever managed without them is good evidence that the nursing program has been a success.

Besides handling first aid injuries and maintaining the first aid room, the nurse works with the plant management under a mutually satisfactory arrangement as to her exact duties. "How" these duties are carried out is a function of the Medical Department which supervises the program. Nurses usually handle pre-employment examination procedures, see that the men are sent to the doctor, and then help the personnel department in seeing that they are properly placed. The nurse arranges to get men to and from the doctor's office with a minimum of lost time and follows through on all recommendations made from the Medical Department. She checks on absenteeism, makes home visits to assist employees when they are ill, arranges for hospital admissions, and serves as a go-between for management and employee in matters affecting health. She arranges appointments for special examinations, attends safety meetings, takes care of goggle programs, besides making daily inspection tours through the plant. She cooperates with local health and social welfare agencies as well taking an active part in plant meetings and social get-togethers. She listens sympathetically to individual complaints and difficulties of workers whether these are associated with work or not.

The present staff of the Medical Department is as follows:

L. E. Hamlin, M. D.	- Medical Director
Mr. Herbert J. Weber	- Industrial Hygiene Engineer
Mr. Henry J. Gotmer	- Assistant Industrial Hygiene Engineer
Mr. Richard Walters	- Assistant in Charge of X-Ray Department
Miss Geraldine Balster	- Chemist
Mr. Tom Burke	- File Clerk
Miss Nina Pellicci	- Secretary
Mrs. Charlette Balsevicis	- Secretary
Mr. Walter A. Hamlin	- Laboratory Assistant Industrial Hygiene

In addition to the foregoing activities the department maintains close association with other scientific bodies such as the American Industrial Hygiene

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Foundation, National Tuberculosis Association, Saranac Laboratory, and Public Hea Departments. Experimental work is being carried on for the study of dusts and fu to protect the health of Brake Shoe workers. Scientific papers have been present at numerous industrial health meetings and published in journals not only in this country but in the Latin American countries. The department has been consulted on numerous occasions by other associations and industries with regard to instituting health programs, analytical procedures, etc.

The department also consults with plants on health cases, medical service and any other problems associated with Industrial health and hygiene.