

A SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPING OF THE GAINFUL WORKERS OF THE UNITED STATES

INTRODUCTION

In census occupation statistics, it has been the custom to present figures for different occupations and occupation groups and, also, for a few general divisions of occupations, such as agriculture, extraction of minerals, and manufacturing and mechanical industries, each of which divisions constitutes a large section of the broad field in which gainful labor is occupied. The Bureau of the Census has not hitherto classified the gainful workers into social-economic groups.¹ There is, however, a real need for such an additional grouping. In many present-day studies, the desire is to deal with large social-economic groups, such as professional persons, clerical workers, skilled workers, and so forth, with but minor regard to the particular occupations pursued by the workers, and, often, without regard to the particular section of the broad occupational field in which the workers are employed. There is need, in short, for a grouping that brings together all of the workers belonging to the same social-economic class, without particular reference to the different occupations pursued by the workers. The purpose of this report is to present such a grouping of the gainful workers of the United States.

Many persons have desired a classification of occupations according to skill. A classification of all occupations according to skill, if it could be made, would be very useful; but a complete classification by skill is impossible, since many occupations do not lend themselves to such a classification. Indeed, none of the professional, proprietary, official, managerial, or clerical pursuits lends itself readily to a classification by skill; and it is doubtful whether any of them may be properly so classified, since in none of them is skill or manual dexterity the chief characteristic. In fact, it is believed that only those occupations in which the expenditure of muscular force is an important characteristic can be properly classified by skill. While it is plainly impossible to draw a hard and fast line between those occupations characterized principally by the exercise of muscular force or manual dexterity and those characterized chiefly by the exercise of mental force or ingenuity—or between hand workers and head workers—such a line of demarcation probably may be made sufficiently exact for our purpose.

¹ Census officials were probably among the first persons in the United States to recognize the importance of statistics showing the gainful workers classified into social-economic groups. In an article published in July, 1897, in Bulletin No. 11 of the Department of Labor, William C. Hunt, for many years chief statistician for population in the Bureau of the Census, grouped the gainful workers into 4 large groups (see p. 420), briefly designated as follows:

- A. The proprietor class.
- B. The clerical class.
- C. Skilled workers.
- D. The laboring class.

Substantially the same 4 groups were discussed by Carroll D. Wright, director of the 1890 census, in his Outline of Practical Sociology, published in 1899. (See pp. 254 and 255).

The author of this volume has published 5 articles relating to the social-economic grouping of the gainful workers of the United States. These articles are as follows: "Social-economic Groups of the United States," Journal Am. Statis. Assn., Vol. XV, June, 1917; "A Social-economic Grouping of the Gainful Workers of the United States," Journal Am. Statis. Assn., Vol. 28, Dec., 1933; "The White-collar Workers," Monthly Labor Rev., Mar., 1934; "Composition of the Nation's Labor Force," Ann. Am. Acad., Vol. 184, Mar., 1936; and "The Negro as a Factor in the Nation's Labor Force," Journal Am. Statis. Assn., Vol. 31, Sept., 1936.

The grouping of the gainful workers here presented is not based on skill, except in the case of groups 4, 5, and 6, in which most of the occupations may be more or less readily classified by skill.

In the construction of these three groups those occupations are considered skilled for the pursuance of which a long period of training or an apprenticeship is usually necessary, and which in their pursuance call for a degree of judgment and of manual dexterity, one or both, above that required in semiskilled occupations. Those occupations are considered semiskilled for the pursuance of which only a short period or no period of preliminary training is necessary, and which in their pursuance call for only a moderate degree of judgment or of manual dexterity. Unskilled occupations are considered to include those the workers in which usually require no special training, judgment, or manual dexterity, but supply mainly muscular strength for the performance of coarse, heavy work.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to classify all manual workers as skilled, semiskilled, or unskilled strictly according to the above concepts. In each group of manual workers, certain of the occupations include some workers who would be better classified by skill in one of the other groups. In fact, each of the groups here presented doubtless contains some workers who do not actually belong there, and some workers who have been included principally for want of a more appropriate place for them. In no group, however, are such workers numerous enough to affect the group total materially.

The occupations of the gainful workers of the United States have been arranged in the following groups:

1. Professional persons.
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials:
 - 2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants).
 - 2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers.
 - 2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials.
3. Clerks and kindred workers.
4. Skilled workers and foremen.
5. Semiskilled workers:
 - 5-a. Semiskilled workers in manufacturing.
 - 5-b. Other semiskilled workers.
6. Unskilled workers:
 - 6-a. Farm laborers.
 - 6-b. Factory and building construction laborers.
 - 6-c. Other laborers.
 - 6-d. Servant classes.

The composition of groups 1 and 2, above, probably is sufficiently clear. Clerks and kindred workers—group 3—are the so-called white-collar workers. They are the clerical assistants to executives, officials, and business and professional men. They comprise office assistants, sales people, telegraph and telephone operators, and all others doing the various types of clerical and kindred work. Skilled workers and foremen—group 4—comprise foremen and the followers of skilled trades, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, machinists, etc. Semiskilled workers—group 5—include apprentices, machine tenders, workers in the needle trades, etc. They are manual workers who have a moderate degree of skill and of manual dexterity. Unskilled workers—group 6—include the laborers and the different servant classes. Most of them have no special training.

Of the 6 main social-economic groups here presented, 3 are subdivided, thus making a total of 12 groups. In table 1, the specific occupations of the 1930 census occupation classification, with United States totals for each occupation, are so rearranged as to make up these 12 social-economic groups.

In order to conserve space, some occupation subgroups are omitted from table 1. For example, the figures for the total "Retail dealers" are given (group 2-b), but not the figures for each different class of retail dealers. Similarly,

the figures for all "Operatives—Manufacturing" are given (group 5-a), but not the figures for the operatives in each manufacturing industry. The same is true as to "Laborers—Manufacturing" (group 6-b).

It is to be noted that census statistics of occupation relate only to gainful workers 10 years old and over, the term "gainful workers" in census usage including all persons who usually follow a gainful occupation, even though temporarily unemployed at the time the census was taken.

TABLE 1.—GAINFUL WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES CLASSIFIED INTO SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPS, BY SEX AND OCCUPATION: 1930

GROUP AND OCCUPATION	MALE	FEMALE
All gainful workers	38, 077, 804	10, 752, 116
1. Professional persons	1, 497, 994	1, 447, 863
Actors and showmen.....	54, 511	20, 785
Architects.....	21, 621	379
Artists, sculptors, and teachers of art.....	35, 631	21, 644
Authors, editors, and reporters.....	46, 922	17, 371
Chemists, assayers, and metallurgists.....	45, 163	1, 905
Clergymen.....	145, 672	3, 276
College presidents and professors.....	41, 774	20, 181
Dentists.....	69, 768	1, 287
Designers, draftsmen, and inventors.....	93, 518	9, 212
Lawyers, judges, and justices.....	157, 220	3, 385
Musicians and teachers of music.....	85, 517	79, 611
Osteopaths.....	4, 554	1, 563
Photographers.....	31, 163	8, 366
Physicians and surgeons.....	146, 978	6, 825
Teachers.....	202, 337	860, 278
Technical engineers.....	226, 136	113
Trained nurses.....	5, 452	288, 737
Veterinary surgeons.....	11, 852	11
Other professional pursuits.....	43, 847	70, 546
Chiropractors.....	9, 203	2, 713
Healers (not elsewhere classified).....	7, 866	9, 774
Religious workers.....	11, 339	19, 951
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials	9, 159, 898	505, 644
2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants)	5, 749, 367	262, 645
2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers	1, 675, 193	111, 854
Retail dealers.....	1, 593, 356	110, 166
Wholesale dealers, importers, and exporters.....	81, 837	1, 688
2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials	1, 735, 336	131, 145
Foresters, forest rangers, and timber cruisers.....	8, 042	15
Owners and managers of log and timber camps.....	6, 889	10
Operators, managers, and officials—extraction of minerals.....	30, 755	141
Builders and building contractors.....	167, 310	202
Manufacturers.....	202, 190	5, 711
Managers and officials—manufacturing.....	302, 334	10, 422
Captains, masters, mates, and pilots.....	24, 482	3
Garage owners, managers, and officials.....	69, 543	422
Owners and managers—truck, transfer, and cab companies.....	40, 508	576
Conductors—steam railroad.....	73, 332	-----
Officials and superintendents—steam and street railroads.....	37, 963	26
Postmasters.....	20, 818	13, 603
Proprietors, managers, and officials 1—transportation.....	34, 987	3, 003
Bankers, brokers, and money lenders.....	212, 312	9, 192
Managers and officials—insurance companies.....	27, 556	1, 752
Proprietors, managers, and officials 1—trade.....	42, 201	3, 104
Managers and officials—real-estate companies.....	5, 124	479
Undertakers.....	32, 192	1, 640
Officials and inspectors—city and county.....	69, 431	8, 964
Officials and inspectors—State and United States.....	49, 881	1, 819
Billiard room, dance hall, etc., keepers.....	28, 819	310
Directors, managers, and officials—motion-picture production.....	1, 888	35
Keepers of charitable and penal institutions.....	9, 468	5, 552
Keepers of pleasure resorts, race tracks, etc.....	9, 741	977
Radio announcers, directors, managers, etc.....	1, 639	180
Theatrical owners, managers, and officials.....	18, 691	1, 032
Owners and proprietors—cleaning, dyeing, and pressing shops.....	15, 207	1, 068
Managers and officials—cleaning, dyeing, and pressing shops.....	4, 615	1, 226
Hotel keepers and managers.....	39, 538	17, 510
Laundry owners, managers, and officials.....	22, 482	2, 063
Restaurant, cafe, and lunchroom keepers.....	125, 398	40, 008

Not otherwise specified.

4 SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPING OF GAINFUL WORKERS

TABLE 1.—GAINFUL WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES CLASSIFIED INTO SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPS, BY SEX AND OCCUPATION: 1930—Continued

GROUP AND OCCUPATION	MALE	FEMALE
3. Clerks and kindred workers	4, 877, 235	3, 072, 220
Inspectors, scalers, and surveyors—log and timber camps.....	2, 183	1
Baggagemen and freight agents—railroad.....	16, 361	16
Ticket and station agents—railroad.....	25, 370	1, 790
Agents—express companies.....	4, 102	74
Express messengers and railway mail clerks.....	25, 600	8
Mail carriers.....	120, 204	1, 129
Radio operators.....	4, 909	46
Telegraph messengers.....	15, 997	179
Telegraph operators.....	51, 699	16, 122
Telephone operators.....	13, 625	235, 259
Advertising agents.....	43, 364	5, 656
Clerks in stores.....	238, 844	163, 147
Commercial travelers.....	219, 790	3, 942
Decorators, drapers, and window dressers.....	13, 911	6, 238
Inspectors, gaugers, and samplers—trade.....	10, 923	5, 820
Insurance agents.....	243, 974	12, 953
Newsboys.....	38, 576	417
Real estate agents.....	203, 119	31, 308
Salesmen and saleswomen.....	1, 508, 283	560, 720
Abstractors, notaries, and justices of peace.....	9, 848	1, 908
Architects', designers', and draftsmen's apprentices.....	2, 436	220
Apprentices to other professional persons.....	3, 861	74
Officials of lodges, societies, etc.....	11, 513	3, 002
Technicians and laboratory assistants.....	8, 288	7, 700
Dentists' assistants and attendants.....	770	12, 945
Librarians' assistants and attendants.....	502	1, 363
Physicians' and surgeons' attendants.....	689	13, 353
Agents, collectors, and credit men.....	182, 630	13, 477
Bookkeepers, cashiers, and accountants.....	447, 037	482, 711
Clerks (except clerks in stores).....	1, 290, 447	706, 553
Messenger, errand, and office boys and girls.....	81, 430	8, 949
Stenographers and typists.....	36, 050	775, 140
4. Skilled workers and foremen	6, 201, 542	81, 145
Farm managers and foremen.....	66, 259	963
Foremen—log and timber camps.....	3, 910	.....
Foremen, overseers, and inspectors—extraction of minerals.....	34, 274	12
Blacksmiths, forgemen, and hammermen.....	147, 460	9
Boilermakers.....	49, 923	.....
Brick and stone masons and tile layers.....	170, 896	7
Cabinetmakers.....	57, 890	7
Carpenters.....	929, 376	50
Compositors, linotypers, and typesetters.....	173, 363	10, 269
Coopers.....	11, 347	.....
Electricians.....	280, 279	38
Electrotypers, stereotypers, and lithographers.....	16, 448	244
Engineers (stationary), cranimen, hoistmen, etc.....	316, 942	22
Engravers.....	18, 747	690
Foremen and overseers—manufacturing.....	310, 037	28, 467
Puddlers.....	1, 597	.....
Glass blowers.....	3, 209	59
Jewelers, watchmakers, goldsmiths, and silversmiths.....	37, 408	1, 254
Loom fixers.....	19, 180	35
Machinists, millwrights, and toolmakers.....	761, 075	20
Mechanics ¹	638, 190	63
Millers (grain, flour, feed, etc.).....	15, 906	40
Molders, founders, and casters (metal).....	105, 139	19
Painters, glaziers, and varnishers (building).....	429, 982	123
Paper hangers.....	26, 872	1, 456
Pattern and model makers.....	29, 711	39
Piano and organ tuners.....	6, 799	24
Plasterers and cement finishers.....	85, 477	3
Plumbers and gas and steam fitters.....	237, 813	1
Pressmen and plate printers (printing).....	31, 215	.....
Rollers and roll hands (metal).....	30, 765	.....
Roofers and slaters.....	23, 636	.....
Sawyers.....	35, 984	80
Shoemakers and cobblers (not in factory).....	76, 127	261
Skilled occupations (not elsewhere classified).....	12, 227	31
Stonecutters.....	22, 887	1
Structural iron workers (building).....	28, 966	.....
Tailors and tailoresses.....	147, 476	21, 807
Tinsmiths and coppersmiths.....	83, 421	6
Upholsterers.....	49, 097	2, 355
Bus conductors.....	1, 002	.....
Conductors—street railroad.....	35, 680	17
Foremen and overseers—steam and street railroads.....	79, 682	55
Locomotive engineers.....	101, 201	.....

¹Not otherwise specified.

TABLE 1.—GAINFUL WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES CLASSIFIED INTO SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPS, BY SEX AND OCCUPATION: 1930—Continued

GROUP AND OCCUPATION	MALE	FEMALE
4. Skilled workers and foremen—Continued.		
Locomotive firemen.....	67,096	---
Aviators.....	6,031	66
Foremen and overseers ¹ —transportation.....	52,061	74
Inspectors—transportation.....	50,965	1,155
Floorwalkers, foremen, and overseers—trade.....	33,308	4,795
Firemen—fire department.....	73,008	---
Marshals, sheriffs, detectives, etc.....	39,247	2,576
Policemen.....	130,838	849
Foremen and overseers—cleaning, dyeing, and pressing shops.....	470	349
Foremen and overseers—laundries.....	3,583	2,754
5. Semiskilled workers.....	5,448,158	2,589,414
5-a. Semiskilled workers in manufacturing.....	2,881,022	1,676,971
Apprentices to building and hand trades.....	40,105	28
Apprentices (except to building and hand trades)—manufacturing.....	33,450	3,869
Bakers.....	131,884	8,916
Dressmakers and seamstresses (not in factory).....	452	157,928
Dyers.....	17,425	204
Filers, grinders, buffers, and polishers (metal).....	76,264	2,336
Milliners and millinery dealers.....	4,846	40,102
Oilers of machinery.....	31,169	41
Enamellers, lacquerers, and japanners.....	4,622	1,136
Painters, glaziers, and varnishers (factory).....	89,546	3,522
Operatives ¹ —manufacturing.....	2,451,259	1,458,799
5-b. Other semiskilled workers.....	2,567,136	852,443
Boatmen, canal men, and lock keepers.....	5,603	40
Sailors and deck bands.....	64,692	8
Chauffeurs and truck and tractor drivers.....	970,916	1,502
Boiler washers and engine hostlers.....	18,300	---
Brakemen—steam railroad.....	88,197	---
Motormen—steam and street railroads.....	60,718	5
Switchmen, flagmen, and yardmen—steam and street railroads.....	102,484	289
Telegraph and telephone linemen.....	71,624	1
Apprentices—transportation.....	6,097	54
Other occupations—transportation.....	83,794	1,923
Apprentices—wholesale and retail trade.....	2,337	107
Deliverymen—bakeries and stores.....	159,328	116
Other pursuits in trade.....	96,069	29,106
Guards, watchmen, and doorkeepers.....	147,115	1,000
Soldiers, sailors, and marines.....	132,830	---
Other public service pursuits.....	40,369	1,288
Other occupations—semiprofessional pursuits.....	8,765	1,756
Attendants—pool rooms, bowling alleys, golf clubs, etc.....	16,047	121
Helpers—motion-picture production.....	1,234	979
Theater ushers.....	9,308	3,153
Other attendants and helpers—professional service.....	28,890	21,490
Barbers, hairdressers, and manicurists.....	261,096	113,194
Boarding and lodginghouse keepers.....	17,093	127,278
Other operatives—cleaning, dyeing, and pressing shops.....	42,313	18,321
Housekeepers and stewards.....	20,393	236,363
Deliverymen—laundries.....	20,558	15
Other operatives—laundries.....	45,087	149,414
Midwives and nurses (not trained).....	13,867	143,142
Other pursuits—domestic and personal service.....	32,022	1,808
6. Unskilled workers.....	10,893,039	3,115,830
6-a. Farm laborers.....	3,746,433	646,231
6-b. Factory and building construction laborers.....	3,248,622	125,521
Firemen (except locomotive and fire department).....	127,293	1
Furnace men, smelter men, and pourers.....	18,627	---
Heaters (metal).....	14,941	1
Laborers ¹ —manufacturing.....	3,087,761	125,519
6-c. Other laborers.....	2,871,744	31,321
Fishermen and oystermen.....	73,071	209
Teamsters and haulers—log and timber camps.....	9,242	1
Other lumbermen, raftsmen, and woodchoppers.....	146,803	93
Coal mine operatives.....	621,545	116
Other operatives in extraction of minerals.....	296,990	490
Longshoremen and stevedores.....	73,944	10
Draymen, teamsters, and carriage drivers.....	111,178	46
Garage laborers.....	66,536	157
Hostlers and stable hands.....	6,654	---

¹ Not otherwise specified.

6 SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPING OF GAINFUL WORKERS

TABLE 1.—GAINFUL WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES CLASSIFIED INTO SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPS, BY SEX AND OCCUPATION: 1930—Continued

GROUP AND OCCUPATION	MALE	FEMALE
6. Unskilled workers—Continued.		
6-c. Other laborers—Continued.		
Laborers—truck, transfer, and cab companies.....	40,920	50
Laborers—road and street.....	306,980	47
Laborers, including construction laborers—steam and street railroads....	459,090	3,384
Laborers l—transportation.....	50,998	65
Laborers in coal and lumber yards, warehouses, etc.....	113,027	642
Laborers, porters, and helpers in stores.....	199,296	9,392
Laborers—public service.....	155,903	1,107
Laborers—professional service.....	23,762	1,621
Laborers—recreation and amusement.....	29,458	435
Stage hands and circus helpers.....	4,099	175
Laborers—cleaning, dyeing, and pressing shops.....	3,910	639
Laborers—domestic and personal service.....	67,337	4,350
Laborers—laundries.....	11,001	8,292
6-d. Servant classes.....	1,026,240	2,312,657
Bootblacks.....	18,747	37
Charwomen and cleaners.....	20,943	40,989
Elevator tenders.....	55,255	12,359
Janitors and sextons.....	273,805	35,820
Launderers and laundresses (not in laundry).....	4,565	356,468
Porters (except in stores).....	127,436	52
Servants.....	364,174	1,634,959
Waiters.....	161,315	231,973

¹ Not otherwise specified.

SOCIAL-ECONOMIC STATUS OF GAINFUL WORKERS, BY SEX

In table 2, the gainful workers of the United States are classified into social-economic groups, by sex, for 1910, 1920, and 1930, the earlier census data having been revised to conform with the 1930 classification.

In 1930 almost 1 gainful worker in 16 was a professional person and almost 1 in 8 was a farmer. Merchants, other proprietors, and managers and officials, together, formed nearly 1 worker in 13. Clerks and kindred workers, often referred to as "white-collar workers", accounted for nearly 1 worker in 6. More than 1 worker in 8 was skilled, nearly 1 in 6 was semiskilled, and considerably over 1 in 4 was unskilled. The skilled, the semiskilled, and the unskilled, together, comprise the manual workers. To distinguish them from the "white-collar workers", they may be called the "overalls and apron workers." They numbered, in 1930, considerably over one-half (57.9 percent) of all gainful workers.

During the 20-year period from 1910 to 1930, some significant changes were taking place in the social-economic distribution of the gainful workers. The professional class increased rapidly—from 4.3 percent of the total workers in 1910 to 6 percent in 1930. Farmers decreased strikingly from 16.1 to 12.3 percent of the total. The clerical group increased more rapidly than any other social-economic group—from 10 percent of the total workers in 1910 to 16.3 percent in 1930. The relative importance of skilled workers and foremen increased somewhat between 1910 and 1920 and then decreased between 1920 and 1930. Between 1910 and 1930 the proportion of the total male workers in the semiskilled group increased from 11.1 percent to 14.3 percent, but the proportion of the total female workers in this group decreased from 27.1 to 23.5 percent.

The unskilled constitute by far the largest social-economic group in the United States. Fortunately, the group has been declining rapidly in relative importance—from 37.3 percent of the total workers in 1910 to 28.7 percent in 1930. There was a marked decline in the relative importance of farm laborers and some decline in the relative importance of factory and other laborers. The relative importance of the servant classes, however, was slightly greater in 1930 than in 1910.

TABLE 2.—GAINFUL WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES CLASSIFIED INTO SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPS, BY SEX: 1910 TO 1930

SEX AND GROUP	NUMBER			PERCENT DISTRIBUTION		
	1930	1920	1910	1930	1920	1910
Total	48,829,980	41,614,248	38,167,336	100.0	100.0	100.0
1. Professional persons.....	2,945,797	2,060,162	1,632,638	6.0	4.9	4.3
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials.....	9,665,540	9,180,583	8,579,746	19.8	22.1	22.5
2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants).....	6,012,012	6,387,360	6,132,380	12.3	15.3	16.1
2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers.....	1,787,047	1,401,949	1,246,077	3.7	3.4	3.3
2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials.....	1,866,481	1,391,374	1,201,289	3.8	3.3	3.1
3. Clerks and kindred workers.....	7,949,455	5,704,970	3,826,959	16.3	13.7	10.0
4. Skilled workers and foremen.....	6,282,687	5,570,602	4,364,060	12.9	13.4	11.4
5. Semiskilled workers.....	7,977,572	6,638,615	5,512,344	16.3	16.0	14.4
5-a. Semiskilled workers in manufacturing.....	4,557,993	4,357,451	3,674,302	9.3	10.5	9.6
5-b. Other semiskilled workers.....	3,419,579	2,281,164	1,838,042	7.0	5.5	4.8
6. Unskilled workers.....	14,008,869	12,469,316	14,251,589	28.7	30.0	37.3
6-a. Farm laborers.....	4,392,764	4,186,128	6,205,633	9.0	10.1	16.3
6-b. Factory and building construction laborers.....	3,374,143	3,136,276	2,659,917	6.9	7.5	7.0
6-c. Other laborers.....	2,903,065	2,890,738	2,821,526	5.9	6.9	7.4
6-d. Servant classes.....	3,338,897	2,264,174	2,564,513	6.8	5.4	6.7
Male	38,077,804	33,064,737	30,091,564	100.0	100.0	100.0
1. Professional persons.....	1,497,934	1,061,791	913,866	3.9	3.2	3.0
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials.....	9,159,896	8,757,614	8,183,563	24.1	26.5	27.2
2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants).....	5,740,367	6,121,783	5,859,238	15.1	18.5	19.5
2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers.....	1,675,193	1,322,075	1,178,049	4.4	4.0	3.9
2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials.....	1,735,336	1,313,756	1,146,276	4.6	4.0	3.8
3. Clerks and kindred workers.....	4,877,235	3,511,808	2,744,488	12.8	10.6	9.1
4. Skilled workers and foremen.....	6,201,542	5,469,048	4,267,327	16.3	16.5	14.2
5. Semiskilled workers.....	5,448,158	4,375,995	3,326,830	14.3	13.2	11.1
5-a. Semiskilled workers in manufacturing.....	2,881,022	2,689,245	2,032,346	7.6	8.1	6.8
5-b. Other semiskilled workers.....	2,567,136	1,686,750	1,294,484	6.7	5.1	4.3
6. Unskilled workers.....	10,893,039	9,888,481	10,655,490	28.6	29.9	35.4
6-a. Farm laborers.....	3,746,433	3,382,899	4,679,926	9.8	10.2	15.6
6-b. Factory and building construction laborers.....	3,248,622	2,966,841	2,571,215	8.5	9.0	8.5
6-c. Other laborers.....	2,871,744	2,859,343	2,803,596	7.5	8.6	9.3
6-d. Servant classes.....	1,026,240	679,398	600,753	2.7	2.1	2.0
Female	10,752,116	8,549,511	8,075,772	100.0	100.0	100.0
1. Professional persons.....	1,447,863	988,371	718,772	13.5	11.6	8.9
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials.....	505,644	422,969	396,183	4.7	4.9	4.9
2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants).....	262,645	265,577	273,142	2.4	3.1	3.4
2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers.....	111,854	79,774	68,028	1.0	0.9	0.8
2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials.....	131,145	77,618	55,013	1.2	0.9	0.7
3. Clerks and kindred workers.....	3,072,220	2,193,162	1,082,471	28.6	25.7	13.4
4. Skilled workers and foremen.....	81,145	101,554	96,733	0.8	1.2	1.2
5. Semiskilled workers.....	2,529,414	2,262,620	2,185,514	23.5	26.5	27.1
5-a. Semiskilled workers in manufacturing.....	1,676,971	1,668,206	1,641,956	15.6	19.5	20.3
5-b. Other semiskilled workers.....	852,443	594,414	543,558	7.9	7.0	6.7
6. Unskilled workers.....	3,115,830	2,580,835	3,596,099	29.0	30.2	44.5
6-a. Farm laborers.....	646,331	803,229	1,525,707	6.0	9.4	18.9
6-b. Factory and building construction laborers.....	125,521	169,435	88,702	1.2	2.0	1.1
6-c. Other laborers.....	31,321	31,395	17,930	0.3	0.4	0.2
6-d. Servant classes.....	2,312,657	1,576,776	1,963,760	21.5	18.4	24.3

At each census the distribution of female gainful workers by social-economic groups differed considerably from that of male workers. As compared with the corresponding proportion for males, the proportion of the females in the professional group, in the clerical group, in the semiskilled group, and in the servant group was particularly large; and the proportion in the proprietary, official, and managerial group, in the skilled worker group, and in the different laborer groups was particularly small. There was a very striking increase between 1910 and 1930 in the proportion of female workers engaged in clerical and kindred pursuits—from 13.4 percent to 28.6 percent; a marked decrease in the proportion employed as semiskilled factory workers, and in the proportion employed as farm laborers; and a considerable decrease in the proportion employed as servants. The proportion of female workers in manual pursuits—skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled—decreased from 72.8 percent in 1910 to 53.3 percent in 1930. Larger and larger proportions of the female workers were entering clerical and kindred pursuits and professional pursuits. In 1930, the proportion of the workers in each of these fields was far larger for females than for males.

The six main groups shown in table 2 are arranged approximately in descending order of the social-economic status of the workers comprising them. Hence, the percentage distribution of the workers among these six groups furnishes a convenient yardstick for measuring changes in the social-economic status of the entire labor force. If the first three main groups; comprising professional persons; proprietors, managers, and officials; and clerks and kindred workers, be combined for each of the three census years 1910, 1920, and 1930, it develops that the proportion of the total gainful workers in these three groups increased from 36.8 percent in 1910 to 40.7 percent in 1920, and to 42.1 percent in 1930. On the other hand, the proportion of the total workers in the unskilled group, comprising laborers and servants, decreased from 37.3 percent in 1910 to 30.0 percent in 1920, and to 28.7 percent in 1930. Plainly, the social-economic status of the Nation's labor force was rising rather rapidly from 1910 to 1930. The trend was definitely upward—definitely away from heavy, arduous, unskilled manual labor and definitely toward more highly skilled manual pursuits and intellectual pursuits.

Social-economic status of gainful workers in States and in cities.—Statistics for 1930, corresponding to those shown for the United States in tables 2 and 3, are presented for geographic divisions and States in tables 18 to 29; and statistics corresponding to those shown for the United States in table 2, are presented for cities of 500,000 or more in table 30.* These statistics show striking differences between the several States, and also between the cities, in the distribution of the workers by social-economic groups. For example, they show that the proportions which male professional persons formed of all male workers ranged from 1.9 percent in Mississippi to 5.7 percent in California and 9.6 percent in the District of Columbia;² and they ranged from 4.0 percent in Cleveland, Ohio, to 8.5 percent in Los Angeles, Calif. The figures show, also, that in a given State there were wide variations between population classes in the social-economic distribution of the workers. In each area, the figures indicated marked differences between the two sexes. Thus, in each State and in each city of 500,000 or more, professional persons, clerks and kindred workers, and usually semiskilled workers, formed relatively larger proportions of the female than of the male gainful workers.

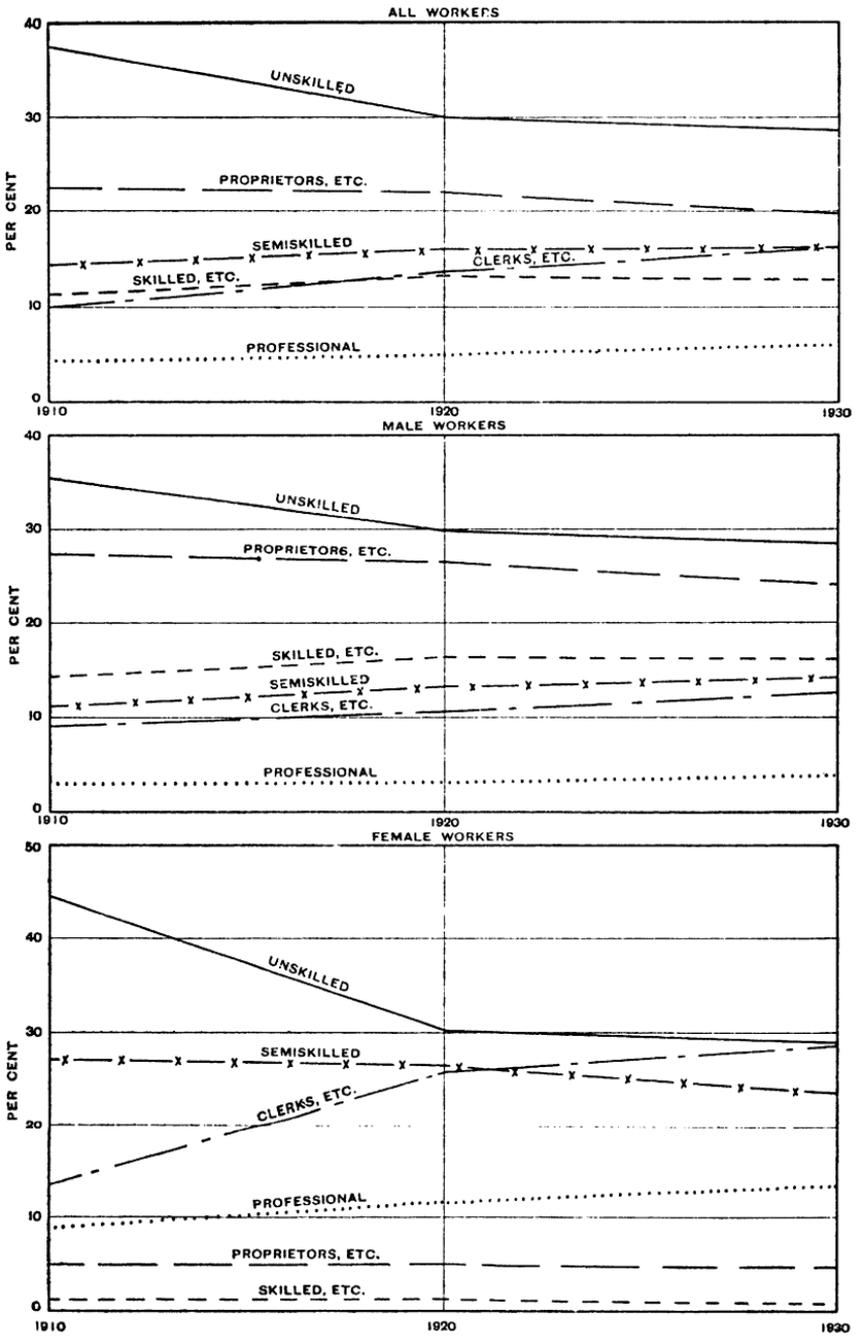
Diagram 1, based on table 2, shows graphically, by sex, the trend of the different social-economic groups from 1910 to 1930.³

¹ The District of Columbia is coextensive with the city of Washington.

² For a discussion of probable future trends, see "Composition of the Nation's Labor Force," *Ann. Am. Acad.*, Vol. 184, Mar., 1936, pp. 16-20.

*For these 13 cities, a distribution of gainful workers by sex, color, nativity, and economic status is shown in the Appendix.

DIAGRAM 1.—TREND OF SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES, BY SEX: 1910-30



**SOCIAL-ECONOMIC STATUS OF GAINFUL WORKERS, BY COLOR,
NATIVITY, AND SEX**

Table 3 shows for native whites, foreign-born whites, and Negroes the gainful workers in 1930 classified into social-economic groups, by sex.

TABLE 3.—GAINFUL WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES CLASSIFIED INTO SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPS, BY COLOR, NATIVITY, AND SEX: 1930

POPULATION CLASS AND GROUP	TOTAL		MALE		FEMALE	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Native white	35, 173, 370	100.0	37, 511, 892	100.0	7, 661, 508	100.0
1. Professional persons.....	2, 532, 206	7.2	1, 243, 081	4.5	1, 289, 125	16.8
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials.....	7, 370, 028	21.0	7, 017, 203	25.5	352, 825	4.6
2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants).....	4, 598, 201	13.1	4, 435, 418	16.1	162, 783	2.1
2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers.....	1, 248, 618	3.5	1, 169, 038	4.2	79, 490	1.0
2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials.....	1, 523, 309	4.3	1, 412, 727	5.1	110, 582	1.4
3. Clerks and kindred workers.....	7, 103, 717	20.2	4, 262, 832	15.5	2, 840, 835	37.1
4. Skilled workers and foremen.....	4, 688, 661	13.3	4, 623, 705	16.8	64, 956	0.8
5. Semiskilled workers.....	5, 787, 360	16.5	3, 886, 352	14.1	1, 901, 008	24.8
5-a. Semiskilled workers in manufacturing.....	3, 256, 407	9.3	1, 958, 928	7.1	1, 297, 479	16.9
5-b. Other semiskilled workers.....	2, 530, 953	7.2	1, 927, 424	7.0	603, 529	7.9
6. Unskilled workers.....	7, 691, 398	21.9	6, 478, 639	23.5	1, 212, 759	15.8
6-a. Farm laborers.....	2, 863, 482	8.1	2, 650, 897	9.7	203, 585	2.7
6-b. Factory and building construction laborers.....	1, 861, 680	5.3	1, 774, 693	6.5	86, 987	1.1
6-c. Other laborers.....	1, 690, 938	4.8	1, 072, 688	6.1	18, 250	0.2
6-d. Servant classes.....	1, 275, 298	3.6	371, 361	1.3	903, 937	11.8
Foreign-born white	7, 411, 137	100.0	6, 255, 071	100.0	1, 156, 066	100.0
1. Professional persons.....	287, 243	3.9	191, 781	3.1	95, 462	8.3
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials.....	1, 263, 289	17.0	1, 201, 688	19.2	61, 601	5.3
2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants).....	468, 322	6.3	447, 205	7.1	21, 117	1.8
2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers.....	493, 431	6.7	466, 059	7.5	27, 372	2.4
2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials.....	301, 536	4.1	288, 424	4.6	13, 112	1.1
3. Clerks and kindred workers.....	731, 204	9.9	528, 593	8.5	202, 611	17.5
4. Skilled workers and foremen.....	1, 381, 971	18.6	1, 367, 463	21.9	14, 508	1.3
5. Semiskilled workers.....	1, 594, 471	21.5	1, 180, 294	18.9	414, 177	35.8
5-a. Semiskilled workers in manufacturing.....	1, 082, 214	14.6	797, 648	12.8	284, 566	24.6
5-b. Other semiskilled workers.....	512, 257	6.9	382, 646	6.1	129, 611	11.2
6. Unskilled workers.....	2, 152, 949	29.1	1, 785, 252	28.5	367, 697	31.8
6-a. Farm laborers.....	199, 579	2.7	194, 358	3.1	5, 221	0.5
6-b. Factory and building construction laborers.....	750, 640	10.1	737, 108	11.8	13, 532	1.2
6-c. Other laborers.....	591, 005	8.0	536, 443	9.4	4, 557	0.4
6-d. Servant classes.....	611, 725	8.3	207, 338	4.3	344, 387	29.8
Negro	5, 503, 535	100.0	3, 663, 893	100.0	1, 840, 642	100.0
1. Professional persons.....	115, 765	2.1	55, 610	1.5	60, 155	3.3
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials.....	929, 644	16.9	842, 920	23.0	86, 724	4.7
2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants).....	873, 653	15.9	797, 231	21.8	76, 422	4.2
2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers.....	28, 343	0.5	24, 493	0.7	3, 850	0.2
2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials.....	27, 648	0.5	21, 196	0.6	6, 452	0.4
3. Clerks and kindred workers.....	82, 669	1.5	62, 138	1.7	20, 531	1.1
4. Skilled workers and foremen.....	176, 912	3.2	175, 537	4.8	1, 375	0.1
5. Semiskilled workers.....	515, 381	9.4	329, 374	9.0	186, 007	10.1
5-a. Semiskilled workers in manufacturing.....	181, 079	3.3	104, 441	2.9	76, 638	4.2
5-b. Other semiskilled workers.....	334, 302	6.1	224, 933	6.1	109, 369	5.9
6. Unskilled workers.....	3, 683, 164	66.9	2, 197, 314	60.0	1, 485, 850	80.7
6-a. Farm laborers.....	1, 112, 510	20.2	693, 669	18.9	418, 841	22.8
6-b. Factory and building construction laborers.....	674, 187	12.3	650, 925	17.8	23, 262	1.3
6-c. Other laborers.....	516, 414	9.4	508, 754	13.9	7, 660	0.4
6-d. Servant classes.....	1, 380, 053	25.1	343, 966	9.4	1, 036, 087	56.3

Since the six main occupation groups shown in table 3 are arranged, approximately at least, in descending order of the social-economic status of the workers in them, the percentage distribution of the workers among these six main groups, as presented in column 2, furnishes a convenient basis for comparing the social-economic status of the workers in the different population classes in 1930. A larger percentage of the native whites than of the foreign-born whites was in each of the first three main groups and a much smaller percentage was in each of the last three. The percentage, both of native whites and of foreign-born whites, was larger than that of Negroes in each main group except "Unskilled workers", where the percentage was over three times as large for Negroes as for native whites and considerably over twice as high for Negroes as for foreign-born whites. More than two out of three Negro workers in 1930 were unskilled; and the proportions of the Negro workers in the semiskilled group, in the skilled group, and in the clerical group were very small as compared with the corresponding proportions for native whites and foreign-born whites.

In 1930, 48.3 percent of the native white workers, 30.8 percent of the foreign-born white workers, and 20.5 percent of the Negro workers were in the first three main groups—the groups comprising the "head workers." In contrast, 51.7 percent of the native white workers, 69.2 percent of the foreign-born white workers, and 79.5 percent of the Negro workers were in the last three main groups—the groups comprising the "hand workers."

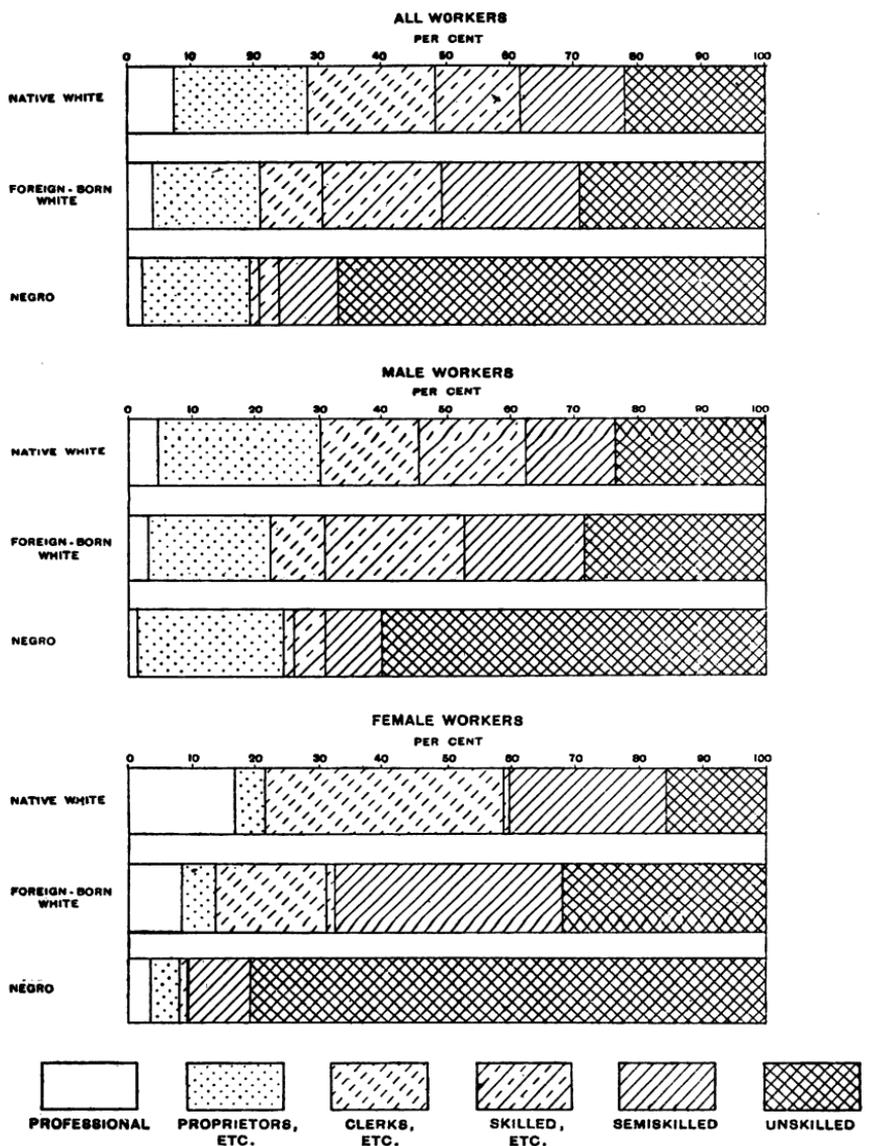
The relatively large proportion of the Negro workers classed as "Proprietors, managers, and officials" is explained by the fact that 15.9 percent of the Negroes, as compared with 13.1 percent of the native whites and 6.3 percent of the foreign-born whites, were farmers (owners or tenants).

The distribution of the male gainful workers of the different population classes by social-economic status is very similar to the corresponding distribution of the total gainful workers, above discussed.

The proportion of the total female workers engaged in professional pursuits in 1930 was over twice as high for native whites as for foreign-born whites, and over five times as high for native whites as for Negroes. Likewise, the proportion engaged in clerical and kindred pursuits was over twice as high for native whites as for foreign-born whites and nearly 34 times as high for native whites as for Negroes. The proportion engaged in semiskilled occupations was highest for foreign-born whites, next highest for native whites, and lowest for Negroes. The proportion engaged in unskilled occupations was over twice as high for foreign-born whites as for native whites, and was over five times as high for Negroes as for native whites.

The distribution of the gainful workers by social-economic groups, in 1930, is presented graphically, by color, nativity, and sex, in diagram 2, which is based on the figures in table 3.

DIAGRAM 2.—SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES, BY COLOR, NATIVITY, AND SEX: 1930



SOCIAL-ECONOMIC STATUS OF NEGRO GAINFUL WORKERS

The social-economic status of Negro gainful workers differs greatly from that of native white workers and from that of foreign-born white workers. In table 4 the Negro gainful workers of the United States are classified into social-economic groups, by sex, for each of the 3 census years, 1910, 1920, and 1930.

TABLE 4.—NEGRO GAINFUL WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES CLASSIFIED INTO SOCIAL-ECONOMIC GROUPS, BY SEX: 1910 TO 1930

SEX AND GROUP	NUMBER			PERCENT DISTRIBUTION		
	1930	1920	1910	1930	1920	1910
Total	5,508,535	4,824,151	5,192,535	100.0	100.0	100.0
1. Professional persons.....	115,765	77,118	64,648	2.1	1.6	1.2
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials.....	929,644	973,253	923,404	16.9	20.2	17.8
2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants).....	873,653	932,050	883,408	15.9	19.3	17.0
2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers.....	28,343	23,593	20,894	0.5	0.5	0.4
2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials.....	27,648	17,610	19,102	0.5	0.4	0.4
3. Clerks and kindred workers.....	82,669	63,095	38,698	1.5	1.3	0.7
4. Skilled workers and foremen.....	176,912	150,428	115,300	3.2	3.1	2.2
5. Semiskilled workers.....	515,381	369,761	258,258	9.4	7.7	5.0
5-a. Semiskilled workers in manufacturing.....	181,073	161,892	107,869	3.3	3.4	2.1
5-b. Other semiskilled workers.....	334,302	207,869	150,389	6.1	4.3	2.9
6. Unskilled workers.....	3,653,164	3,190,496	3,792,227	66.9	66.1	73.0
6-a. Farm laborers.....	1,112,510	1,198,140	1,949,848	20.2	24.8	37.6
6-b. Factory and bldg. constr. laborers.....	674,187	601,295	438,327	12.3	12.5	8.4
6-c. Other laborers.....	516,414	446,154	389,956	9.4	9.2	7.5
6-d. Servant classes.....	1,380,053	944,907	1,014,096	25.1	19.6	19.5
Male	3,662,893	3,252,862	3,178,564	100.0	100.0	100.0
1. Professional persons.....	55,610	39,434	35,815	1.5	1.2	1.1
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials.....	842,920	885,385	836,852	23.0	27.2	26.3
2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants).....	797,231	851,621	803,477	21.8	26.2	25.3
2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers.....	24,493	20,455	17,888	0.7	0.6	0.6
2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials.....	21,196	13,309	15,487	0.6	0.4	0.5
3. Clerks and kindred workers.....	62,138	48,047	31,926	1.7	1.5	1.0
4. Skilled workers and foremen.....	175,537	148,551	114,269	4.8	4.6	3.6
5. Semiskilled workers.....	329,374	228,806	148,579	9.0	7.0	4.7
5-a. Semiskilled workers in manufacturing.....	104,441	91,817	53,430	2.9	2.8	1.7
5-b. Other semiskilled workers.....	224,933	136,989	95,149	6.1	4.2	3.0
6. Unskilled workers.....	2,197,314	1,902,639	2,011,113	60.0	58.5	63.3
6-a. Farm laborers.....	693,669	667,317	979,354	18.9	20.5	30.8
6-b. Factory and bldg. constr. laborers.....	650,925	567,311	425,307	17.8	17.4	13.4
6-c. Other laborers.....	508,754	438,157	386,263	13.9	13.5	12.2
6-d. Servant classes.....	343,966	229,854	220,189	9.4	7.1	6.9
Female	1,840,642	1,571,289	2,013,961	100.0	100.0	100.0
1. Professional persons.....	60,155	37,684	28,833	3.3	2.4	1.4
2. Proprietors, managers, and officials.....	86,724	87,868	86,552	4.7	5.6	4.3
2-a. Farmers (owners and tenants).....	76,423	80,429	79,931	4.2	5.1	4.0
2-b. Wholesale and retail dealers.....	3,850	3,138	3,006	0.2	0.2	0.1
2-c. Other proprietors, managers, and officials.....	6,452	4,301	3,615	0.4	0.3	0.2
3. Clerks and kindred workers.....	20,531	15,048	6,772	1.1	1.0	0.3
4. Skilled workers and foremen.....	1,375	1,877	1,031	0.1	0.1	0.1
5. Semiskilled workers.....	186,007	140,955	109,679	10.1	9.0	5.4
5-a. Semiskilled workers in manufacturing.....	76,638	70,075	54,439	4.2	4.5	2.7
5-b. Other semiskilled workers.....	109,369	70,880	55,240	5.9	4.5	2.7
6. Unskilled workers.....	1,485,860	1,287,857	1,781,114	80.7	82.0	88.4
6-a. Farm laborers.....	418,841	530,823	970,494	22.8	33.8	48.2
6-b. Factory and bldg. constr. laborers.....	23,262	33,984	13,020	1.3	2.2	0.6
6-c. Other laborers.....	7,660	7,997	3,693	0.4	0.5	0.2
6-d. Servant classes.....	1,036,087	715,053	793,907	56.3	45.5	39.4

Professional persons formed only 2.1 percent of all Negro workers in 1930. While proprietors, managers, and officials constituted 16.9 percent of the total, most of those in this group were either farm owners or farm tenants. Clerks and kindred workers formed only 1.5 percent of the total, skilled workers and foremen only 3.2 percent, and semiskilled workers only 9.4 percent. In 1930, more than two-thirds (66.9 percent) of the Negro workers were unskilled.

The skilled, the semiskilled, and the unskilled are all manual workers. Almost 8 out of 10 (79.5 percent) of the Negro workers in 1930 were in these three groups. It is quite probable, also, that most of the Negro farm owners and farm tenants are actually engaged in manual labor, and that the Negro croppers, in the work they do, do not differ greatly from farm laborers. If the Negro farm owners and tenants be considered manual workers, then, in 1930, more than 95 out of each 100 (95.4 percent) of the Negro workers were engaged in manual work; and if the 392,897 Negro croppers be considered unskilled, then, in 1930, 74.1 percent of the Negro workers were in unskilled pursuits.

During the 20-year period from 1910 to 1930, significant changes were taking place in the social-economic distribution of Negro gainful workers. Professional persons; proprietors, managers, and officials (other than farmers); and skilled workers and foremen increased considerably in relative importance, while the relative importance of clerks and kindred workers more than doubled and the relative importance of semiskilled workers nearly doubled. But farmers were relatively less important in 1930 than in 1910, and there was a striking decline in the relative importance of farm laborers—from 37.6 to 20.2 percent of all Negro workers. There was a considerable increase, however, in the relative importance of nonagricultural laborers and in the relative importance of the servant classes. There was a marked increase in the proportion of the Negro female workers engaged in professional pursuits, in clerical and kindred pursuits, and in servant pursuits, respectively.

If professional persons; proprietors, managers, and officials (exclusive of farmers); and clerks and kindred workers—the “head workers”—be combined, it develops that the proportion of the total Negro workers in these three groups increased from 2.8 percent in 1910 to 4.6 percent in 1930. The skilled workers and the semiskilled workers, combined, increased from 7.2 to 12.6 percent of the total during the two decades. But notwithstanding the fact that during this 20-year period there was a gradual and important movement of Negro workers into higher social-economic groups, at the close of the period over two-thirds of them (66.9 percent) were still in unskilled pursuits—6 out of 10 of the males and over 8 out of 10 of the females.

The changes that have been taking place in the relative importance of Negroes in the Nation's labor force and in the occupational and the social-economic distribution of Negro workers, together with prospective changes in the industrial organization and the probable future mechanization of industry, indicate that future years will bring even more significant changes in the relative importance of Negro workers, in their geographical and occupational distribution, and in their social-economic status.⁴

⁴ For further discussion, see “The Negro as a Factor in the Nation's Labor Force,” *Journal Am. Statis. Assn.*, Vol. 31, Sept., 1936.