SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1940

POPULATION

THE LABOR FORCE

(Sample Statistics)

Usual Occupation

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SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1940

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Supplement: Block Statistics for Cities.
II General Characteristics of Housing, by States.
III Characteristics by Monthly Rent or Value, by States.
IV Mortgages on Owner-Occupied Nonfarm Homes, by States.

Special Reports.
FOREWORD

Sampling techniques were utilized in the Sixteenth Decennial Census for the first time in the history of the Population Census. The use of sampling methods permitted the collection of statistics on a larger number of inquiries than had heretofore been possible, the release of preliminary population statistics at an early date, and the tabulation of a great many social and economic characteristics of the population at a relatively low cost.

This report is based on tabulations of a five-percent sample of the population returns and presents data on usual occupations of the labor force and of persons not in the labor force, by employment status and personal characteristics. These statistics are designed for the analysis of the incidence of unemployment upon various occupational groups, for the study of occupational shifts during the period of large-scale unemployment in which the census was taken, and for a description of the occupational skills to be found among possible recruits to the labor force. This report was prepared under the supervision of Dr. Leon E. Truesdell, Chief Statistician for Population, and Dr. A. Ross Eckler, Assistant Chief Statistician, by William H. Mautz, Chief of Economic Statistics, Dr. Barry Casper, and David L. Kaplan. The sampling procedures were under the direction of Dr. W. Edwards Deming, Mathematical Adviser.
USUAL OCCUPATION

INTRODUCTION

This report presents data on usual occupation based on tabulations of a five-percent sample of the returns of the Sixteenth Decennial Census of Population, taken in April 1940.1 Statistics are presented for experienced persons in the labor force, and for persons 14 years old and over not in the labor force (except those unable to work or in institutions). Data on usual occupation are shown by color, age, nativity and citizenship, marital status, employment status, and current or last major occupation group.

The statistics on usual occupation for the experienced labor force, presented in this report, constitute the only body of occupation data to be published in the 1940 census reports in which a uniform definition of occupation is used for all experienced persons in the labor force. In other publications, the occupation data for employed persons and for those on public emergency work refer to their jobs during the census week, and the data for experienced workers seeking work refer to their last jobs of one month or more. The classification by employment status, which is shown in this report for experienced workers in each usual occupation, can be used for analyzing the occupational incidence of unemployment. In addition, this report provides, for each occupation, information on the personal characteristics of all experienced workers in the labor force. The data given here also make possible the study of shifts between usual occupation and current or last occupation.

The data for persons not in the labor force presented in this report serve as an inventory of the skills to be found among possible recruits to the labor force. The classifications by urban-rural residence, age, and marital status help to identify the groups most readily available for employment in each occupation.

RELATED REPORTS

This is one of a series of reports based on sample tabulations, published under the general title "The Labor Force--Sample Statistics." The report entitled "Occupational Characteristics," in this series, presents statistics on the current occupation of employed persons and the last occupation of experienced workers seeking work, in terms of the intermediate occupation lists for males and females. The data are presented by color, age, years of school completed, class of worker, months worked in 1939, and other characteristics, for the United States and regions.

The report entitled "Characteristics of Persons Not in the Labor Force," also based on sample tabulations, presents data on usual major occupation group, age, color, marital status, household relationship, months worked in 1939, and Social Security status, for persons not in the labor force, for the United States and regions.

Volume III of the Reports on Population, entitled "The Labor Force," presents, for States and large cities, statistics on current occupation for employed persons and last occupation for experienced workers seeking work, based on a complete count of the census returns. The intermediate occupation lists are shown by such characteristics as race, age, marital status, and wage or salary income in 1939. Volume III also shows the numbers of men and women employed in each of the 451 occupations in the complete census occupation classification, as well as data on current major occupation group for persons on public emergency work.

Occupation statistics for each State, county, and urban place, and for principal cities, for the entire United States, are presented in Volume II of the Reports on Population, entitled "Characteristics of the Population." That volume gives data on current major occupation group for employed persons, based on a complete count of the census returns.

AVAILABILITY OF UNPUBLISHED DATA

Some of the data obtained from the tabulations upon which the tables in this report are based have not been published because many of the categories in the unpublished tables are very small and hence are subject to comparatively large sampling errors. Statistics on usual occupation for persons in the experienced labor force, in terms of the intermediate lists of occupations for males and females, were tabulated for all cities of 175,000 to 375,000, and for selected cities of 100,000 to 175,000. In addition, usual occupation statistics for persons on public emergency work and for experienced workers seeking work, in terms of the complete 1940 census occupation classification, were tabulated by urban-rural residence and sex, for each of the four regions.

Such of the unpublished figures as are considered reliable can be obtained upon request, for the nominal cost of transcribing or reproducing them. Requests for such unpublished statistics, addressed to the Director of the Census, Washington, D. C., will receive a prompt reply, which will include an estimate of the cost of preparing the data.

LABOR FORCE CLASSIFICATION

In the 1940 Census of Population, persons 14 years old and over were classified on the basis of their activity during the census week of March 24 to 30, 1940, into two major groups: (a) Persons in the labor force, including those at work for pay or profit or at unpaid family work, those with a job or business from which they were temporarily absent, those on public emergency work, and those seeking work; and (b) persons not in the labor force. The latter group includes persons reported as engaged in home housework, in school, or unable to work; seasonal workers for whom the census week fell in an off-season, and who were not seeking work; others not employed, nor on public emergency work, nor seeking work; all inmates of penal and mental institutions and homes for the aged, insane, and needy, regardless of their activity during the census week; and persons for whom employment status was not reported. Data relating to the various categories of persons in the labor force and not in the labor force are summarized for the United States, by sex, in table 1.

1 The 1940 Population Census schedule is reproduced in Part 1 of Volume III and Part 1 of Volume IV of the Sixteenth Census Reports on Population. The instructions to enumerators are also reproduced in these volumes.
THE LABOR FORCE—SAMPLE STATISTICS

Table 1. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PERSONS 14 YEARS OLD AND OVER, BY SEX, FOR THE UNITED STATES: MARCH 1940

[Sample based on a 5-percent sample.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</th>
<th>Total Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons 14 and over</td>
<td>103,019,940</td>
<td>50,427,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In labor force</td>
<td>59,216,920</td>
<td>25,078,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>43,803,020</td>
<td>25,349,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in labor force</td>
<td>53,806,920</td>
<td>25,048,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employed (excl. emergency work): 4,321,500, 3,451,500, 87.7, 85.6, 66.7

At work: 4,321,500, 3,451,500, 87.7, 85.6, 66.7

Not at work: 323,400, 370,000, 9.0, 9.2, 9.2

On public emergency work: 2,456,450, 2,000,000, 84.5, 5.0, 9.2

Seeking work: 987,050, 471,500, 98.7, 98.5, 98.5

Experienced workers: 4,321,500, 3,451,500, 87.7, 85.6, 66.7

New workers: 987,050, 471,500, 98.7, 98.5, 98.5

Persons not in labor force: 59,216,920


PERSOXS NOT IN THE LABOR FORCE

Employment status categories: The employment status categories of persons in the labor force are defined below:

Employed (except on public emergency work): The group classified as employed includes (a) persons who worked for pay or profit at any time during the week of March 24 to 30, 1940, in private work or nonemergency Federal, State, or local government work, or assisted without pay on a family farm or in a family business; and (b) persons not actually at work and not seeking work during the week of March 24 to 30, 1940, but with jobs, businesses, or professional enterprises from which they were temporarily absent because of vacation, illness, industrial dispute, bad weather, or layoff not exceeding four weeks with definite instructions to return to work on a specific date. The group "employed (except public emergency work)" includes not only employees but also proprietors, farmers, other self-employed persons, and unpaid family workers.

On public emergency work: This category includes persons who, during the week of March 24 to 30, 1940, were at work on, or assigned to, public emergency work projects conducted by the Works Projects Administration (WPA), the National Youth Administration (NYA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), or State or local work relief agencies.

Experienced labor force: Many of the tables in this report present data for the experienced labor force, which includes employed persons, persons on public emergency work, and persons seeking work other than new workers. The entire labor force is composed of the experienced labor force and new workers. Occupation data for new workers are not available, since enumerators were instructed not to report occupation for persons who had never worked full time for one month or more.

Misclassification of persons on public emergency work: In the interpretation of the data for the public emergency work program, allowance must be made for the misclassification in the census returns of considerable numbers of public emergency workers. The number of persons reported in the census as on public emergency work in the United States was 2,529,605, according to the complete count of the census returns, whereas the number recorded on the pay rolls of the Federal emergency work agencies as of the time of the census was 2,856,605, including the NYA Student Work Program, and 3,379,978 including that program. The most common type of misclassification was the reporting of persons engaged in parapublic emergency work) as "employed (except public emergency work)". Persons on the NYA Student Work Program were very frequently reported as in school and not in the labor force. There is also evidence that a considerable number of emergency workers were classified as seeking work. Since the amount of misclassification undoubtedly differed considerably among the various occupations, the occupation data for persons on public emergency work should be used with caution.

Number of unemployed: The total number of unemployed, as usually defined, includes (1) persons seeking work and without any form of public or private employment, and (2) persons on public emergency work programs established to provide jobs for the unemployed. Because of the misclassification of public emergency workers, the census total of these two groups understates the number of unemployed. The statistics in this report which show the proportion of workers unemployed for each occupation should, therefore, be interpreted with considerable care.

PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOR FORCE

The figures relating to usual occupation presented in this report do not give a complete account of persons not in the labor force who had training or experience in each occupation. First, two groups of persons not in the labor force have been included in the labor force: (a) persons reporting as unemployed but also engaged at least to some extent in home housework, though they may be working also for pay or profit or a full or part-time basis; and (b) persons on public emergency work. The statistics in this report which show the proportion of workers unemployed for each occupation should, therefore, be interpreted with considerable care.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE CLASSIFICATION OF WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND Aged PERSONS

In the interpretation of the number of persons reported in each occupation, according to employment status, age, and sex, certain difficulties in classification of women because most of them are normally engaged at least to some extent in housework, though they may be working also for pay or profit or at unpaid family work. Women with part-time jobs may therefore have been reported in some cases as engaged in own home housework and not in the labor force. Likewise, some women who had lost their jobs and were undesirably available, since numbers were instructed not to report occupation for persons who had never worked full time for one month or more.

For similar reasons, the employment status classification for persons of school age tend to be less reliable than for older persons. Many students working part time after school hours were probably reported as in school and not in the labor force, and it was doubly difficult in many cases to determine whether a person attending school was also seeking work. A very large proportion of the youths on the NYA Student Work Program were reported as in school and not in the labor force. On the other hand, a considerable number of students in farming areas who performed only incidental farm
INTRODUCTION

Many of the persons 65 years old and over, to some extent for those to 64 years old, the statistics on employment status are less reliable and less meaningful than for younger persons. In these age classes it is difficult to draw the line between those who are retired and those who are temporarily or permanently disabled or unable to work, and many men in these age groups at the time of the census had forced into retirement because of their inability to compete with younger workers, although they were still able and willing to work. Many of these prematurely retired workers should be considered as part of the nation's unused labor supply, although they were not actively seeking work at the time of the 1940 census.

OCCUPATION

Two inquiries relating to occupation were made in the 1940 census. First, an inquiry regarding "current" or "last" occupation was made of all persons in the experienced labor force during the census week. For employed persons and current persons on public emergency work, this question referred to the job in which they were engaged during the census week. For experienced workers seeking work, the question referred to the job in which they most recently engaged for one month or more. Second, an inquiry regarding "usual" occupation was made of a five-percent sample of all persons 14 years old and over (except new workers), regardless of whether they were in the labor force during the census week. This question referred to the occupation which the person regarded as his usual occupation and at which he was still physically able to work.

SHIFTS BETWEEN USUAL OCCUPATION AND CURRENT OR LAST OCCUPATION

Although most of the data in this report are based on usual occupation, data on current or last occupation are also presented in some of the tables. Statistics on current major occupation group for employed persons, by usual occupation, are presented in table 9. This table shows the number of persons with a particular skill who were currently employed at that general level of skill. The table also shows the level of skill at which persons were employed if they were not working at their usual level of skill. Table 10, which presents a cross-classification of usual occupation with last major occupation group, gives similar information for experienced workers seeking work. These two tables together indicate employment status differences in shifts between usual occupation and current or last occupation. A summary of the data in tables 9 and 10 is presented in table 11, which shows the percentage of persons in each usual major occupation group who reported both usual occupation and current or last occupation in the same major group.

Table II. EMPLOYED PERSONS (EXCEPT ON EMERGENCY WORK) WHO REPORTED USUAL AND CURRENT OCCUPATIONS, AND EXPERIENCED WORKERS SEEKING WORK WHO REPORTED USUAL AND CURRENT OCCUPATIONS, BY MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP AND SEX, FOR THE UNITED STATES: MARCH 1940

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALE</th>
<th></th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REPORTING CURRENT OCCUPATION</td>
<td>REPORTING USUAL OCCUPATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP AND SEX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NUMBER</td>
<td>PERCENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and semi-professional workers</td>
<td>83,310,680</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers and farm managers</td>
<td>1,113,620</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proprietors, managers, and officials, except farm</td>
<td>3,801,300</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical, sales, and kindred workers</td>
<td>4,316,000</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers</td>
<td>4,406,000</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operators and kindred workers</td>
<td>1,042,400</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic service workers</td>
<td>102,300</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective service workers</td>
<td>527,000</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers, excl. domestic and protective</td>
<td>1,446,400</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm laborers and foremen</td>
<td>2,503,140</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers, except farm and mines</td>
<td>2,741,940</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II presents, for whites and nonwhites, the distribution of employed persons by usual occupation and by current occupation, and the distributions of experienced workers seeking work by usual occupation and by last occupation. This table indicates the amount of shift into and out of each occupation according to employment status and color. Similar statistics by age are presented for employed persons in tables 12 and 13.

Persons who reported a lower level of current or last occupation than usual occupation were for the most part unemployed workers, that is, persons whose skills were not being utilized. On the other hand, persons who reported a higher level of current or last than usual occupation, were mainly those in the process of occupational advancement. It should be noted, however, that the data on usual occupation undoubtedly reflect a tendency for persons to report their highest occupational skill. Because of this tendency, the group reporting a lower level of current or last occupation than usual occupation includes not only persons who were temporarily forced to accept employment at a lower skill, but also many who had worked at a lower skill for so long that they were unlikely to return to their former activity, and some who were no longer physically able to perform the tasks of their former job. For the same reason, the group reporting a higher level of current or last occupation than usual occupation does not include all persons who were in the process of occupational advancement, since many of these persons probably reported their current or last job, rather than their usual job, as the usual occupation. In addition, the relatively large number of persons who did not report a usual occupation should be taken into consideration in comparing the data on usual occupation with those on current or last occupation.

STRUCTURE OF THE OCCUPATION CLASSIFICATION

The occupation classification used for the 1940 census contains 451 titles, arranged in 11 major occupation groups. Of these 451 titles, 221 represent distinct occupations, and
the remaining 250 represent industrial subdivisions of five occupations: "Proprietors, managers, and officials;" "Foremen;" "Inspectors;" "Operatives and Kindred workers;" and "Laborers."

The remaining 461-item list is restricted to the presentation of statistics on current occupation for employed workers by sex in Volume III of the Reports on Population. In this report, intermediate occupation lists of 167 items for males and 75 items for females are arranged according to the categories of the complete census occupation classification to which each return should be assigned. The Bureau of the Census has also published the "Classified Index of Occupations: 1940," in which the 25,000 occupation designations are arranged according to the 461 categories in the census list.

With two minor exceptions, the 167 items in the census intermediate occupation list for males are convertible to the standards of the Census-Occupational Classification, which was designed by an Interdepartmental Joint Committee on Occupational Classification (sponsored by the Central Statistical Committee of the American State Associations) to increase comparability among occupation statistics compiled by various governmental and private agencies. The census intermediate list of 76 items for females and the 99-item Convertibility List are both convertible to a somewhat broader grouping of occupations.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS

The task of classifying the enumerators' returns on occupation would be difficult enough if all the returns were in the form of concise descriptions of the work done, since it involves the assignment of many thousands of different designations to one or another of the categories in the census occupational classification. It is made more difficult, however, by the failure of many enumerators to return exact designations of specific occupations. Indefinite returns resulted in some cases from the hurriedness of the enumerators or from their lack of knowledge of occupational designations. In other cases, the householders and others from whom the enumerators obtained their information did not know the specific occupations of the persons to whom the questions relating to the latter difficulties were frequent in the replies to the inquiry on usual occupation than to the inquiry on current or last occupation.

In many instances, however, indefinite occupation returns can be assigned to the proper class through examination of other entries on the schedule. For example, the return "Drugstore" can often be assigned to the occupation class "Retail trade" to the class "Proponents... drug store" or to the basis of such collateral information as age, education, class of worker, and wage or salary income. Likewise, a person for whom the return was simply "Farm laborer" can usually be classified as a wage worker or as an unpaid family worker on the basis of schedule entries for family relationship, age, and receipt of income.

This industry return in particular is often of great assistance in the classification of an occupation: in fact, for many of the items in the occupational list some dependence on industry is essential. This is true not only of those in which the occupational designation itself implies reference to an industry (as "Spinning, cotton mills"), but also of other cases where the return in the industry column indirectly points out the proper occupational classification. A return of occupation and industry, "Salesmen, pushcart," for example, would be classified under "Vendors and peddlers" rather than under "Salesmen."

To some extent the difficulties in the classification of occupations grow out of the nature of the occupations themselves. At some points in what might be termed the occupational series the groups are clear and distinct. A cabinetmaker, for example, is easily distinguished from a plumber or a bricklayer. At other points in the series they fall into distinct categories or convenient groups but shade off into another in such fashion as to call for almost arbitrary allocations to standard groups or classes.
INTRODUCTION

The statistics on nativity and citizenship show the occupational differentials existing between native workers, foreign-born workers who have become naturalized citizens, and aliens. In the classification by nativity, a person born in the United States or in any of its territories or possessions is counted as native. Likewise included as native are the small number of persons who, although born in a foreign country or at sea, were American citizens by birth because their parents were American citizens. The classification of the foreign born in regard to citizenship embraces two major categories: Naturalized citizen, and alien. Citizenship by naturalization is open only to white persons, persons of African nativity or descent, and descendants of races indigenous to the Western Hemisphere. Foreign-born Chinese, Japanese, and other Asians are not eligible for citizenship except under rare circumstances. There is an additional category designated "Citizen ship not reported," comprising persons for whom the enumerators secured no report as to citizenship.¹

MARRITAL STATUS

Data on marital status by usual occupation are presented only for females in this report. The statistics on this subject are especially useful in the determination of availability for employment of the women with a particular skill who were not in the labor force during the census week. In the classification by marital status, two groups are shown: Married, husband present; and other marital status, that is, single, married with husband absent, widowed, or divorced. A woman was classified as "married, husband present" if her husband was reported as a member of the household in which the woman was enumerated. Women in each marital status category are classified by age in order to provide further indications of the family responsibilities which affect their ability to take jobs.

COMPARISON BETWEEN RESULTS OF SAMPLE TABULATIONS AND COMPLETE COUNT

The statistics shown in this report are based on tabulations of a five-percent sample of the 1940 census returns, multiplied uniformly by 20. Exact agreement is not to be expected between the tabulations of the sample and the corresponding tabulations of a complete count, but the sample data nevertheless indicate the relationships among the various characteristics involved. With regard to the individual numbers in the tables, comparisons thus far made with figures obtainable also from the complete count indicate that 99 percent of the numbers above 10,000 will differ from those available from the complete count by less than 5 percent, 95 percent of those between 5,000 and 10,000 will differ by less than 10 percent, and 90 percent of those between 2,000 and 5,000 will differ by less than 20 percent. Somewhat larger variations may occur in the case of numbers below 2,000, but even here the majority of the differences are less than 10 percent, although such larger differences occasionally occur.

In a forthcoming technical report there will be a detailed exposition of the sampling method, descriptions of the various samples that were taken, and comparisons between the sample and complete count. The purpose of the report will be to assist in evaluating the data that are published on the basis of the samples.

¹ In the 1940 census there were 828,072 foreign-born white persons in the United States for whom citizenship was not reported. It would appear that this group consisted predominantly of aliens. This conclusion is based partly upon the fact that the total number of foreign born reported as aliens, plus those for whom citizenship status was not reported, is approximately equal to the number of aliens registered under the Alien Registration Act of 1940.

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MAP OF THE UNITED STATES SHOWING REGIONS, DIVISIONS, AND STATES

- Region boundaries
- Division boundaries
- State boundaries

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS