U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Sinclair Weeks, *Secretary*

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
Robert W. Burgess, *Director*

CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

CONSUMER INCOME

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FAMILY INCOME EQUALS 1953 LEVEL; UP 7 PERCENT OVER 1952

(Advance data, April 1955 sample survey)

Average (median) family income in the United States was estimated at $4,200 in 1954, according to estimates released today by Robert W. Burgess, Director, Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce. This figure was about the same as in 1953 but $300 higher than in 1952. The increase since 1952 probably represented a significant gain in purchasing power for the average family, since prices rose only slightly during the same period, according to the Consumer's Price Index.

Of the Nation's 42 million families, about 16 million, or two-fifths, received incomes of $5,000 or more in 1954 while 8 million, or one-fifth, had incomes under $2,000. The remaining 18 million families were in the $2,000-to-$5,000 bracket. The distribution of families (groups of two or more related persons) by their income in 1954 is shown below:

Table A.--NUMBER OF FAMILIES BY FAMILY INCOME, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1954

(Figures derived from data in table B and rounded to the nearest 100,000)

Family income	Number of families
Total	41,900,000
Under $1,000	3,700,000
$1,000 to $1,999	4,600,000
$2,000 to $2,999	5,000,000
$3,000 to $3,999	6,400,000
$4,000 to $4,999	6,500,000
$5,000 to $5,999	5,000,000
$6,000 to $6,999	3,600,000
$7,000 to $9,999	4,700,000
$10,000 to $14,999	1,800,000
$15,000 and over	600,000

The 7-percent gain in family income since 1952 largely reflects the continued rise in wage rates for workers in most major industries. The survey data indicate that the median wage or salary income rose between 7 and 8 percent from 1952 to 1954. During this period, average income from farm self-employment decreased substantially while receipts from other sources of income remained stable.

The 1953 and 1954 income data presented in this report were obtained from the Bureau of the Census Current Population Surveys of April 1954 and April 1955. Additional family income data from these surveys will appear in a more detailed report to be issued later this year. Other data relating to the income received by the population are available from the Personal Income Series of the Department of Commerce, the Federal Reserve Board Survey of Consumer Finances, Federal income tax data, and Old-Age and Survivors Insurance wage record data. These data are collected for different purposes and, therefore, differ in several important respects. A discussion of the comparability of these data may be found in Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 16, "Income of Persons in the United States: 1953."

Information on income was collected in the Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey from the civilian noninstitutional population and members of the Armed Forces living off post or with their families on post in continental United States. Since the estimates are based on a sample, they are subject to sampling variability. Particular care should be exercised in the interpretation of medians and other figures,

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when based on relatively small numbers of cases, as well as small differences between figures. Moreover, as in all field surveys of income, the figures are subject to errors of response and nonreporting.

Income as defined in this report represents the combined total money income of the family, or the sum of money wages and salaries, net income from self-employment, and income other than earnings received by all family members during the calendar year. The median income is the amount which divides the distribution into two equal groups, one having incomes above the median and the other having incomes below the median.

Table B.--DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES AND UNRELATED INDIVIDUALS BY TOTAL MONEY INCOME, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1952 TO 1954

Total money income	Families			Unrelated individuals		
	1954	1953	1952	1954	1953	1952
Number.....thousands..	41,934	41,202	41,020	9,623	9,514	9,774
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under $500.....	4.6	4.7	4.1	21.7	21.1	20.0
$500 to $999.....	4.2	3.9	4.4	23.5	21.1	20.2
$1,000 to $1,499.....	5.6	4.9	5.3	10.7	9.9	12.0
$1,500 to $1,999.....	5.4	5.0	5.5	8.6	7.8	9.4
$2,000 to $2,499.....	5.5	5.7	6.7	7.4	9.8	9.6
$2,500 to $2,999.....	6.4	6.0	7.4	6.9	8.1	6.7
$3,000 to $3,499.....	7.5	7.6	9.7	5.8	7.2	6.9
$3,500 to $3,999.....	7.9	8.2	8.8	4.9	4.3	5.5
$4,000 to $4,499.....	8.4	8.6	8.2	2.9	2.9	2.6
$4,500 to $4,999.....	7.2	7.3	7.2	1.9	2.6	2.2
$5,000 to $5,999.....	11.9	13.2	11.9	2.9	2.2	2.4
$6,000 to $6,999.....	8.5	8.1	7.5	1.3	1.2	1.0
$7,000 to $9,999.....	11.1	11.6	9.1	0.7	0.7	1.0
$10,000 to $14,999.....	4.4	4.1	2.8	0.3	0.3	0.4
$15,000 to $24,999.....	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.2	0.3	...
$25,000 and over.....	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.2
Median income.....	$4,173	$4,233	$3,890	$1,224	$1,394	$1,409