

New York's Maddest Hours Greatest Moving Throgs in History When Its Workers Rush To and From Their Homes

(New York Papers) Every well ordered drama has its big movement, and if you were to ask what was the big movement in the life of our biggest city, the answer undoubtedly would be, the rush hour. If you are disposed to doubt this view from a window of any tall building in the downtown section the mad homeward rush of New York's millions. It is 5 o'clock in the afternoon and countless, thin human streams are flowing into canons and highways from doors and exits of masonry. As the minutes pass these streams become heavier, filling streets with black, silent masses. The human tide sweeps on, swelling and rising until it chokes and overflows the narrow, walled passages. At a few minutes past 6 the flood is at its height; it rages for almost an hour and is rapidly subsiding. Leaving highways dry and empty, you look anxiously for the wreckage, there is none, and you marvel. A close-up view of the picture reveals multitudes of men and women being driven onward by some compelling force, and it is plain to see that their movements are characterized by some unusual energy. They walk very fast, for they are all impelled by the same desire, to reach their goal as quickly as possible. This goal may be a subway entrance, an elevator stairway or a passing street car or bus; in their haste they crowd and press upon one another, seeking an opening here and there in the thick moving masses. In the hurly-burly of the rush men and women are buffeted rudely by human waves, and laggards are swept off their feet and carried along by the tide. A few years ago it was customary to refer to the rush hour in terms of wild amusement. Today no one regards it as a joke, for getting to work and getting home again are serious propositions, and it has become one of the city's problems. The Two Rush Hours. There are, generally speaking, two big rush hours in New York. In the morning when workers depart for work and in the evening when they return. The evening rush, if anything is more intense than the morning, probably because the majority of persons are more eager to get to their homes than their places of business. Besides these two main rush hour periods, many communities and sections of the city have rush hour problems of their own. This is true of the Polo Grounds after baseball game and of the Times Square with its pleasure seekers. At the offices of the Interborough they tell you that New York is a 9 o'clock, whereas Chicago is an 8 o'clock means that New Yorkers are generally at their desks or work tables by 9, and that other cities start the workday earlier. The morning rush hours are from 7 to 9 o'clock and between these hours traffic is at its maximum. After 10 it drops off perceptibly until 1 when it begins to pick up again. There is a 4 o'clock crowd of homegoers composed of laborers who began the day early. In pre-war times when there was no housing problem many workers made it a point to live near their places of employment. On account of the scarcity of flats and apartments, this is impossible today, and many workers are living long distances from their places of toll. This does not help the transportation problem, since it entails longer rides and trains have to travel considerable distances before they receive any relief from their human loads. Workers residing in the outlying sections of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Long Island make an early start if they have far to go and trains are often well filled before they have passed many stations. The afternoon rush hours are from 4 to 7. Between 5 and 7 traffic is estimated to be at its peak from 5:45 to 6:15; during this brief, half hour the rush becomes a rush and a jam, and it is then that the transit lines are taxed far beyond their capacities. Although the burst of the traffic is borne by northbound trains, the traffic to Brooklyn is proportionately heavy and the New Jersey tubes and ferries are besieged by a good-sized army of workers from the downtown office section and from loft, manufacturing and shopping centres. No one can have a fair conception of this vast army un-

no one else. It has been my observation that in recent years courtesy and politeness on crowded cars have been increasing. It began, I think, with the war. There are hundreds of men today who daily surrender their seats to all types of women and not solely to mothers and the aged. The Homeward Rush. The homeward rush does not begin, as many imagine, on subway and elevated, but has its real beginning in office building, factory and store, where great armies of workers knock off work and begin a mad scramble to get home. Every one of these mighty empires of workers, from the lowliest office boy to the head of the concern, when quitting time comes, becomes obsessed with the same idea—to get home. They think of the hot dinner or supper awaiting them, of the brief but pleasant hours of relaxation, they have planned, hence when quitting time comes, with that single thought implanted in their minds, they hasten for the nearest exit or elevator. Every one is eager to get to his respective abode as soon as possible, the sooner he gets there the better it will be, for if he hurries, he reasons, he may obtain a seat in the "rush" and arrive home early. That the big buildings have the same problems of transportation is not surprising, for they are crowded with workers who arrive late must wait and take their turn. At five o'clock the evening rush begins, and there is a continuous stream pouring from the building until it is completely full. The Van Hudson Terminal buildings are next in size; they are crowded chiefly by railroad interests and have a population of more than 11,000. The workers arrive at 4:45, and when they are out of the building by 6:30. The buildings are a meeting place for the New Jersey tubes, the Brooklyn and New York subways, and travelers of all kinds in general. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Building and annex in Madison Square workers arrive at 5:30 a. m., and the outgoing rush begins at 4:30 p. m. As the company provides a luncheon in the building for its 5,000 employees, the mid-day traffic is high. When the workers quit work there is a constant flow of homegoers from the building, many on lower floors making use of the large stairways. In this section there is a large silk and manufacturing district which taxes the transit lines to their limit. At the sixty-story Woolworth Building workers arrive in large numbers at 8:30, but the peak of the traffic is not reached until 8:15 p. m. At the Singer Building, 149 Broadway, the heavy traffic peaks are from 8:45 to 9:10 a. m., and from 4:30 to 6:10 p. m. The Whitehall Building, with a population of more than 7,000, is tenanted by individual corporations, shipping and contractors. Traffic in its elevators is high from 8:30 a. m. and 5:30 p. m. The Trinity Building, 115 Broadway, is inhabited by bankers, brokers, lawyers and others. It contains about 7,000 workers, its morning traffic peaks at 9:20 and its afternoon peak at five o'clock. The Adams Building, 61 Broadway, has a population of 7,000. Many workers arrive at 8 in the morning and leave between five and six o'clock. Other large buildings, housing mail workers, the City Investing Building, the Telephone & Telegraph, the Bankers' Trust, the Municipal and the City Building. Other large buildings in zones between Fourteenth and Fifty-ninth streets have the same problem in getting their workers to and from their places of business. In the big stores conditions are not so good. They are in the big office buildings but with this exception that in the store the army of visitors employes start to quit and help to lighten the burden. In many manufacturing buildings employes make frequent use of the elevators since they have a few floors to ascend or descend. Where stores are high elevators are used. In these rush hour moments numbers of persons in and out of tall buildings there is seldom any confusion, the great throngs move easily and without delay. They are transported without effort either up or down in the crowded cars, and workers living as they do in congested areas are accustomed to such conditions, and when they are in a hurry they know instinctively how to handle themselves. They learn quickly to watch their steps and to step nimbly and they are prepared to meet any kind of an emergency. As for the big buildings, they are looked after by trained corps of workers. The superintendents of these buildings are men who possess a high degree of intelligence and who have received a long and practical training for their work. These superintendents have forces of workers numbering from 200 to 1,000. They know how to handle many people. Some of these superintendents are not only responsible for the physical comfort and welfare of their tenants but they negotiate leases and attend to the numerous details of the management of a big building. They are for the most part excellent judges of human nature and keen observers of everything which goes on about them. They have a name for ready arrivals, whom they call "minute men." These minute men may be letter employes of the building who have to punch the clock when they report for work, or employees who must take the building at the eleventh hour in an effort to be on time. It is a common sight to find a bound up the subway stairs two at a time, to see a man in a dark suit, with a cane and just make an elevator for the twenty-second floor as the doors are closing. It is a safe guess that such a person is a minute man making an energetic effort to reach the office in time and avoid a reprimand from his boss. At the offices of the Interborough it was said that three million passengers are carried a day on the subway and its elevated lines—that the city is five years behind in its subways, and that way in operation traffic is increasing at such a rate that real relief can come

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A RETURN TO SANITY IN DRESS. Conservatism in Women's Apparel is Indicated in Displays for Spring and Summer in Paris. Paris, Feb. 21.—(Associated Press by mail)—A return to conservatism in women's dress is indicated in advance displays for spring and summer now being held in Paris. Several hundred American buyers who have arrived for the seasonal fashion shows are more pleased than they have been since the armistice because of the ease with which the new modes can be adopted to American taste. The Paris dressmakers continue to show extreme effects in afternoon and evening wear, but the majority of the gowns reflect a return to sanity in dress. Such is the view of American buyers. Buying, however, is restricted because of the general depression in the United States. The business lull in America has led to purchase of the most quiet models, the theory being that American women during the coming season will buy only simple things which can be worn on many occasions. The season is only half finished, but a general indication has already been given of the changes. One of the most noticeable innovations is the lengthening of skirts at least one inch. French dressmakers admit that this is a recognition of American taste which has resented the extremely short skirt since it was introduced. Backs are still bare. This dressmaker's view is in contrast with the building of additional subways and extensions. A history of the transportation systems of the city shows that it has always suffered from congestion. In the days of the old time stage coaches, an old railroad man said, they were frequently overcrowded. In the days of the old horse-drawn cars there were strapangers, and the first elevated road began in 1876 did not end congestion. The records show that the city has always been behind in its transit facilities and has never been able to catch up with its needs. The subway with new extensions of the subways, despite their congestion, hold a record for safety unequalled by any other such a rate that real relief can come

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