Counterpane Toys

To meet a request from the head nurse at County Hospital, the project developed a light-weight cloth doll that could be used by children confined to bed for long periods. The project added geometric shapes – cylinders, squares, pyramids – and later animals so the boys would have playthings.

One Christmas Milwaukee County ordered 4,000 toys to include in baskets for families on relief. The sewing unit and doll unit combined forces to produce them in record time.
A nurse at County Hospital suggested calling the project light weight cloth toys “counterpane toys.”
The counterpane dolls, made from material scraps, were washable so that they could be used as bed toys for small children and for children in hospitals.
See Mary Kellogg Rice, *Useful Work for Unskilled Women: A Unique Milwaukee WPA Project* (Milwaukee County Historical Society, 2003) for references and photo credits.