crafts, contracted with three New York firms that sent instructions and materials to the Kentucky studio and set piece rates. Other firms did have local roots. Eleanor Beard, for example, whose husband owned a local general store, opened her studio in Hardinsburg, Kentucky; by 1929, Beard had sales outlets in Pasadena, Santa Barbara, and Chicago. In 1931, two local tailors who were laid off by Beard began the firm Galante, Inc., also in Hardinsburg, and one of Beard's quilters, Mrs. A. H. Withers, later opened her own business in Kirk, Kentucky.[38] Although these needlework firms varied greatly in size—Elizabethtown Needlecrafts hired only six households to work at home for them in 1934, whereas Miller Brothers of Elizabethtown employed two hundred families of homeworkers that year—the average company retained one hundred or more households on a regular basis. Some individuals also worked at the studios as cutters, stampers, and inspectors.[39]

In some areas of the Tennessee Valley and western Kentucky, chair manufacturers hired large numbers of local women to weave chair seats. Morristown Chair Company in Morristown, Tennessee, and the Livermore Chair Company and Greene River Chair Company in Livermore, Kentucky, together employed almost five hundred women and men to seat straight-backed and rocking chairs in 1933. These firms had considerable impact on their local communities. Although the Depression had hit the chair industry hard, one worker claimed that chair manufacturers had the city of Livermore "all tied up." Other industries that attempted to locate in the town had been kept out by the chair companies, who also, he said, "control the relief and everything." In addition to the one hundred to two hundred families each company hired to cane chair seats at home, each also employed men at its shops to construct the frames and finish the goods.[40]

We cannot, however, view Appalachian craft producers solely as laborers or as preservers of long-practiced family or community traditions. The craftworkers' economic status, social relationships, and local and family customs, as well as the conditions and terms of craft labor, shaped their experiences. Indeed, craft producers' ambivalent reflections upon their work suggest the complex and shifting meanings of craft labor in a changing world increasingly bounded by industrialism.

Whether a homeworker working at piece rates, an independent entrepreneur managing her own business, or a student at a social settlement learning a craft, the 1930s mountaineer saw in handicraft work opportunities for a cash income. Moreover, the long hours that women and men labored at their craftwork, together with the low wages and exploitation they endured, suggest that they well understood craft production to be a form of disciplined labor. Despite craft leaders' insistence that this was supplementary income earned in leisure hours, women often pursued craftwork as a full- or part-time job, rather than working at it at odd times between other primary chores. Bedspread tufters, quilters, and chair caners for commercial firms, in particular, worked long hours to complete orders quickly so that they could obtain more work. The majority of women tufted anywhere from seven to ten hours a day to meet their orders, sometimes stopping only for the midday meal. Others in the household assumed responsibility for chores and child care so that these women could work full time at the tufting (or "turfing," as it was then called), and at rush times families would postpone household chores, giving the spreads priority over all other activities. These were certainly not mountain artisans working in off hours for pleasure or to meet the needs merely of their households or local communities.[41]

Such devotion to their work yielded only meager incomes. In 1933–34 tufters made only five to fourteen cents an hour in wages; code changes in 1934 raised piece rates but resulted in earnings of only ten to fifteen cents an hour before the deduction of haulers' commissions. About 30 percent of all candlewick workers earned one to two dollars a week, though more than a fourth earned less than a dollar. Fewer than 25 percent made two to three dollars a week. The industry's distribution system in the mountains had tremendous impact on tufters' wages. Tufters who obtained their work directly from the factory could make eighteen cents a spread, whereas women who acquired their materials from spread sheds made four cents less, and workers who relied on subhaulers for their materials received only twelve cents for each spread.[42]

Tufters' earnings were consistently hampered by low piece rates, and only a few companies posted varying rates for particular patterns. Spread companies rarely performed time tests on their pat-

terns to determine fair rates, and even when they did, the conditions under which they tested their workers did not reflect the particular situations of mountain homeworkers. The C. B. Woods Company did conduct a time test of all its patterns, but it used three people who worked in the center, not at home, under conditions that homeworkers could not possibly have maintained day after day. The company's testers were also given Coca-Colas during rest periods each morning and afternoon to speed up their work. After June 1934, NRA codes encouraged the industry to base piece rates on the amount of yarn and the kind of muslin used for each pattern, but there still remained great discrepancies in the time it took to complete different patterns using the same amounts of yarn.[43]

Women who sewed for quilting and appliqué firms had similar experiences. They worked long days and frequently into the night; Alberta Walls of Hardinsburg, Kentucky, routinely worked from 4:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. and sometimes until midnight or 1:00 A.M. in the winter. Lulu Snyder of Harned, Kentucky, began work for Eleanor Beard at 5:30 or 6:00 A.M., or sometimes as early as 3:00 A.M. She interrupted her work to prepare the noon meal but continued quilting after supper until 10:30 or 11:00 P.M. Furthermore, American Needlecrafts' Hardinsburg workers complained that they were never informed about specific piece rates until they returned the finished work to the studio. Over 40 percent of all hand quilters earned an annual sum of one hundred dollars or more, but 30 percent earned fifty dollars or less.[44]

Moreover, most of the expenses for tools and transportation were borne by the craftworkers. Although these needlewomen didn't lose part of their earnings to haulers, they never received compensation for the time and money they spent picking up materials and delivering finished goods to the studios; because the studios often omitted pattern pieces or supplied inadequate amounts of materials to finish the goods, many women had to make several trips per week. A few firms sent work out through the mail, especially when workers lived far from town. Louisville's Regina, Inc., paid one-way postage for materials sent to women in their homes, but they trained women only at the studio when introducing a new kind of work or design. As a rule, quilting firms furnished the wool, cotton, crepes, silks, satins, velvets, and thread, but workers provided their own equip-

ment—thimbles, needles, sewing machine, scissors, quilting frame, and iron.[45]

Methods for determining quilting piece rates varied, possibly reflecting the experiences and personal histories of business owners. Mrs. Kleinjohn, owner of Regina, Inc., claimed to strike a balance between the rate she had in mind and her workers' accounts of the time required for the job. Regina, Inc., apparently paid higher rates than some other firms, for Kleinjohn complained that the Hardinsburg firms paid seventy-five cents to a dollar on quilts for which she paid three dollars. Mrs. Withers, a former homeworker for Eleanor Beard who became co-owner of her own quilting firm, figured piece rates for new goods by the yardage of thread used or by comparison with similarly worked pieces. As a former homeworker herself, Withers claimed sensitivity to the rights and needs of her employees. She declared that she had paid as high as thirty dollars for a piece and divided the profits with her workers, who were "friends and neighbors." Withers often passed on to local workers her customers' requests for someone to do the quilting on quilt tops they had made themselves; on such jobs she took a 50 percent commission. Eleanor Beard maintained that she discussed completion times for the goods with her homeworkers. Beard made no apologies for her profits, however, and admitted having "made a beautiful living"; she believed twenty cents an hour "a grand price for country people." As Beard commented: "Never said I was an altruist."[46]

Low piece rates were only one of the wage inequities that homeworkers had to bear; they also absorbed many of the hidden costs of manufacturing. Chair caners, for example, received no compensation for storing chairs in their already cramped homes. Some firms gave out no fewer than two dozen chairs with each caning order, and these were distributed early in the week, remaining at the workers' homes until company haulers collected them. In the meantime, the workers were responsible for keeping them clean and dry. Some families stacked them on the porch, but those without porches were forced to keep the chairs inside their small and crowded cabins. At the Morristown Chair Company in 1933, twenty-five men worked eight-hour days and together earned almost $4,000 in wages. The same sum went to the two hundred women caners who each earned $1.00 per dozen seats for basketweave and $1.20 for a dozen of the

more complicated herringbone weave. Caners were rarely docked for poor work; the companies usually gave them a couple of chances to prove their skill and then simply ceased to hire those who produced substandard work.[47]

Producers employed by smaller firms might work long hours but could draw higher wages. Rug hookers frequently worked eight- to ten-hour days. Working together in their shop, Mrs. M. A. Stewart and her husband produced three rugs daily, two feet by four feet in size, and completed twenty-seven square feet a day on larger pieces. The couple had steady work hooking rugs for The Treasure Chest for most of 1933. They received 12½ cents per square foot, regardless of the design, and together they earned about $750 for the year. At the Madison Rug Shop, Mrs. S. M. Robinson worked ten or more hours a day punching hooked rugs for 10 cents a square foot, acquiring almost $60 in six weeks; her colleague, Mrs. Chandler of Mars Hill, North Carolina, earned 80 cents per ten-hour day as a "string cutter," or $140 a year. Mrs. S. A. Armstrong of Knoxville paid four women 25 cents per square foot to make hooked rugs at home from materials Armstrong supplied. By comparison, in 1933 Clementine Douglas of The Spinning Wheel offered her workers 60 cents a square foot for weaving rugs, for which they also furnished all materials.[48]

Hours and wages among craftworkers for benevolent agencies and schools varied according to the needs of workers, the work available, and in some cases the particular craft and sex of the producer. Almost half of those working for the benevolent centers earned $50 or less annually, and about a third made $50 to $100 each year. At one of the most successful producing centers, workers earned piece rates that brought them about 30 cents an hour. They averaged $16 a month, or just under $200 a year. Bertha Nienburg, director of the Women's Bureau survey, complained that both the philanthropic and commercial centers believed that wages of 10 to 12 cents an hour for craftswomen and 20 to 25 cents an hour for craftsmen were sufficient. Such low hourly wages, Nienburg protested, reflected an ignorance of craft processes that set insufficient piece rates.[49]

Women and girls learning to weave at the settlement schools generally received an hourly wage during the learning period, re-

gardless of what prices were set for the finished goods. Crossnore School students received 10 cents an hour for the six hours each week they spent learning to weave. Once they became accomplished at their craft, their wages and hours varied, but earnings remained low. Generally, women wove six hours a day once or twice a week at the school, earning by the piece. Mrs. Cuthbertson earned about $35 in one year, making 15 cents on bags and 75 on blankets that sold for $1.50 and $3.50, respectively.[50]

As did the commercial companies, benevolent craft industries often failed to compensate craftworkers for some of the hidden costs of their labor. At Pine Mountain Settlement School, for example, Mrs. Nolan earned a dollar for each yard of material she wove, but neither she nor most other women were paid for time they spent preparing the loom. Mrs. Nolan could complete about one yard each five- to seven-hour day on her twelve-treadle spreads. Nevertheless, it also took her a day to thread the loom, another day to tie up, and yet another to wind bobbins. In 1933 Nolan made three spreads, which she sold for about $25 each, but she furnished all materials herself. After deductions for those, Nolan netted $37 for the three spreads. On average, women weaving for the sponsored craft industries earned $53 a year. Their hours varied, but often they worked full days for about 75 cents or a dollar per yard.[51]

Wages, piece rates, and hours were only one area of concern to craft producers. Other labor-related issues, such as the work process and their attitudes toward the products, also colored producers' reactions to the job. Many craftspeople found their work tedious and stressful. Most complaints of this ilk came from industries in which workers put in exceptionally long hours to fill orders and ensure future work. Bedspread tufters, for example, invariably described their work as hard and tiring; they complained about pains in their backs, sides, shoulders, and hands. The comments of two women who tufted for Kenner and Rauschenberg and B. J. Bandy were typical: "We like the money we make, that's all"; "I start as early as I can and work as hard as I can, and I'm not doing it for pleasure"; and "It's the hardest work I ever did do." Most producers who were able to get to town to pick up their own work chose patterns that paid well and were easily worked. Even those who liked the work felt the stress of trying to finish orders on time. Bonnie