
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Frances Perkins, *Secretary*

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Isador Lubin, *Commissioner*

Earnings and Hours in the Leather and Leather Belting and Packing Industries, 1939

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Prepared by the
Division of Wage and Hour Statistics
of the Bureau of Labor Statistics
J. PERLMAN, Chief



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CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	IX
Introduction and summary	1
PART I.—Earnings and hours in the leather industry	5
Description of the industry and scope of survey.....	7
Definition of the industry.....	7
Characteristics of the industry.....	7
Fluctuations in employment and pay rolls.....	10
Description of the sample.....	12
Average hourly earnings.....	15
Methods of wage payments.....	15
Hourly earnings of all workers.....	15
Variations by sex and skill.....	16
Geographical differences.....	18
Hourly earnings in relation to Fair Labor Standards Act.....	22
Differences between union and nonunion plants.....	23
Variations by size of community.....	25
Product differences.....	26
Occupational differences.....	30
Variations by race of workers.....	34
Extra rates for overtime work.....	35
Comparisons with 1932 survey.....	36
Weekly hours and earnings.....	36
Full-time weekly hours.....	36
Actual weekly hours.....	37
Weekly earnings.....	37
PART II.—Earnings and hours in the leather belting and packing industry	39
Description of the industry and scope of survey.....	41
Definition of the industry.....	41
Characteristics of the industry.....	41
Scope of the survey.....	42
Average hourly earnings.....	42
Methods of wage payments.....	42
Hourly earnings of all workers.....	43
Variations by sex and skill.....	44
Geographical differences.....	45
Hourly earnings in relation to Fair Labor Standards Act.....	49
Variations by size of community and unionization.....	50
Product differences.....	51
Occupational differences.....	53
Weekly hours and earnings.....	54
Full-time weekly hours.....	54
Actual weekly hours.....	54
Weekly earnings.....	55

List of Tables

	Page
TABLE 1.—Number of establishments, number of wage earners, and wages paid in the leather industry, 1921–37.....	8
2.—Classification of establishments in the leather industry, by size, 1937.....	9
3.—Geographical distribution of establishments and wage earners in the leather industry, by State, 1937.....	9
4.—Value of products in the leather industry, 1937.....	10
5.—Index numbers of employment and pay rolls in the leather industry, 1923–39.....	11
6.—Earnings and hours in the leather industry, 1932–39.....	12
7.—Coverage of survey in the leather industry, by States, September 1939.....	14
8.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average hourly earnings, sex, and skill, September 1939.....	16
9.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average hourly earnings, sex, and district, September 1939.....	20
10.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average hourly earnings, region, sex, and skill, September 1939.....	21
11.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average hourly earnings, and by groups of plants, September 1939.....	23
12.—Average hourly earnings of leather workers in the northern region, by size of community, unionization, sex, and skill, September 1939.....	24
13.—Average hourly earnings of leather workers, by product, sex, and skill, September 1939.....	27
14.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average hourly earnings and by product, September 1939.....	30
15.—Average hourly earnings, weekly hours, and weekly earnings of leather workers, by sex, skill, and occupation, September 1939.....	32
16.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average hourly earnings, 1932 and 1939.....	36
17.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by actual weekly hours, sex, and skill, September 1939.....	37
18.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average weekly earnings, sex, and skill, September 1939.....	38
19.—Number of establishments, number of wage earners, and wages paid in the leather belting and packing industry, 1921–37....	42
20.—Coverage of survey in the leather belting and packing industry, by States, September 1939.....	43
21.—Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average hourly earnings, sex, and skill, September 1939....	45
22.—Distribution of leather belting and packing plants, by average hourly earnings and by district, September 1939.....	46
23.—Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average hourly earnings, region, sex, and skill, September 1939.....	47
24.—Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average hourly earnings, sex, and district, September 1939....	48
25.—Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average hourly earnings and by groups of plants, September 1939.....	50

	Page
26.—Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average hourly earnings and by product, September 1939_	52
27.—Average hourly earnings, weekly hours, and weekly earnings of leather belting and packing workers, by sex, skill, and occu- pation, September 1939_-----	55
28.—Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by actual weekly hours, sex, and skill, September 1939_-----	56
29.—Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average weekly earnings, sex, and skill, September 1939_-----	56

Letter of Transmittal

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS,
Washington, D. C., May 24, 1940.

THE SECRETARY OF LABOR:

I have the honor to transmit herewith a report on wages and hours of labor in the leather and leather belting and packing industries in 1939. The report was prepared under the direction of Jacob Perlman, Chief, Division of Wage and Hour Statistics, in response to a request of the Research and Statistics Branch, Wage and Hour Division.

ISADOR LUBIN,
Commissioner.

HON. FRANCES PERKINS,
Secretary of Labor.

VII

PREFACE

The present survey of wages and hours in leather tanning and finishing is the third of a series made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in this industry. The first survey was made in 1919 and the second in 1932. The former surveys did not, however, include leather belting and packing.

The Bureau wishes to acknowledge its debt to the various firms that voluntarily cooperated in furnishing the information upon which this bulletin is based. The Bureau also expresses its grateful appreciation to the Tanners' Council of America, American Leather Belting Association, and New England Shoe and Leather Association, as well as the various unions, for their valuable cooperation.

In preparing this bulletin, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has strictly adhered to its long-established policy of keeping confidential all information submitted to it by individual establishments included in the survey.

The survey was made under the supervision of Jacob Perlman, Chief of the Division of Wage and Hour Statistics of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. P. L. Jones was in charge of the field work and O. R. Witmer supervised the office work. The text was written by H. O. Rogers. Acknowledgment for valuable suggestions is also extended to A. B. Long, of the Industry Committee Branch, and W. P. Fallon, of the Research and Statistics Branch of the Wage and Hour Division.

ISADOR LUBIN,

Commissioner of Labor Statistics.

MAY 24, 1940.

ix

Bulletin No. 679 of the

United States Bureau of Labor Statistics

Earnings and Hours in the Leather and Leather Belting and Packing Industry, 1939

Introduction and Summary

Two industries are covered by this report on wages and hours. The first and more important is the manufacture (tanning, currying, and finishing) of leather from hides and skins. The second includes the manufacture of leather belting, leather packing, and textile leathers.¹

In the leather tanning and finishing industry, hourly earnings averaged 62.3 cents in September 1939. Earnings in the leather belting and packing industry were somewhat lower, averaging 56.5 cents an hour. Both industries, however, showed a wide range in individual earnings.

An outstanding feature of the leather tanning and finishing industry is the relatively small proportion of workers in the low-earnings classes. Taking the industry as a whole, only 1.2 percent were paid less than 30 cents an hour, 2.7 percent earned less than 35 cents, and 5.8 percent received less than 40 cents. There was a fairly substantial scattering of employees in the higher-earnings classes, 13.2 percent averaging 82.5 cents an hour or better. This is particularly noteworthy in view of the predominance of the semiskilled and unskilled workers in the industry.

The differences in hourly earnings in the leather industry can be explained in part by the sharply contrasting wage levels of the different groups of employees. For male workers, the averages were 77.3 cents for the skilled, 65.6 cents for the semiskilled, and 53.8 cents for the unskilled. The female workers averaged 44.5 cents, or 9.3 cents less than the average for the unskilled males. Female employees, however, constitute only a twelfth of the industry's total labor force.

In the leather tanning and finishing industry, as in many other branches of manufacturing, there is a pronounced geographical difference in hourly earnings. Against an average of 65.3 cents for all male employees of the northern plants surveyed, those in the South averaged 46.1 cents. In the Northern States, 1.9 percent of the male wage

¹ For additional information concerning wages and hours in the manufacture of leather products, see *Earnings and Hours in Shoe and Allied Industries, During First Quarter of 1939*, U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bull. No. 670, Washington, 1939.

earners were paid below 40 cents an hour, but 15.6 percent received 82.5 cents and over. In the South 27.9 percent received less than 40 cents, and only 0.7 percent earned as much as 82.5 cents.

Hourly earnings in the leather industry are also influenced in an important fashion by the kind of products manufactured. Among the more important industry divisions, hourly earnings were highest (82.7 cents) in plants specializing in the production of glove leather, which represented 4.3 percent of all leather value. Relatively high hourly earnings (72.3 cents) were also reported for the plants specializing in calf upper leather, with a representation of 9.9 percent of production value. The lowest hourly earnings (56.7 cents) were shown for workers employed by plants making primarily sole and belting leather. Total value of their products, however, was the highest in the industry.

In contrast with the leather tanning and finishing industry, a relatively large proportion of leather belting and packing employees were found in the lower-wage classes. Roughly one out of every six wage earners (17.3 percent) earned under 40 cents an hour, and 5.6 percent received less than 35 cents. Hardly any of the employees earned less than 25 cents, but there was a small concentration at exactly 25 cents.

As in the leather industry, sharply contrasting wage levels are shown for each of the principal groups of employees in the belting and packing industry. Compared with an average of 68.2 cents an hour for skilled males, semiskilled males averaged 54.4 cents, and unskilled males had an average of 42.2 cents. The few female employees in the industry, most of whom were semiskilled workers, averaged 40.5 cents.

In the belting and packing industry, there is a sharp contrast in average hourly earnings between the northern and southern establishments. As there were no female workers employed in the southern establishments, any comparison between regions should be confined to male employees. For all males, the average hourly earnings were 62.1 cents in the Northern States and 43.9 cents in the South.

Weekly hours in the tanning and finishing industry averaged 39.1 in September 1939, as against 43.4 hours in the leather belting and packing industry.

Average weekly earnings amounted to \$24.42 in the leather tanning and finishing industry and \$24.51 in the leather belting and packing industry.

The information presented in this report was collected by actual visits of the Bureau's field representatives to every plant included in the survey. Using pay-roll and other records, the field representatives obtained for every worker (including working supervisors and plant clerks)² in each establishment the occupation, sex, color, total

² The survey did not cover higher supervisory officials and office workers in central or other offices that are separate and distinct from the plants.

hours actually worked, and total earnings for a pay-roll period between September 10 and October 1, 1939.³ In addition, certain general plant information concerning full-time hours, overtime rates, methods of wage payment, and employer-employee dealings was secured from the officials of the cooperating firms.

Descriptions of the various occupations were obtained from a number of establishments, especially where there was some doubt as to the duties involved. This information, coupled with that obtained from previous surveys of the leather industry, furnished the basis for the detailed occupational groupings used in the report.

In addition, the occupations were classified according to skill. This classification was developed on the basis of the prevailing opinion of plant supervisors, or foremen, as well as other information available in the Bureau. Any classification of occupations by skill tends to be somewhat arbitrary. Despite this limitation, it is believed that the skill designations used in this report are essentially accurate.

It should be noted that the data collected cover a period prior to October 24, 1939, the effective date of the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act establishing an hourly minimum of 30 cents, as well as a maximum workweek of 42 hours. As only a small proportion of the workers in the leather industry fell short of the 30-cent minimum at the time of the survey, the wage structure shown here is not likely to be much different from the one now in existence.

During the period covered by the survey, the Fair Labor Standards Act provided for a workweek of 44 hours for plants engaged in interstate commerce, and employees working in excess of this standard received time and a half for overtime. Unless otherwise indicated, the hourly earnings shown in this report are based on regular rates. Consequently, they do not reflect the compensation from the extra rates paid for overtime work.⁴

³ In establishments where the pay-roll period exceeded 1 week, there was also obtained the number of hours worked during 1 continuous week within the pay-roll period. This enabled the Bureau to present weekly hours, as well as weekly earnings for all workers.

⁴ In most surveys made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the compensation resulting from the extra rates for overtime work is included in computing average hourly earnings. The present survey, however, was made at the request of the Economic Section of the Wage and Hour Division, in order to provide reliable information on wages for use of the industry committee that has been established under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. For this reason, it was considered desirable to exclude the earnings at the extra rates.

Although made primarily for the Wage and Hour Division, the Bureau has strictly adhered here to its long established policy of keeping confidential all data obtained from individual establishments.

Part I
Earnings and Hours in the Leather Industry

Description of the Industry and Scope of Survey

Definition of the Industry

The manufacture of leather from hides and skins includes two principal processes, namely tanning and finishing.⁵ Most establishments are integrated, thus performing all processes. A few plants do tanning only, but a substantial number engage in finishing only. The Bureau's survey included integrated establishments, as well as those confining their operations to either tanning or finishing.

In defining the industry, the Census of Manufacturers makes a distinction between regular and contract factories, the former covering plants working primarily on hides and skins owned by them, and the latter including establishments that manufacture leather on contract. Some of the regular plants, however, also do some contract work, and some of the contract establishments also manufacture small amounts of leather from hides and skins owned by them. The present survey includes both regular and contract plants.

The survey excluded all integrated plants having fewer than 20 employees, or any separate tanning or finishing establishments with fewer than 10 workers. This reduced the total number of plants in the industry to about 300, which employed somewhat less than 50,000 wage earners.

Characteristics of the Industry

As an employer of labor, the leather industry is fairly important. In the aggregate, the 402 establishments⁶ in the industry, according to the Census of Manufacturers, provided work for 50,687 wage earners in 1937. The total wage bill of these plants amounted to \$61,288,375, which represented 54.0 percent of the value added by manufacture.

For many years, an outstanding feature of the leather industry was the remarkable decrease that had taken place in the number of establishments. This was accompanied by an almost steady rise in the number of wage earners. According to the Census of Manufactures, the number of plants declined from somewhat less than 7,000 in 1849 to 680 in 1919,⁷ but the number of wage earners increased from approxi-

⁵ Includes currying, a secondary process of finishing leather after tanning.

⁶ Includes only plants with an annual production valued at \$5,000 and over.

⁷ Prior to 1905, all kinds of manufacturing and mechanical establishments were included by the Census of Manufactures. Since 1905, however, only manufacturing establishments conducted under what is known as the factory system have been included. This change affects the comparability of the data as regards the number of plants for the various industries.

mately 26,000 to 72,000. This was the result of a gradual expansion in the size of establishment.

TABLE 1.—*Number of establishments, number of wage earners, and wages paid in the leather industry, 1921-37*¹

[Based on data from Census of Manufacturers]

Year	Number of establishments	Number of wage earners (average for the year)	Average number of wage earners per establishment	Wages paid (thousands of dollars)
1921.....	608	48,955	81	\$57,741
1923.....	597	59,703	100	73,784
1925.....	531	52,263	98	65,834
1927.....	494	52,924	107	67,887
1929.....	471	49,932	106	63,414
1931.....	418	42,047	101	49,542
1933.....	374	44,191	118	43,076
1935.....	384	50,877	133	55,683
1937.....	402	50,687	126	61,288

¹ Includes only plants having an annual production valued at \$5,000 and over.

Even between 1921 and 1937, the number of establishments in the leather industry decreased by about one-third.⁸ On the other hand, the number of wage earners, which was subject to considerable fluctuation during this period, never approached the high level reached in 1919. It will be noted, however, that the size of plant in terms of number of wage earners has increased generally during these years.

Although the size of the producing unit in the leather industry has been growing steadily, the typical plant is still relatively small. In 1937, for example, the average per establishment was 126 wage earners. Of the 402 plants in that year, only 20 reported between 501 and 1,000 workers, and only a single establishment showed over 1,000 employees. In contrast, about three-fifths of the plants employed 100 workers or less, and virtually one-fourth showed 20 employees or less.

Leather manufacturing is widely scattered geographically. (See table 3.) The New England States, the early center of the industry, still remain an important producing region. Most of the leather plants in the Pacific States are located in the vicinity of San Francisco. In the Southern States, by contrast, establishments making leather are scattered throughout the Appalachian belt, but their combined employment constitutes only a minor portion of the industry's total.

⁸ Likewise, the figures since 1921 are not strictly comparable with those for 1919 and prior years. Before 1921, the Census of Manufactures covered all establishments with a value of product amounting to \$500 and over. Beginning with that year, however, the minimum requirement was extended to a product value of \$5,000 and over. This change probably accounts for most of the decrease in number of plants between 1919 and 1921. The establishments excluded due to the shift in definition were very small, so that the reduction in number of wage earners between the 2 years was due primarily to other causes.

TABLE 2.—Classification of establishments in the leather industry, by size, 1937

[Based on data from Census of Manufactures]

Size of establishment	Number of establishments	Number of wage earners
Total.....	402	50,687
No wage earners.....	3	.....
1 to 5 wage earners.....	31	99
6 to 20 wage earners.....	63	742
21 to 50 wage earners.....	81	2,792
51 to 100 wage earners.....	70	5,256
101 to 250 wage earners.....	87	14,182
251 to 500 wage earners.....	46	15,161
501 to 1,000 wage earners.....	20	12,455
1,001 to 2,500 wage earners.....	1	(¹)
2,501 wage earners or more.....	.....	.....

¹ As this figure could not be shown without disclosing data for an individual establishment, it has been included with that for the previous size group.

TABLE 3.—Geographical distribution of establishments and wage earners in the leather industry, by State, 1937

[Based on data from Census of Manufactures]

State	Number of establishments	Wage earners (average for the year)	State	Number of establishments	Wage earners (average for the year)
<i>Leather: Tanned, curried, and finished—regular factories</i>			Ohio.....	14	1,825
			Oregon.....	4	25
			Pennsylvania.....	44	8,541
United States.....	331	48,132	Virginia.....	7	770
California.....	13	667	West Virginia.....	6	937
Delaware.....	10	2,692	Wisconsin.....	17	4,307
Illinois.....	26	4,376	Other States ¹	17	1,813
Indiana.....	5	368	<i>Leather: Tanned, curried, and finished—contract factories</i>		
Kentucky.....	3	442	United States.....	71	2,555
Maryland.....	3	520	Massachusetts.....	30	880
Massachusetts.....	66	9,325	New Jersey.....	8	335
Michigan.....	13	2,569	New York.....	20	838
Missouri.....	4	182	Other States ²	13	502
New Jersey.....	33	2,930			
New York.....	37	4,710			
North Carolina.....	9	1,133			

¹ Connecticut, 2 establishments; Georgia, 2; Maine, 1; Minnesota, 3; New Hampshire, 3; Rhode Island, 1; Tennessee, 2; Texas, 2; Washington, 1.

² Colorado, 1 establishment; Delaware, 1; Illinois, 3; Maine, 2; New Hampshire, 1; Pennsylvania, 3; Wisconsin, 2.

At first glance, the leather industry appears reasonably homogeneous in terms of product. Actually, however, it is an industry of extreme diversity. The factors that contribute to the complexity of the industry are the variations in the kinds of animal skins or hides employed for conversion into leather and the specific uses for which the finished leather is intended. These factors, in turn, determine the tanning and finishing methods employed in the manufacturing process.

Some idea of the variety and relative importance of the various products manufactured in the leather industry may be obtained

from table 4, which has been condensed from a more detailed table presented by the Census of Manufactures for 1937. It will be seen that, in terms of value, the most important products are sole and belting (30.3 percent), side upper leather (20.2 percent), kid upper leather (10.8 percent), and calf upper leather (9.9 percent).

TABLE 4.—*Value of products in the leather industry, 1937*

[Based on data from Census of Manufacturers]

Kind of leather	Value of product	Per cent	Kind of leather	Value of product	Per cent
All kinds.....	\$362, 094, 589	100. 0	Upholstery leather (automobile, furniture, and carriage)	\$7, 138, 787	2. 0
Sole and belting leather.....	110, 212, 195	30. 3	Patent upper leather.....	9, 326, 345	2. 6
Side upper leather, cattle ²	73, 044, 815	20. 2	Fancy leather.....	6, 625, 961	1. 8
Kid upper leather.....	39, 132, 725	10. 8	Bag, case, and strap leather.....	5, 315, 613	1. 5
Calf upper leather.....	35, 705, 736	9. 9	Harness and collar leather.....	6, 000, 303	1. 7
Sheepskin and goatskin—			Horsehide.....	5, 750, 321	1. 6
Glove and garment leather.....	15, 639, 069	4. 3	Weltting leather.....	2, 297, 520	. 6
Lining leather.....	13, 965, 396	3. 9	Miscellaneous leather ³	21, 709, 629	6. 0
Splits, other than upper and upholstery leather.....	10, 230, 174	2. 8			

¹ Includes the value of leather only, whether made as a primary product in this industry or as a secondary product in other industries. In order to avoid duplication, the value of rough leather has been excluded.

² Includes also wax and finished splits.

³ This includes all other leather which is not classified with the above items.

Fluctuations in Employment and Pay Rolls

As stated previously, the figures of the Census of Manufactures indicate important fluctuations in the total number of wage earners in the leather industry between 1921 and 1937. Such fluctuations are confirmed by the index numbers of employment and pay rolls since 1923, which are published monthly by the Bureau's Division of Employment Statistics. (See table 5.)

In connection with these figures, it is interesting to note how the changes in business conditions affected employment and pay rolls in the leather industry since 1937. The highest point in employment during recent years was reached in April 1937, when the index stood at 98.8 (using 1923–25 as a base of 100). After that month, employment declined almost without interruption until June 1938, when the index stood at 73.3. This was followed by a general rise that brought the index up to about 88 percent of the 1923–25 average in the fall of 1939. The highest point reached by the index numbers of pay rolls during recent years (99.5) was also recorded in April 1937, after which there was a general decline that continued until the following April, when the index stood at 65.7. Subsequently, a general increase occurred, which raised the index to 88 percent of the 1923–25 average in the fall of 1939.

Although frequently overshadowed by cyclical changes, employment and pay rolls are affected by seasonal fluctuations in the leather industry. Generally, the slack period occurs during the summer, and the busy months are during the fall and winter.

Based on the monthly reports of employment and pay rolls, the Bureau computes average weekly earnings. Likewise, using the figures on man-hours, which are reported by a substantial number of establishments, there are computed average hourly earnings and average hours worked per week. These figures are presented by months since 1932 in table 6.

Average hourly earnings in the leather industry showed a strong tendency to remain constant for relatively long periods of time. The lowest figure during the depression of the early thirties was reached in April 1933, when the average amounted to 38.4 cents. Following the adoption of the President's Reemployment Agreement and the industry code during the N. R. A., average hourly earnings rose to about 56 cents at the close of 1934. Hourly earnings remained at approximately this level until the fall of 1936. During the latter part of 1936 and early part of 1937 the average increased again, attaining a level of approximately 63-64 cents. Since that time, earnings have remained relatively stable.

TABLE 5.—Index numbers of employment and pay rolls in the leather industry, 1923-39¹

[Indexes are based on 3-year average 1923-25=100 and are adjusted to 1937 Census of Manufactures]

Month	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Employment																	
January.....	114.6	103.1	97.8	97.4	99.4	98.0	89.8	89.5	77.6	70.9	70.3	90.7	91.8	95.0	95.8	76.1	87.3
February.....	116.2	103.5	99.0	98.4	101.3	98.8	90.2	89.0	77.7	72.3	71.8	92.8	93.3	93.6	96.2	77.1	88.3
March.....	115.1	102.4	98.7	98.6	99.5	98.0	89.0	88.2	78.6	71.3	69.9	94.1	93.1	93.1	97.6	75.9	87.3
April.....	113.3	98.1	96.0	96.4	95.4	94.7	88.3	87.6	77.9	70.8	65.8	92.1	92.0	92.5	98.8	74.0	85.8
May.....	108.9	93.2	93.3	94.5	94.0	94.7	88.2	86.1	77.6	67.7	73.2	90.9	90.6	91.8	98.0	73.4	83.3
June.....	108.4	90.2	93.0	92.0	94.1	93.4	89.0	84.4	77.7	63.8	80.5	90.2	90.0	91.3	96.9	73.3	84.8
July.....	107.7	87.4	91.4	93.6	95.1	94.1	92.0	83.9	79.5	63.4	85.7	90.1	90.8	92.2	93.8	75.1	85.5
August.....	106.3	88.2	93.1	96.4	95.5	94.4	93.2	84.1	80.5	64.8	91.6	86.8	89.1	79.4	93.0	78.5	85.5
September.....	105.2	92.9	95.2	98.3	96.4	94.3	94.3	83.7	77.9	67.3	91.9	85.1	92.4	95.9	91.7	79.8	86.5
October.....	104.9	94.0	95.8	98.1	96.0	93.0	95.2	82.9	75.0	70.2	90.8	86.4	94.2	95.8	88.8	82.5	88.4
November.....	105.7	95.2	96.3	98.4	96.3	89.9	93.2	79.9	72.1	72.1	87.2	87.3	97.4	96.9	82.3	85.3	87.9
December.....	103.0	96.8	95.9	98.6	96.4	88.3	91.3	76.2	70.5	71.0	90.2	90.7	97.5	97.0	78.1	86.6	87.0
Average.....	109.1	95.4	95.5	96.7	96.6	94.3	91.1	84.6	76.9	68.8	80.7	89.8	92.9	94.1	92.6	78.1	86.5
Pay rolls																	
January.....	105.1	105.6	98.8	98.5	103.0	100.6	88.0	89.1	71.3	58.0	50.2	73.0	77.0	85.9	91.8	67.9	85.8
February.....	108.9	107.0	102.8	101.6	105.1	102.4	92.5	89.3	73.9	61.5	53.3	77.2	80.5	83.1	93.6	70.9	87.3
March.....	110.6	104.8	102.4	102.2	102.2	102.3	88.7	86.5	76.0	60.1	49.3	78.2	81.6	80.6	95.9	69.1	85.2
April.....	109.5	99.3	94.3	99.4	97.7	95.5	89.4	85.7	75.7	56.8	44.1	76.1	78.8	81.1	99.5	65.7	81.4
May.....	111.1	92.9	94.9	97.3	96.4	96.1	90.2	85.2	76.4	51.1	55.6	75.9	77.5	82.2	98.2	66.0	78.7
June.....	109.8	91.1	92.3	94.7	97.3	93.8	91.9	83.8	75.8	47.7	65.7	73.6	78.3	81.0	96.8	67.3	82.2
July.....	106.5	83.6	88.3	94.7	96.2	94.2	93.1	82.3	76.9	46.9	70.9	72.7	78.3	80.9	92.6	70.1	82.0
August.....	104.5	87.4	93.4	99.6	99.1	94.3	97.1	83.8	78.4	49.1	74.6	69.6	80.9	84.5	92.4	75.7	83.1
September.....	105.6	90.3	92.6	100.6	97.7	94.2	96.9	82.0	73.4	52.4	74.1	66.9	81.8	85.8	87.6	76.7	84.2
October.....	108.5	94.3	98.1	103.1	98.1	94.4	99.9	80.1	68.4	56.3	74.6	69.9	85.6	88.9	84.3	79.4	88.2
November.....	107.4	94.1	98.6	100.4	98.1	88.8	93.8	75.6	63.0	54.9	69.9	71.4	87.3	90.4	73.2	82.3	87.2
December.....	106.7	98.8	99.1	102.4	101.0	89.7	92.0	73.0	60.9	53.6	74.2	75.4	89.5	94.1	69.4	85.1	86.5
Average.....	107.9	95.8	96.3	99.5	99.3	95.5	92.8	83.0	72.5	54.0	63.0	73.3	81.4	84.9	89.6	73.0	84.5

¹ Compiled by Bureau's Division of Employment Statistics.

TABLE 6.—Earnings and hours¹ in the leather industry, 1932-39²

Month	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Average hourly earnings								
January.....	\$0.443	\$0.393	\$0.523	\$0.561	\$0.557	\$0.587	\$0.638	\$0.639
February.....	.444	.393	.525	.561	.555	.590	.634	.634
March.....	.449	.399	.522	.564	.558	.591	.638	.630
April.....	.451	.384	.521	.565	.562	.614	.636	.629
May.....	.449	.396	.524	.563	.558	.624	.633	.629
June.....	.440	.407	.524	.561	.556	.626	.630	.630
July.....	.419	.417	.529	.558	.561	.631	.628	.629
August.....	.421	.452	.538	.563	.560	.628	.629	.633
September.....	.417	.486	.544	.564	.563	.630	.629	.634
October.....	.419	.507	.552	.560	.559	.633	.630	.633
November.....	.410	.505	.559	.560	.565	.628	.629	.639
December.....	.398	.515	.558	.561	.576	.638	.631	.643
Average.....	.429	.446	.537	.562	.561	.617	.632	.634
Average hours worked per week								
January.....	41.2	41.8	37.1	37.6	39.3	40.2	35.4	39.0
February.....	44.4	43.3	37.9	37.6	38.8	40.5	36.6	39.4
March.....	43.7	42.3	37.4	38.2	37.7	40.9	36.1	38.9
April.....	42.2	40.7	37.2	37.5	38.2	40.6	35.1	37.8
May.....	39.0	44.9	37.7	37.4	38.9	39.7	35.8	37.9
June.....	40.0	46.5	37.6	37.6	38.6	39.3	36.8	38.7
July.....	41.3	46.3	36.2	37.8	38.3	38.6	37.4	38.0
August.....	41.5	41.7	35.9	38.4	39.5	38.9	38.7	38.6
September.....	41.9	37.9	35.1	38.3	39.2	37.7	38.7	38.6
October.....	43.2	37.8	35.9	39.3	40.6	37.5	38.5	39.4
November.....	42.7	37.5	36.6	38.9	40.1	35.2	38.6	38.7
December.....	43.1	38.2	37.3	39.6	41.3	35.2	39.2	38.8
Average.....	42.0	41.1	36.8	38.2	39.2	38.8	37.3	38.7
Average weekly earnings								
January.....	\$19.96	\$17.51	\$19.73	\$21.26	\$21.96	\$23.55	\$22.43	\$24.76
February.....	20.47	18.24	20.43	21.20	21.51	23.95	23.11	24.88
March.....	20.34	17.52	20.33	21.43	21.05	24.11	22.91	24.47
April.....	19.48	16.78	20.21	21.04	21.38	24.76	22.32	23.83
May.....	18.43	18.54	20.41	20.96	21.69	24.64	22.57	23.78
June.....	18.37	19.92	20.16	21.26	21.63	24.54	23.11	24.30
July.....	17.79	20.07	19.84	21.10	21.48	24.32	23.44	23.96
August.....	18.69	19.73	19.84	21.59	22.01	24.64	24.29	24.29
September.....	18.67	19.50	19.57	21.59	21.94	23.70	24.24	24.32
October.....	19.32	19.86	20.18	22.00	22.75	23.60	24.23	24.91
November.....	18.44	19.50	20.45	21.78	22.79	22.13	24.30	24.76
December.....	18.31	20.08	20.88	22.21	23.72	22.23	24.77	24.88
Average.....	19.03	19.06	20.17	21.47	21.99	23.90	23.52	24.43

¹ Average weekly earnings are computed from figures furnished by all reporting establishments. Average hours and average hourly earnings are computed from data supplied by a smaller number of establishments as all reporting firms do not furnish man-hours. The figures are not strictly comparable from month to month because of changes in the size and composition of the reporting sample.

² Compiled by the Bureau's Division of Employment Statistics.

Description of the Sample

In the present survey, no attempt was made to cover all of the leather plants. Instead, the survey was restricted to a carefully selected sample of 152 establishments, from which wages and hours data were obtained for 25,617 wage earners.

The method of sampling used by the Bureau in this survey differs from that employed in other surveys. In the outlying States, where

a relatively small proportion of the industry is located, the survey covered virtually all establishments. This included California and a number of Southern States; namely, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, and Texas. Similarly, the Bureau covered all single-plant companies with 500 wage earners and over. For the small and medium-sized single-establishment concerns, however, as well as the plants of multi-unit companies in all regions, which are located in other parts of the country, the coverage was on a sample basis. The "cell" method of sampling was used, in accordance with which a number of cells were formed, each constituting a more or less homogeneous entity with respect to size of plant, location, size of community, product, unionization, etc. Depending upon the number of establishments in the cell, one or more plants were selected to represent each cell, which were later weighted to bring the figure up to the total size of the cell. Upon the completion of the weighting, the coverage was checked to make sure that it afforded an accurate cross-section of the industry, from the standpoint of size of plant, corporate affiliation, product, geographical distribution, size of community, and unionization.

An indication of the extent to which the geographical composition of the sample corresponds to that of the total industry is shown by table 7, which compares the distribution of the industry by States, as shown by the Census of Manufactures, and that in the Bureau's survey. In making this comparison, it is important to note that the present survey was made in September 1939, but the most recent available data for the Census of Manufactures are for 1937. It should also be kept in mind that the wage survey included only establishments with 20 or more workers, whereas the Census of Manufactures covered all plants with an annual production valued at \$5,000 and over. Finally, it will be noted that, in several of the States shown, data on the wage earners employed by contract factories are not available from the information of the Census of Manufactures, while such establishments are included in the data for each State in the Bureau's survey. In spite of these differences, an examination of the figures indicates that the proportion of wage earners covered by the survey in most States corresponds very closely with that reported by the Census of Manufactures. Massachusetts, for example, accounted for 20.1 percent of the wage earners in 1937, as compared with 21.0 percent in the survey. In other States, likewise, the correspondence between the two series is striking.

TABLE 7.—Coverage of survey in the leather industry, by States, September 1939

State	Census of manufactures, 1937		Percent of workers in Bureau survey ¹
	Number of workers	Percent of workers	
United States.....	50,687	100.0	100.0
California.....	667	1.3	1.3
Delaware.....	² 2,692	5.3	5.1
Illinois.....	³ 4,376	8.6	10.7
Massachusetts.....	10,205	20.1	21.0
Michigan.....	2,569	5.1	2.5
New Jersey.....	3,265	6.4	6.1
New York.....	5,548	10.9	10.5
North Carolina.....	1,133	2.2	1.8
Ohio.....	1,825	3.6	2.2
Pennsylvania.....	⁴ 8,541	16.9	16.4
Wisconsin.....	⁵ 4,307	8.5	12.9
Other plants.....	⁶ 5,559	11.1	79.5

¹ Excludes integrated plants with less than 20 employees, as well as finishing establishments with less than 10 workers.

² Excludes 1 contract plant.

³ Excludes 3 contract plants.

⁴ Excludes 3 contract plants.

⁵ Excludes 2 contract plants.

⁶ Includes 2 regular factories in Connecticut, 2 in Georgia, 5 in Indiana, 3 in Kentucky, 1 in Maine, 3 in Maryland, 3 in Minnesota, 4 in Missouri, 3 in New Hampshire, 4 in Oregon, 1 in Rhode Island, 2 in Tennessee, 2 in Texas, 7 in Virginia, 1 in Washington, and 6 in West Virginia; includes also 1 contract factory in Colorado, 1 in Delaware, 3 in Illinois, 2 in Maine, 1 in New Hampshire, 3 in Pennsylvania, and 2 in Wisconsin.

⁷ Includes 3 plants in Connecticut, 1 in Georgia, 2 in Indiana, 2 in Maryland, 1 in Minnesota, 2 in Missouri, 2 in New Hampshire, 3 in Tennessee, 1 in Texas, 2 in Virginia, and 2 in West Virginia.

The estimated (weighted) number of workers as computed from the Bureau's survey was approximately 47,900.⁹ Applying to the figure of 50,687 wage earners, as reported by the Census of Manufactures for 1937, the net change in employment disclosed by the Bureau's index numbers, the estimated number of workers in the industry at the time of the survey in September 1939 was about 47,300, which is only slightly less than the weighted figure shown above. In September 1939 the Bureau obtained information by mail questionnaire on employment and pay rolls from 169 establishments in the leather industry, with 34,300 employees. These workers averaged 63.4 cents for hourly earnings, 38.6 for weekly hours, and \$24.32 for weekly earnings,¹⁰ which may be compared with 62.3 cents, 39.1 hours, and \$24.42, respectively, on the basis of the present field survey.¹¹ The close correspondence between the respective figures of two independent surveys is evidence of the accuracy of both samples.

⁹ This figure excludes integrated establishments with fewer than 20 employees, as well as finishing plants with fewer than 10 workers, neither of which were included in the survey. These establishments covered approximately 800 employees.

¹⁰ The figures on average hourly and weekly earnings include the extra earnings due to overtime work.

¹¹ The figures on average weekly hours and earnings in the survey are exclusive of 1 establishment, which did not report total hours worked.



PLATE 1.—FLESHING-MACHINE OPERATOR.



PLATE 2.—SHAVING-MACHINE OPERATORS.

Average Hourly Earnings

Methods of Wage Payments

A majority of the wage earners in the leather industry are paid on a straight time-rate basis. Although the proportion varied from plant to plant, some time workers were found in each of the establishments included in the survey. Most of these employees were paid on an hourly basis, but there were a few occupations, such as working foremen and maintenance workers, that were customarily on a weekly or monthly basis. Including the salaried employees, 51.8 percent of the wage earners in the industry were paid on a time-rate basis.

Although time workers predominated in the industry, some employees were paid straight piece rates in approximately three-fourths of the establishments, the total number of workers affected being 38.5 percent of the labor force. In general, employees paid at piece rates were most frequent in the finishing departments. The occupations showing a considerable number of piece workers were machine stakers, togglers, tackers, buffers, machine setters-out, glazing-machine operators, hand finishers or seasoners, and shaving-machine operators. Moreover, group piece rates were frequently applied to some of the occupations. Toggler and tackers, for example, in many plants, customarily worked in teams and split their total earnings.

Production-bonus systems of wage payment were reported by a few of the larger establishments, affecting approximately one-tenth of the total wage earners in the industry. In some of these plants, moreover, only certain classes of employees were affected.

Hourly Earnings of All Workers

For all wage earners in the leather industry, earnings in September 1939 averaged 62.3 cents an hour, but varied considerably among establishments. Indeed, for the plants covered by the survey, the averages ranged from under 30 cents to almost \$1. Despite the wide differences, a substantial number of establishments, employing more than one-half of the workers, showed averages that fell within the 15-cent range between 55 and 70 cents. On the other hand, the establishments averaging under 55 cents employed less than one-fifth, and those with averages of 70 cents and over accounted for more than one-fourth of the total labor force.¹²

Considering the hourly earnings of individual workers, which are shown in table 8, the largest proportion (13.9 percent) in any 5-cent interval was found between 57.5 and 62.5 cents. Approximately one-half (48.7 percent) received between 47.5 and 67.5 cents, and over four-fifths (81.0 percent) were paid between 40.0 and 82.5 cents. A substantial proportion, namely 13.2 percent, earned 82.5 cents and

¹² These proportions are based on the weighted number of workers.

over. On the other hand, relatively few (5.8 percent) received less than 40 cents. This is particularly noteworthy, in view of the predominance of semiskilled and unskilled workers in the industry.

TABLE 8.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average hourly earnings, sex, and skill, September 1939

Average hourly earnings	All workers	Males				Females
		Total	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled	
Under 25.0 cents.....	(¹)	(¹)			0.1	
Exactly 25.0 cents.....	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.1	1.6	1.7
25.1 and under 27.5 cents.....	.3	.2	(¹)	.2	.3	1.0
27.5 and under 30.0 cents.....	.3	.2	(¹)	.2	.4	1.8
30.0 and under 32.5 cents.....	.7	.6	.2	.4	1.1	2.1
32.5 and under 35.0 cents.....	.8	.6	.2	.5	.9	2.4
35.0 and under 37.5 cents.....	1.9	.6	.2	.4	1.3	15.2
37.5 and under 40.0 cents.....	1.2	.9	.3	.6	1.8	4.5
40.0 and under 42.5 cents.....	5.5	4.0	.7	2.7	7.9	22.8
42.5 and under 47.5 cents.....	7.4	6.5	1.8	5.2	11.2	17.4
47.5 and under 52.5 cents.....	11.5	11.4	3.8	8.9	19.7	12.1
52.5 and under 57.5 cents.....	12.5	12.7	5.9	11.3	18.5	9.8
57.5 and under 62.5 cents.....	13.9	14.7	8.9	15.5	15.7	4.7
62.5 and under 67.5 cents.....	10.8	11.7	11.7	13.7	8.1	1.4
67.5 and under 72.5 cents.....	8.2	8.7	11.4	10.7	3.8	2.4
72.5 and under 77.5 cents.....	6.1	6.7	9.1	8.1	2.9	.3
77.5 and under 82.5 cents.....	5.1	5.5	8.6	6.8	1.8	.2
82.5 and under 87.5 cents.....	3.2	3.5	6.2	3.9	1.3	(¹)
87.5 and under 92.5 cents.....	2.7	3.0	8.0	2.8	.8	.1
92.5 and under 100.0 cents.....	3.1	3.3	10.1	3.1	.5	
100.0 and under 110.0 cents.....	2.3	2.5	7.4	2.4	.2	.1
110.0 and under 125.0 cents.....	1.0	1.1	2.6	1.3	.1	
125.0 and under 150.0 cents.....	.7	.8	2.0	.9	(¹)	
150.0 cents and over.....	.2	.3	.8	.3	(¹)	
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of workers (weighted).....	47,904	43,895	6,439	24,280	13,176	4,009
Average hourly earnings.....	\$0.623	\$0.638	\$0.773	\$0.656	\$0.538	\$0.445

¹ Less than 1/10 of 1 percent.

Variations by Sex and Skill

Leather manufacturing is largely a man's industry. In contrast with many other industries that have been mechanized extensively, women constitute only a minor fraction of the wage earners in this industry. Taking the industry as a whole, only one-twelfth of the total labor force were women. The proportion of females, however, varied conspicuously in the different divisions of the industry. Virtually no women were employed in the plants manufacturing sole and belting and glove leather, but 18.3 percent of the workers found in the kid-leather plants and 17.0 percent of those employed in calf-upper plants were females. Even in the branches where females were relatively numerous, their employment was largely restricted to the finishing departments. No females were found in the southern establishments.

Converting raw hides and skins into leather is one of the oldest processes known to man. The principal objective is to preserve the material and at the same time to give it certain desired physical properties. For some purposes, such as gloves, the requisite qualities are softness, flexibility, and porosity. Firmness, thickness, and durability, on the other hand, are the properties needed in high-quality sole and belting leather. To bring out the desired qualities formerly required craftsmen with an intimate knowledge of leather and the treatment of leather. At the present, however, the processes involved are largely chemically controlled, and modern machinery has displaced all except a relatively small remnant of the highly skilled craftsmen.

In spite of the progressive decline in the demand for highly skilled craftsmen in the leather industry, a few machine operations still require a high degree of manual dexterity. This is due largely to the fact that very few of the machines used in making leather are completely automatic. As shown by this survey, skilled males constituted over one-eighth of the total workers in the industry. Most of the females were semiskilled employees. The semiskilled males constituted approximately one-half, and the unskilled males accounted for over one-fourth of the total labor force.

The dispersion of hourly earnings in the leather industry may be explained in part by the sharply contrasting wage levels among the different groups of employees. For male workers, the averages were 77.3 cents for skilled, 65.6 cents for semiskilled, and 53.8 cents for unskilled. Hence, the difference between skilled and semiskilled was about the same as that between semiskilled and unskilled employees. The female workers averaged 44.5 cents, or 9.3 cents less than the average of the unskilled males.

An outstanding feature of the distribution of individual hourly earnings is the relatively small proportion of the more important groups of employees in the low-wage classes. Among semiskilled males, numerically the largest single group, only 2.4 percent of the total were found below the 40-cent level. Moreover, hourly earnings of this amount or less are shown for only 1.0 percent of the skilled and no more than 7.5 percent of the unskilled males. On the other hand, 28.7 percent of the females were paid under 40 cents, but it must be remembered that this is the smallest group of workers in the industry.

Among each of the more important groups of employees, a fairly generous scattering is found in the upper wage classes. Thus, earnings of 82.5 cents an hour and over are shown for more than one-third (37.1 percent) of the skilled and over one-seventh (14.7 percent) of the semiskilled males. Even among the unskilled males, the hourly earnings of a small minority (2.9 percent) amounted to 82.5 cents and

over. By contrast, hardly any females received that figure and above. Hourly earnings in excess of \$1 were confined largely to the skilled and semiskilled males, the respective proportions amounting to 12.8 and 4.9 percent.

Geographical Differences

Under the N. R. A., the code for the leather industry provided for two regions with respect to wages. One was the southern area, including Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. For these States, the minimum rate set was 32.5 cents an hour. For the remainder of the United States, including all of the Northern and Western States, the minimum was 35 cents for females and 40 cents for males.

Generally speaking, there is a difference in the wage levels of these two areas. Of the Southern States mentioned in the code, the survey covered Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, and Texas, as the other States either had no establishments or had none of any importance in the leather industry. These seven States, which employed 6.9 percent of the total wage earners in the industry, had a considerably lower wage level on the whole than that found in the Northern States, despite the fact that no females were employed in the plants covered by the survey in the Southern States.

The wage level in the Southern States, however, was by no means uniform. In fact, these States may be divided into two districts, each of which had a different wage level. One district (including Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, and Texas) may, for the sake of convenience, be termed the lower Southern States. These States generally showed the lowest hourly earnings, as evidenced by an examination of the averages of the various establishments. Thus, all but one of the plants covered here by the survey averaged less than 45 cents. Moreover, all of the establishments in the industry with an average under 35 cents were in this district. The other district (including West Virginia, Maryland, and Virginia) may be designated as the border States. A somewhat higher wage level generally prevailed in this district. With one exception, the averages of the plants included by the survey in these States fell within a relatively narrow range, between 45 and 50 cents.

The wage level of these border States overlaps with that of the Northern States. Thus, there are individual establishments in a number of Northern States with average hourly earnings of less than 45 cents. These are exceptional, however, as a large proportion of the northern plants have average hourly earnings of more than 50 cents.

Although the general wage level in the northern region is substantially higher than that in either of the two southern wage districts, hourly earnings in the North show less concentration. Broadly speaking, hourly earnings in this area varied considerably even within a single State. This was especially true of the more important States. In Massachusetts, for example, the averages of the plants covered in the survey ranged from 37 to 83 cents, although most of the establishments averaged between 60 and 80 cents. In Pennsylvania, the plant averages covered a spread from 39 to 71 cents, with the majority of establishments concentrated between 50 and 70 cents. The range of plant averages in New York State was from 52 to 99 cents, but most of the establishments averaged between 65 and 85 cents. A similar dispersion was found in other States having a substantial number of plants, such as Delaware, Illinois, New Jersey, and Wisconsin.

With hourly earnings in the northern region differing considerably in most instances within a single State, it is obviously difficult to conceive of homogeneous wage districts that are composed of more than one State. The three districts that are shown in this report represent more or less arbitrary groupings of States that correspond to areas that the trade frequently regards as competing producing areas. These groupings include plants surveyed in the New England, Middle Atlantic, and Middle Western States, respectively. The New England States covered in the survey included Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. Delaware was added to the Middle Atlantic States which, under the Bureau of the Census classification, include New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The Middle Western States, as used in the present survey include not only the East North Central States (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin), as defined by the Bureau of the Census, but also Minnesota, Missouri, and California. Each of these groups of States is important, accounting respectively for 23.2, 38.0, and 31.9 percent of the total workers in the industry.

The differences in the wage structure of these three districts are not sufficient for them to be regarded as distinctive wage areas. The most concentrated distribution of hourly earnings is found in the Middle Western States (including California). In this District only 2.9 percent of the workers received less than 40 cents, and 2.6 percent were paid more than 92.5 cents. On the other hand, more than two-thirds (67.7 percent) earned 47.5 to 72.5 cents. The average for all workers was 62.0 cents, while most establishments averaged less than 65 cents. (See table 9.)

TABLE 9.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average hourly earnings, sex, and district, September 1939

Average hourly earnings	All workers				Males				Females ¹		
	New England	Middle Atlantic	Middle Western including California	Southern	New England	Middle Atlantic	Middle Western including California	Southern	New England	Middle Atlantic	Middle Western including California
Under 25.0 cents.....	0.1	(?)	(?)	-----	0.1	(?)	0.1	-----	-----	-----	-----
Exactly 25.0 cents.....	.4	0.1	0.4	5.0	.4	0.1	-----	5.0	0.2	-----	4.7
25.1 and under 27.5 cents.....	.3	(?)	.2	2.4	.2	(?)	-----	2.4	.8	-----	2.2
27.5 and under 30.0 cents.....	.3	.1	.4	1.8	.2	.1	(?)	1.8	1.0	0.5	3.6
30.0 and under 32.5 cents.....	.5	.6	.3	4.1	.4	.4	.1	4.1	1.1	2.3	2.9
32.5 and under 35.0 cents.....	.2	.5	.2	6.5	.1	.2	.1	6.5	1.1	5.0	1.2
35.0 and under 37.5 cents.....	1.9	2.7	.8	1.6	.8	.7	.3	1.6	10.6	29.4	6.4
37.5 and under 40.0 cents.....	.9	1.0	.6	6.5	.5	.5	.4	6.5	3.5	7.4	2.8
40.0 and under 42.5 cents.....	7.8	5.1	3.6	9.6	4.6	3.5	2.7	9.6	32.5	25.1	12.2
42.5 and under 47.5 cents.....	6.6	6.6	6.7	18.2	4.8	6.0	5.7	18.2	20.7	14.6	16.9
47.5 and under 52.5 cents.....	9.9	12.4	11.0	12.5	9.9	12.9	10.2	12.5	10.5	6.6	18.4
52.5 and under 57.5 cents.....	10.4	12.5	13.5	13.1	10.2	13.5	13.3	13.1	12.2	1.5	14.9
57.5 and under 62.5 cents.....	12.2	12.0	18.1	9.8	13.2	12.6	19.1	9.8	3.5	3.8	6.6
62.5 and under 67.5 cents.....	10.1	10.2	13.7	3.9	11.4	10.9	14.7	3.9	.3	.9	2.8
67.5 and under 72.5 cents.....	7.0	7.1	11.4	3.6	7.7	7.5	12.3	3.6	1.8	2.0	3.2
72.5 and under 77.5 cents.....	6.2	6.9	6.4	.5	7.0	7.4	7.0	.5	-----	-----	.8
77.5 and under 82.5 cents.....	5.6	5.8	4.9	.2	6.4	6.2	5.4	.2	.2	-----	.3
82.5 and under 87.5 cents.....	3.8	3.5	3.0	.2	4.2	3.8	3.3	.2	-----	-----	.1
87.5 and under 92.5 cents.....	4.2	2.8	2.2	.2	4.8	2.9	2.4	.2	-----	.4	-----
92.5 and under 100.0 cents.....	4.6	4.1	1.3	.1	5.2	4.4	1.5	.1	-----	-----	-----
100.0 and under 110.0 cents.....	4.4	2.7	.8	.1	5.0	2.8	.9	.1	-----	.5	-----
110.0 and under 125.0 cents.....	1.8	1.4	.2	.1	2.0	1.5	.2	.1	-----	-----	-----
125.0 and under 150.0 cents.....	.7	1.4	.2	-----	.8	1.5	.2	-----	-----	-----	-----
150.0 cents and over.....	.1	.5	.1	-----	.1	.6	.1	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of workers (weighted)	11,098	18,227	15,277	3,302	9,823	16,939	13,831	3,302	1,275	1,288	1,446
Average hourly earnings.....	\$0.645	\$0.642	\$0.620	\$0.461	\$0.670	\$0.658	\$0.635	\$0.461	\$0.447	\$0.417	\$0.467

¹ No females were employed in plants covered in survey in Southern States.

² Less than $\frac{1}{10}$ of 1 percent.

The difference between the average hourly earnings for the Middle Western States and that of 64.2 cents in the Middle Atlantic States (including Delaware) arises primarily from the fact that 10.1 percent of the workers in the Middle Atlantic area received more than 92.5 cents. These high earnings, found for the most part in New York State, raised the general average, in spite of the fact that a larger proportion of the workers earned less than 40 cents in this area than in the Middle Western States. There is a considerable contrast in the wage level of New York and New Jersey and of Pennsylvania and Delaware. The averages were 71.6 cents in New York and 68.4 cents in New Jersey, compared with 61.2 cents in Pennsylvania and 53.7 cents in Delaware.

The fundamental differences in wage structure in the Northern States occur not between broad subregions within this area, but in the contrasting wage structures of small districts and of individual plants. On a regional basis, the only comparison that is warranted

is that shown in table 10 between the Northern States as one group and the Southern States as another. The average hourly earnings of all males in the entire Northern States amounted to 65.3 cents, against 46.1 cents for the entire Southern region.¹³ In the Northern States, there were 1.9 percent of the total paid below 40 cents, and 15.6 percent received 82.5 cents and over. In the Southern States, by contrast, the respective figures were 27.9 and 0.7 percent.

TABLE 10.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average hourly earnings, region, sex, and skill, September 1939

Average hourly earnings (in cents)	Northern States					Southern States ¹					
	All work- ers	Males				Fe- males	All work- ers	Males			
		Total	Skilled	Semi- skilled	Un- skilled			Total	Skilled	Semi- skilled	Un- skilled
Under 25.0.....	(²)	(²)			0.1						
Exactly 25.0.....	0.3	0.2	(²)	0.1	.4	1.7	5.0	5.0	0.6	0.2	11.9
25.1 and under 27.5.....	.1	.1				.2	1.0	2.4	.6	3.2	1.9
27.5 and under 30.0.....	.2	.1		(²)	.2	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.0	1.8	2.0
30.0 and under 32.5.....	.5	.3		.2	.8	2.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.2
32.5 and under 35.0.....	.3	.1		(²)	.4	2.4	6.5	6.5	3.2	7.6	5.9
35.0 and under 37.5.....	1.9	.6	(²)	.3	1.3	15.2	1.6	1.6	4.1	1.6	1.0
37.5 and under 40.0.....	.8	.5	(²)	.2	1.1	4.5	6.5	6.5	4.8	5.5	8.0
40.0 and under 42.5.....	5.2	3.5	0.5	2.5	7.1	22.8	9.6	9.6	4.4	6.2	15.0
42.5 and under 47.5.....	6.6	5.6	1.2	4.1	10.6	17.4	18.2	18.2	13.0	20.0	17.1
47.5 and under 52.5.....	11.3	11.3	3.5	8.6	20.3	12.1	12.5	12.5	10.2	12.8	12.7
52.5 and under 57.5.....	12.4	12.5	5.7	11.1	19.1	9.8	13.1	13.1	10.5	14.2	12.6
57.5 and under 62.5.....	14.2	14.9	8.9	15.8	16.6	4.7	9.8	9.8	8.3	12.5	7.0
62.5 and under 67.5.....	11.4	12.3	11.9	14.3	9.0	1.4	3.9	3.9	8.6	6.0	.4
67.5 and under 72.5.....	8.5	9.2	11.3	11.2	4.2	2.4	3.6	3.6	15.0	4.1	.3
72.5 and under 77.5.....	6.6	7.2	9.3	8.6	3.3	.3	.5	.5	5.4		
77.5 and under 82.5.....	5.4	6.0	9.0	7.2	2.0	.2	.2	.2	.6	.2	
82.5 and under 87.5.....	3.4	3.7	6.4	4.2	1.5	(²)	.2	.2	2.2		
87.5 and under 92.5.....	2.9	3.2	8.3	3.0	.9	.1	.2	.2	1.6		
92.5 and under 100.0.....	3.3	3.6	10.6	3.3	.6		.1	.1	.6	.1	
100.0 and under 110.0.....	2.5	2.7	7.8	2.6	.2	.1	.1	.1	.6		
110.0 and under 125.0.....	1.1	1.2	2.7	1.4	.1		.1	.1	.6		
125.0 and under 150.0.....	.8	.9	2.1	1.0	(²)						
150.0 cents and over.....	.3	.3	.8	.3	(²)						
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of workers (weighted).....	44,602	40,593	6,124	22,639	11,830	4,009	3,302	3,302	315	1,641	1,346
Average hourly earnings.....	\$0.635	\$0.653	\$0.784	\$0.669	\$0.552	\$0.445	\$0.461	\$0.461	\$0.555	\$0.478	\$0.417

¹ There were no female workers in the plants covered in survey in the Southern States.
² Less than 1/10 of 1 percent.

As mentioned previously, the N. R. A. code minima were 35 cents for females and 40 cents for males in the Northern States. It is interesting to note that at the time of the survey (September 1939) there were 9.0 percent of the females earning under 35 cents and 1.9 percent of the males receiving less than 40 cents in this region. The southern code minimum was 32.5 cents for both sexes, although no females were employed in the plants surveyed. In this region 13.3

¹³ There were no female workers in the southern plants. Hence, the comparison between the Northern and Southern States must be confined to male workers.

percent of the males earned less than 32.5 cents. In connection with the above minima, however, it should be pointed out that the code permitted certain tolerances for learners and aged or handicapped workers, neither class to exceed 5 percent of all workers on the pay roll in a given plant.

Hourly Earnings in Relation to Fair Labor Standards Act

From the preceding tables, it is evident that in September 1939 hardly any of the wage earners in the leather industry were paid below the minimum of 25 cents an hour, which was in effect at that time in accordance with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. Moreover, an insignificant proportion of all workers, namely 0.6 percent, received exactly 25 cents. In fact, the relative size of this group was important only for the few plants in the Southern States, where 5.0 percent of the total earned exactly that figure.

The 30-cent hourly minimum, under the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, became effective on October 24, 1939, or shortly after the survey was made. Even this minimum evidently resulted in no more than minor readjustments in the industry's wage structure. At the time of the survey, only 1.2 percent of all wage earners employed in the industry earned less than 30 cents an hour. In this respect, too, the only region affected relatively to any extent is that including the Southern States, where 9.2 percent of the total workers received below 30 cents.

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, it is possible for the Administrator, upon the recommendation of an industry committee, to set an hourly minimum in excess of 30 cents but not to exceed 40 cents. Taking the highest minimum that might be set under the act, namely 40 cents an hour, there were 5.8 percent of all workers in the industry earning below that figure. The proportion was 3.6 percent for males (1.0 percent for skilled, 2.4 percent for semi-skilled, and 7.5 percent for unskilled), compared with 28.7 percent for females. On a geographical basis, the corresponding proportions for all wage earners were 4.6 percent in the New England States, 5.0 percent in the Middle Atlantic States, 2.9 percent in the Middle Western States (including California), and as much as 27.9 percent in the Southern States.

The effect of the Fair Labor Standards Act upon groups of plants having approximately the same wage level may be seen from table 11. In the few lowest-paid establishments, namely those averaging under 35 cents an hour, as many as 25.4 percent of all workers earned exactly 25 cents, and 46.7 percent received less than 30 cents. All of these plants, it should be remembered, were in the lower Southern States. None of the other groups of establishments was affected to any extent



PLATE 3.—WET-WHEELER, EMERY GRINDING.

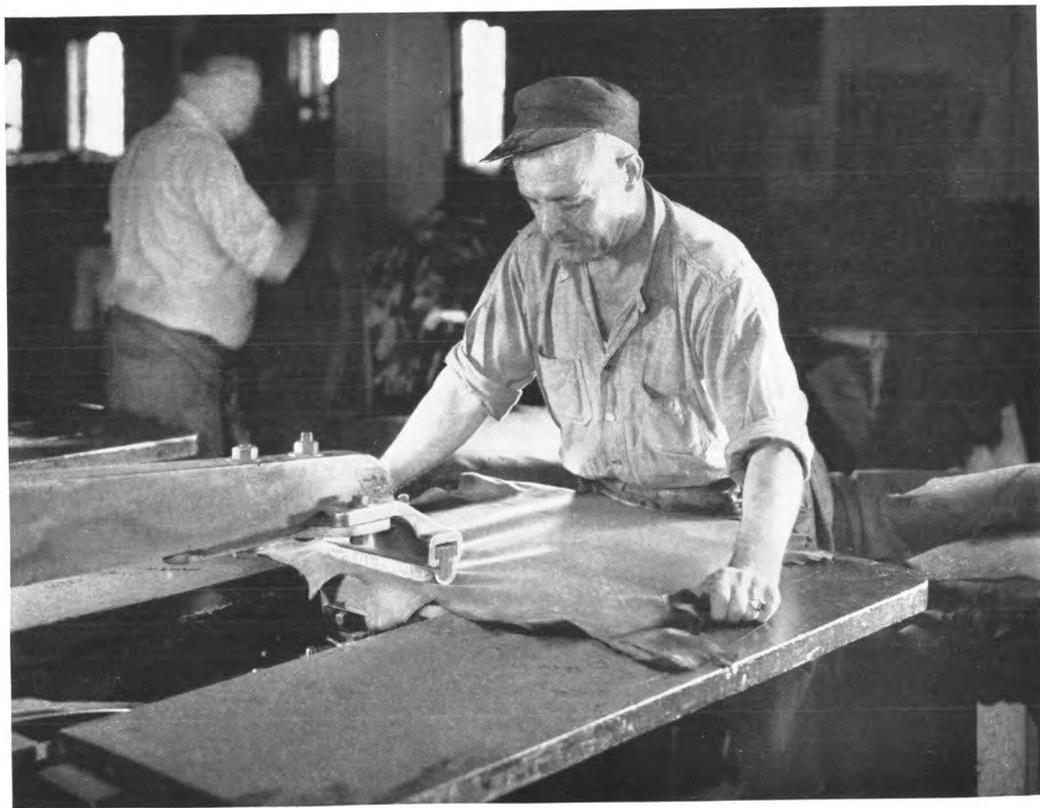


PLATE 4.—STAKER, MACHINE.

by the 30-cent minimum. The impact of the 30-cent minimum was therefore largely confined to plants employing less than 1½ percent of the workers in the industry. On the other hand, a 40-cent minimum would affect not only the lowest-paid plants but also those in other wage classes. In the lowest-paid establishments, all but 7.9 percent of the wage earners were paid below 40 cents. For plants averaging between 35 and 45 cents the proportion was 36.2 percent, as compared with 15.7 percent for those with averages between 45 and 50 cents, 9.0 percent for those averaging between 50 and 55 cents, and 4.5 percent for those with averages between 55 and 60 cents. All four of these groups of establishments were scattered geographically. None of the other groups of plants would be affected much by a 40-cent minimum.

TABLE 11.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average hourly earnings and by groups of plants, September 1939

Average hourly earnings	Plants having average hourly earnings of—									
	Under 35 cents	35 and under 45 cents	45 and under 50 cents	50 and under 55 cents	55 and under 60 cents	60 and under 65 cents	65 and under 70 cents	70 and under 75 cents	75 and under 80 cents	80 cents and over
Under 25 cents.....				0.1	(1)	(1)	0.1	(1)		
Exactly 25 cents.....	25.4	2.2	0.3	.7	0.6				0.1	
25.1 and under 27.5 cents.....	12.2	.3	.3	.5	.2	(1)				
27.5 and under 30.0 cents.....	9.1	.1	.4	.5	.5	0.1				
30.0 and under 32.5 cents.....	19.2	5.2	1.0	1.4	.4	.1	.1			0.3
32.5 and under 35.0 cents.....	19.6	10.7	1.8	.5	.1	.3		(1)		.3
35.0 and under 37.5 cents.....	5.1	11.1	6.6	3.6	2.3	.5	.6	0.1	.2	.3
37.5 and under 40.0 cents.....	1.5	6.6	5.3	1.7	.4	.4	.8	1.9	.4	.1
40.0 and under 42.5 cents.....	2.5	31.5	18.5	13.9	2.4	3.5	5.5	.7	2.4	.4
42.5 and under 47.5 cents.....	2.2	10.9	24.2	14.7	6.5	5.1	5.8	5.5	2.1	.8
47.5 and under 52.5 cents.....	.5	8.2	18.3	20.2	17.3	9.9	7.0	7.4	3.4	3.5
52.5 and under 57.5 cents.....	.8	6.4	9.8	12.1	22.8	11.0	8.7	7.4	8.3	5.0
57.5 and under 62.5 cents.....	.3	4.3	4.5	13.7	17.7	18.7	9.4	11.6	13.1	18.3
62.5 and under 67.5 cents.....	.2	.8	1.9	7.6	13.6	15.9	10.5	12.0	9.3	7.3
67.5 and under 72.5 cents.....	.8	.3	3.3	3.9	6.9	14.6	9.4	8.2	8.7	6.7
72.5 and under 77.5 cents.....		1.0	.8	3.0	3.1	7.7	13.2	7.8	8.8	3.5
77.5 and under 82.5 cents.....	.3	.2	.4	.9	2.3	5.1	9.8	9.6	8.7	6.2
82.5 and under 87.5 cents.....			.5	.4	1.5	2.7	5.2	6.4	7.0	2.8
87.5 and under 92.5 cents.....	.3	.2	.9	.3	.8	2.1	3.7	4.2	8.6	4.6
92.5 and under 100.0 cents.....			.6	.2	.2	.6	6.3	9.2	7.7	4.6
100.0 and under 110.0 cents.....			.4	.1	.3	1.1	2.1	4.9	6.8	12.7
110.0 and under 125.0 cents.....			.2	(1)	.1	.1	1.0	1.6	2.3	11.5
125.0 and under 150.0 cents.....						.5	.6	1.5	1.5	7.3
150.0 cents and over.....			(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	.2	(1)	.6	3.8
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of workers (weighted).....	647	972	3,538	4,188	11,632	8,494	6,293	5,057	5,504	1,579

¹ Less than ¼ of 1 percent.

Differences Between Union and Nonunion Plants

Unionism has existed in the leather industry for many years. At

¹⁴ As defined in this survey, a union establishment is one in which the majority of employees are covered by either a written or oral agreement with an affiliated union. Plants with an employee organization confined to only one company are included with the nonunion establishments. There were relatively few such plants, although they covered a substantial number of workers in the industry.

the time of the survey, approximately one-fourth of the workers were employed in union¹⁴ establishments. Several important unions are active in the industry. One is the International Fur and Leather Workers of the United States and Canada (formerly the National Leather Workers Association), which is affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Another is the United Leather Workers International Union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor. In the Johnstown-Gloversville area in New York State, the dominant union is the Independent Leather Workers Union of Fulton County, N. Y., which is not affiliated with either the C. I. O. or A. F. of L. On the Pacific Coast, moreover, several establishments have agreements with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America.

The union establishments were prevalent in some of the important producing centers in the industry. A substantial number of plants with union agreements was found in the Boston metropolitan area, especially in Peabody and Woburn, Mass. Union establishments were likewise concentrated in the Johnstown-Gloversville area, Newark, the Philadelphia-Camden area, and San Francisco. A few plants with union agreements were also scattered throughout other parts of the Northern States. Of the establishments covered in the survey, none in the Southern States was found to have a union agreement.

TABLE 12.—Average hourly earnings of leather workers in the northern region, by size of community, unionization, sex, and skill, September 1939

Population of community and unionization	Number of workers (weighted)						Average hourly earnings					
	All workers	Males				Fe-males	All workers	Males				Fe-males
		Total	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Un-skilled			Total	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Un-skilled	
20,000 and under 100,000:												
Union plants.....	1,252	1,216	111	796	309	36	\$0.774	\$0.785	\$0.818	\$0.862	\$0.590	(1)
Nonunion plants.....	4,698	4,456	571	2,860	1,025	242	.632	.640	.694	.658	.560	\$0.471
1,000,000 and over:												
Union plants.....	9,099	8,019	1,345	4,545	2,129	1,080	.691	.722	.872	.746	.572	.462
Nonunion plants.....	10,554	9,734	1,915	5,169	2,650	820	.667	.683	.853	.684	.558	.463

¹ Not a sufficient coverage to permit the presentation of an average.

For the most part, the union establishments in the Northern States were in communities with a population between 20,000 and 100,000 and in metropolitan areas with 1,000,000 and over, so that any comparison between union and nonunion plants must be confined to these two classes of communities. As may be seen from table 12, the average hourly earnings of all workers were higher in union than nonunion

establishments in communities of both size groups, the difference amounting to 14.2 cents in communities between 20,000 and 100,000, but only 2.4 cents in metropolitan areas with 1,000,000 and over. Differences also appear for each skill group among the males. The only comparison for females is in metropolitan areas of 1,000,000 and over, where the hourly earnings in both union and nonunion plants averaged approximately the same.

Variations by Size of Community ¹⁵

The leather industry is concentrated to a marked extent in the large industrial communities. In terms of employment, 41.0 percent of the total workers were located in metropolitan areas with a population of 1,000,000 and over. One fourth (25.3 percent) were found in medium-sized communities, namely those between 100,000 and 1,000,000, and one-third (33.7 percent) were in places under 100,000.

There was no consistent relationship between hourly earnings and size of community. Average hourly earnings for nonunion plants in the North were 55.7 cents in places under 10,000, 60.8 cents in communities between 10,000 and 20,000, and 63.2 cents in communities of 20,000 to 100,000. This seems to indicate a progression of hourly earnings with size of community. On the other hand, in communities of 100,000 to 250,000, the average was 60.9 cents, while in those with a population of 250,000 to 1,000,000 the average was 56.6 cents, or no higher than the figure in the smallest communities studied. In the metropolitan centers of more than 1,000,000, the average for nonunion plants was 66.7 cents.

Among union plants, as has already been pointed out, higher averages prevailed in communities with a population between 20,000 and 100,000 than in metropolitan areas of 1,000,000 and over, the respective figures amounting to 77.4 and 69.1 cents. It should be pointed out, however, that nearly all of the union establishments in places between 20,000 and 100,000 were located in the Johnstown-Gloversville area, which reported an exceptionally high wage level.

Owing to the fact that only a small part of the industry was located in the Southern States, the coverage here was not sufficiently large to permit an analysis of the data by size of community.

¹⁵ By size of community is meant here the size of metropolitan area within which the plant is located. For places with a population of 100,000 or more, the Bureau utilized the metropolitan districts as defined by the U. S. Bureau of the Census. On the other hand, for communities with less than 100,000, similar metropolitan centers were set up, including not only the population within a particular political subdivision but also that of the nearby areas. Roughly speaking, the metropolitan districts correspond to labor-market areas, within which there is competition among workers for jobs as well as among employers for workers.

Product Differences

Thus far, the analysis has been on the basis of leather manufacturing as a whole, in order to determine the part played in shaping the industry's wage structure by various factors, such as the composition of the labor force as to sex and skill, geographical location, unionization, and size of community. From the competitive standpoint, however, it is important to view differences in wages on the basis of either individual products or groups of products that are manufactured by the various plants in the industry.

As already indicated, a wide variety of separate products is manufactured in the leather industry. Any classification of the wage data on a product basis, however, must be more or less arbitrary. This is due to the fact that numerous establishments are engaged in making more than one product. Such plants were here classified on the basis of the value of the predominating product. On the other hand, there are many establishments that specialize in the manufacture of a single product.

In terms of employment, the most important product in the industry is side upper leather, with approximately one-third (32.7 percent) of the total wage earners working primarily on this product. Exactly one-fifth of the employees worked largely on sole and belting leather, while kid upper and calf upper leather accounted respectively for 12.9 and 7.9 percent. Only 2.5 percent of the wage earners worked primarily on glove leather, but as many as 11.6 percent were mainly engaged in the making of other sheepskin leather. The miscellaneous group of leather includes a variety of products, each of which accounted for a small number of employees, with the total group including 12.4 percent of all workers in the industry.

The lowest hourly earnings in the industry generally prevailed among plants making primarily sole and belting leather. Several factors are responsible for this situation. First, although hardly any females (0.1 percent) were found in these establishments, these plants showed relatively few (9.7 percent) skilled males, with substantial proportions of semiskilled (47.0 percent) and unskilled (43.2 percent) males (see table 13); second, although the plants are widely scattered geographically, a significant number is located in the Southern States; third, very few of the establishments were unionized; lastly, many of the plants are in the smaller communities, especially in western Pennsylvania and the Southern States.

TABLE 13.—Average hourly earnings of leather workers, by product, sex, and skill, September 1939

Product	All workers	Males				Females
		Total	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled	
Number of workers (weighted)						
All products.....	47,904	43,895	6,439	24,280	13,176	4,009
Side upper leather ¹	15,611	14,376	1,768	8,842	3,766	1,235
Sole, including belting, leather.....	9,579	9,573	933	4,503	4,137	6
Kid upper leather.....	6,170	5,041	1,448	2,335	1,258	1,129
Calf upper leather.....	3,774	3,133	699	1,756	678	641
Glove leather ²	1,220	1,220	126	789	305	.....
Other sheepskin leather.....	5,568	4,868	579	2,977	1,312	700
Miscellaneous leather.....	5,982	5,684	886	3,078	1,720	298
Percent of workers						
All products.....	100.0	91.6	13.4	50.7	27.5	8.4
Side upper leather ¹	100.0	92.1	11.3	56.7	24.1	7.9
Sole, including belting, leather.....	100.0	99.9	9.7	47.0	43.2	.1
Kid upper leather.....	100.0	81.7	23.5	37.8	20.4	18.3
Calf upper leather.....	100.0	83.0	18.5	46.5	18.0	17.0
Glove leather ²	100.0	100.0	10.3	64.7	25.0	.....
Other sheepskin leather.....	100.0	87.4	10.4	53.4	23.6	12.6
Miscellaneous leather.....	100.0	95.0	14.8	51.4	28.8	5.0
Average hourly earnings						
All products.....	\$0.623	\$0.638	\$0.773	\$0.656	\$0.538	\$0.445
Side upper leather ¹.....	.632	.647	.744	.662	.566	.442
Sole, including belting, leather.....	.567	.567	.649	.584	.528	(³)
Kid upper leather.....	.632	.680	.865	.649	.523	.411
Calf upper leather.....	.723	.766	.884	.766	.638	.507
Glove leather ².....	.827	.827	.831	⁴ .927	.598	.....
Other sheepskin leather.....	.596	.615	.702	.642	.512	.453
Miscellaneous leather.....	.608	.616	.780	.640	.489	.432

¹ Includes integrated plants engaged in both tanning and finishing of patent leather.

² Includes sheep, kid, "cabretta," and cape glove leather.

³ Not a sufficient number of workers to permit the presentation of an average.

⁴ For an explanation regarding this figure, see p. 29.

Hourly earnings of all workers in establishments manufacturing primarily side upper leather averaged 63.2 cents. With a few exceptions, the averages of the plants covered in the survey ranged between 55 and 80 cents. The highest wage level was found in the Peabody-Woburn area, which is an important district for this product. This area is highly unionized and all but one of its establishments averaged above 75 cents or considerably higher than other New England plants. Another important district includes the Middle Western States, where establishments engaged mainly in the making of side upper leather have grown up as a result of proximity to the meat-packing industry. Compared to the Peabody-Woburn area, however, hourly earnings in this district were substantially lower, with all but one plant averaging below 65 cents. In the Middle Atlantic States, where this product is also of importance, the averages of all but one of the establishments ranged between 65 and 75 cents.

As regards composition of labor force, there were only 11.3 percent skilled males, as compared with 56.7 percent semiskilled and 24.1 percent unskilled males and 7.9 percent females.

As with side upper leather, the average hourly earnings of all workers in plants making kid upper leather amounted to 63.2 cents. The composition of the labor force, however, in these plants was considerably different from that in the side upper plants. Thus, in establishments producing kid upper leather, there were 23.5 percent skilled, 37.8 percent semiskilled, and 20.4 percent unskilled males, and 18.3 percent females. Moreover, skilled males in kid upper leather averaged more than those working primarily on side upper leather, but the opposite was true of semiskilled and unskilled males and all females. The two most important producing centers in kid upper leather are Philadelphia and Wilmington, with the former having a much higher wage level than the latter. For plants covered in the survey, the averages ranged from 59 to 73 cents in Philadelphia and from 49 to 58 cents in Wilmington. Very few establishments making kid upper leather were unionized at time of survey.

For all workers in establishments producing primarily sole and belting leather, the average hourly earnings amounted to 56.7 cents. Taking the plants covered in the survey, the averages ranged from 31 to 79 cents. In spite of this wide dispersion, there were several fairly homogeneous wage areas in connection with this product. One of these comprises the Lower Southern States, in which all but one establishment averaged below 35 cents. Another includes the border States, where the plant averages covered a range between 45 and 55 cents. A third consists of the small towns in western Pennsylvania, with most establishments averaging between 55 and 60 cents. This district is especially important in the manufacture of sole and belting leather. Plants making sole and belting leather are also located in the New England States, the Middle Atlantic States outside of western Pennsylvania, and the Middle Western States, including California. In each district, the hourly earnings varied considerably, with most plant averages being above 60 cents, especially in the metropolitan areas of Boston and San Francisco.

For all workers in plants engaged mainly in the production of calf upper leather, the average hourly earnings were 72.3 cents. In these establishments, the composition of the labor force was very similar to that found in plants manufacturing kid upper leather. On the other hand, the hourly earnings in establishments working primarily on calf upper leather averaged higher than those in kid upper leather for each skill-sex group. Some of the plants making largely calf upper leather are found in Peabody, while others are scattered throughout the Middle Atlantic and Middle Western States. In the Peabody establishments, moreover, the hourly earnings averaged con-

siderably more than those in other parts of the country. Some of the plants were unionized, and most of them are located in the larger communities.

Establishments making fine glove leather are for the most part in the Johnstown-Gloversville area of New York. Furthermore, by far the great majority of these plants were unionized. With few exceptions, the various establishments covered in the survey showed average hourly earnings of over 80 cents. For all workers, the average amounted to 82.7 cents. It will be observed, however, that this average is largely influenced by the high hourly earnings of semiskilled males, who constituted 64.7 percent of the total labor force.¹⁶ These semiskilled males averaged 92.7 cents, which is even higher than the average of skilled males. In this connection, it is to be noted that almost three-fourths of the semiskilled males were on piece work, as against only about one-eighth of the skilled males. The hourly earnings of semiskilled males on glove leather averaged higher than those on any product for which separate figures are shown, although this was not true of the skilled and unskilled males.

The "other sheepskin leather" group includes not only sheep and kid garment leather, but also such other sheepskin leather products as are used for hat sweatbands, textile rollers, shoe linings, etc. Although the average hourly earnings of the plants covered by the survey in this group ranged from 44 to 77 cents, most of the establishments averaged between 60 and 72 cents. A considerable number of the plants had union agreements. Geographically, most of the establishments were located along the Atlantic coast, due to the fact that sheep and kid skins are largely imported from abroad.

In the miscellaneous leather group, there is included an even greater variety of products than is found in "other sheepskin leather." The miscellaneous group covers plants engaged in patent finishing or embossed finishing, as well as those working on harness, upholstery, fancy, luggage (bag, case, and strap), lacing, glove leathers other than sheepskin (cowhide, horsehide, and pigskin), packing, textile machinery, horsehide upper, and other leather. Some of these products deserve special attention. Harness leather (including saddle, collar, and skirting), for example, is unique in that it covers two competitive areas, one embracing for the most part the Middle Western States, including California, and the other the Lower Southern States. The wage level was not very high in either of these areas, although the establishments in the Northern States averaged considerably more than those in the Lower Southern States.¹⁷ Aside from harness

¹⁶ There were only 10.3 percent skilled and 25.0 percent unskilled males. No females were reported in any of the establishments covered by the survey.

¹⁷ Of the total number of workers in harness leather, 25.0 percent earned under 30 cents, 39.0 percent less than 35 cents, and 47.6 percent below 40 cents.

leather, nearly all of the plants in the miscellaneous group were located in the Northern States. Establishments manufacturing upholstery or fancy leather (found, for the most part, in the New York City metropolitan area) had fairly high average hourly earnings. Plants engaged in patent finishing, most of which are in the Peabody-Woburn area, also showed high hourly earnings. By contrast, establishments engaged in embossed finishing, which are scattered throughout the Northern States, had a lower wage level. Many of the above plants, especially patent finishing and fancy leather, had union agreements.

Table 14 presents the distribution, in terms of simple percentages, of individual earnings for each of the various product groups.

TABLE 14.—Percentage distribution of leather workers, by average hourly earnings and by product, September 1939

Average hourly earnings	Total	Side upper leather ¹	Sole, including belting, leather	Kid upper leather	Calf upper leather	Glove leather ²	Other sheep-skin leather	Miscellaneous leather
Under 25.0 cents.....	(³)	(³)	(³)				0.1	0.1
Exactly 25.0 cents.....	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.2		0.2	.5	2.8
25.1 and under 27.5 cents.....	.3	.3	.3	(³)			.4	.9
27.5 and under 30.0 cents.....	.3	.4	.7	.1	0.1		.4	.1
30.0 and under 32.5 cents.....	.7	.4	1.8	.4	.1	.7	.8	.6
32.5 and under 35.0 cents.....	.8	.2	1.2	.9	.4	1.1	.2	2.0
35.0 and under 37.5 cents.....	1.9	.7	.6	7.0	.2	.3	1.8	3.0
37.5 and under 40.0 cents.....	1.2	1.6	.6	1.4	.3		1.3	1.8
40.0 and under 42.5 cents.....	5.5	2.8	5.7	8.9	6.0	.1	9.8	5.8
42.5 and under 47.5 cents.....	7.4	5.1	9.9	8.5	3.5	.8	11.3	8.6
47.5 and under 52.5 cents.....	11.5	11.5	16.9	10.6	4.0	2.1	12.9	8.2
52.5 and under 57.5 cents.....	12.5	12.6	19.5	7.0	10.4	4.5	10.8	10.6
57.5 and under 62.5 cents.....	13.9	13.7	13.5	10.0	8.8	20.1	12.3	16.8
62.5 and under 67.5 cents.....	10.8	13.7	10.9	7.4	11.1	8.1	9.4	8.8
67.5 and under 72.5 cents.....	8.2	11.1	6.5	5.9	7.8	6.9	6.1	8.2
72.5 and under 77.5 cents.....	6.1	8.1	4.0	5.2	7.6	3.4	5.3	5.9
77.5 and under 82.5 cents.....	5.1	5.3	2.5	6.8	10.4	6.7	4.5	3.7
82.5 and under 87.5 cents.....	3.2	3.2	1.3	5.0	5.8	2.7	3.9	1.8
87.5 and under 92.5 cents.....	2.7	2.6	1.2	2.3	8.8	4.5	2.5	2.0
92.5 and under 100.0 cents.....	3.1	1.9	2.0	6.8	5.9	4.6	2.7	2.3
100.0 and under 110.0 cents.....	2.3	1.4	.6	3.6	5.8	12.3	1.7	2.4
110.0 and under 125.0 cents.....	1.0	.8	.1	1.1	1.7	8.1	.4	1.6
125.0 and under 150.0 cents.....	.7	.2	(³)	.8	.9	8.9	.8	1.3
150.0 cents and over.....	.2	(³)		.1	.4	3.9	.1	.7
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of workers (weighted).....	47,904	15,611	9,579	6,170	3,774	1,220	5,568	5,982

¹ Includes integrated plants engaged in both tanning and finishing of patent leather.

² Includes sheep, kid, cabretta, and cape glove leather.

³ Less than a tenth of 1 percent.

Occupational Differences

Within each of the broad skill-sex groups, hourly earnings varied conspicuously by occupation. Among the skilled males, average hourly earnings by occupation ranged from 86.2 cents for daubers (final coat, patent leather) to 65.8 cents for miscellaneous maintenance workers. Next to daubers, the highest occupational averages were reported for the various kinds of working foremen over productive

departments, such as beam house, tanning, finishing, and sorting and shipping, each of which groups averaged considerably over 80 cents. Several groups of machine operators, namely those working on glazing, splitting, and shaving machines, also averaged over 80 cents. A few other productive occupations, such as inspectors and sorters of finished leather, on the other hand, averaged between 70 and 75 cents. Most of the occupational groups with averages under 80 cents, however, were composed of nonproductive workers.

The highest hourly earnings for any occupation regarded by employees as semiskilled are shown for wet wheelers (emery grinding), whose average amounted to 90.9 cents. In fact, this figure is higher than the national average of any of the skilled occupations. At the other extreme among the semiskilled male occupations are the stretching-machine operators, oiling-off machine operators, and hand leather stuffers, spongers, and oilers, whose averages were respectively 52.3, 49.5, and 48.9 cents. Omitting these extremes, the occupational averages for semiskilled males ranged from 77.5 cents for machine stakers to 55.9 cents for miscellaneous maintenance workers. In other words, even with the extremes omitted, the range of occupational averages among semiskilled males is fairly wide, but it must be remembered that the leather industry is for the most part one with a large number of semiskilled workers, who differ widely as to degree of skill.

It should be noted that in the semiskilled male occupations for which separate figures are shown for hand and machine workers, with two exceptions, there is very little difference between the respective averages. In the important occupation of stakers, for example, the average hourly earnings amounted to 77.5 cents for machine workers and 77.4 cents for hand workers.

The highest paid unskilled males are the beam house haulers, cleaners of equipment, and stampers of hides and leather, who averaged 61-62 cents an hour. For the remaining occupations, the averages ranged from 57.6 cents for tan house haulers to 45.6 cents for watchmen. The small group of learners averaged 48.8 cents, which was higher than the averages shown for miscellaneous laborers, strippers of leather (other than patent), janitors, and watchmen.

TABLE 15.—Average hourly earnings, weekly hours, and weekly earnings of leather workers,¹ by sex, skill, and occupation, September 1939

Sex, skill, and occupation	Number of workers (weighted)	Average hourly earnings	Average weekly hours	Average weekly earnings
All workers.....	47,672	\$0.625	39.1	\$24.42
Males.....	43,663	.640	39.2	25.14
Skilled.....	6,419	.774	40.5	31.33
Carpenters.....	283	.662	42.5	28.14
Daubers, final coat, patent leather.....	206	.862	37.8	32.58
Electricians.....	101	.769	40.5	31.12
Engineers, power plant.....	243	.757	45.4	34.38
Foremen, working, beam house.....	166	.847	41.6	35.27
Foremen, working, finishing.....	656	.833	42.1	35.06
Foremen, working, sorting, and shipping.....	109	.836	42.4	35.40
Foremen, working, tanning.....	184	.846	42.3	35.76
Foremen, working, miscellaneous.....	331	.752	41.7	31.34
Glazing machine operators.....	977	.839	37.8	31.73
Inspectors.....	215	.725	39.8	28.85
Machine repairmen.....	574	.668	42.0	28.07
Millwrights.....	113	.747	42.6	31.80
Shaving machine operators.....	1,015	.820	38.1	31.22
Sorters, finished leather.....	591	.699	41.3	28.89
Splitting machine operators.....	319	.821	39.2	32.20
Miscellaneous workers, maintenance, skilled.....	280	.658	42.5	27.96
Miscellaneous workers, other, skilled.....	56	.659	40.8	26.87
Semiskilled.....	24,235	.656	39.0	25.62
Beamsters, or scudders, hand.....	762	.659	38.2	25.20
Beamsters or scudders, machine.....	168	.659	36.9	24.35
Bleaching machine operators.....	123	.565	39.6	22.37
Boarders or grainers, hand.....	160	.756	37.4	28.23
Boarders or grainers, machine.....	195	.662	39.3	26.00
Brushing machine operators.....	275	.573	39.4	22.60
Buffers.....	1,498	.722	37.2	26.89
Buffers and polishers, hand.....	113	.649	42.2	27.40
Clerks, plant.....	505	.596	41.9	24.98
Color wheel operators.....	722	.599	39.4	23.57
Croppers or cutters, hides and skins, hand.....	227	.621	38.4	23.84
Finishers or seasoners, hand.....	1,354	.646	39.9	25.78
Finishing or seasoning machine operators.....	480	.636	38.7	24.65
Firemen, power plant.....	544	.617	43.0	26.53
Fleshing machine operators.....	838	.671	39.1	26.26
Ironers, leather, machine.....	155	.613	41.0	25.10
Liquor men, tanning.....	193	.584	39.9	23.27
Measuring machine operators.....	330	.591	40.7	24.06
Mixers, finishing solutions.....	303	.648	42.6	27.55
Mixers, solutions, beam house.....	74	.687	39.2	26.90
Oiling-off machine operators.....	76	.495	40.8	20.18
Pasters, leather drying.....	313	.697	41.5	28.94
Plating and embossing press operators.....	939	.660	39.7	26.19
Press operators, miscellaneous.....	142	.610	38.6	23.56
Rolling machine operators.....	1,094	.620	39.5	24.51
Setters-out, hand.....	201	.622	37.3	23.17
Setters-out, machine.....	1,626	.624	38.8	24.21
Sorters, hides and skins.....	318	.663	40.7	26.97
Sorters, leather in process.....	494	.602	41.5	24.96
Splitting machine helpers.....	349	.605	39.7	24.02
Sprayers, leather.....	410	.575	43.2	24.85
Stakers, hand.....	348	.774	37.4	28.98
Stakers, machine.....	1,805	.775	38.4	29.78
Stretching machine operators.....	72	.523	43.8	22.90
Stuffers, spongers, and oilers, leather, hand.....	350	.489	40.3	19.70
Stuffing and oiling wheel operators.....	283	.574	39.5	22.71
Tackers, leather drying.....	1,399	.728	37.4	27.23
Togglers, leather drying.....	1,323	.752	34.7	26.07
Trimmers, hides and skins, hand.....	717	.659	38.7	25.50
Trimmers, leather, hand.....	385	.627	38.4	24.09

¹ Exclusive of those in 1 plant for whom data by occupation are not available.

TABLE 15.—Average hourly earnings, weekly hours, and weekly earnings of leather workers, by sex, skill, and occupation, September 1939—Continued

Sex, skill, and occupation	Number of workers (weighted)	Average hourly earnings	Average weekly hours	Average weekly earnings
Males—Continued.				
Semiskilled—Continued.				
Truck and tractor drivers	214	.605	41.6	25.16
Unhairing-machine operators	453	.643	38.7	24.87
Weighers and counters	147	.582	38.2	22.23
Wet wheelers, emery grinding	133	.909	36.7	33.35
Wheel operators, miscellaneous	336	.605	38.3	23.18
Wringing-machine operators	319	.617	38.1	23.47
Miscellaneous workers, maintenance, semiskilled	337	.359	43.0	24.04
Miscellaneous workers, other, semiskilled	633	.619	38.9	24.09
Unskilled				
Cleaners, equipment	96	.612	38.5	23.55
Dippers, dampening	276	.547	40.2	21.97
Dippers, finishing solutions	216	.549	39.5	21.66
Driers, leather	1,327	.536	39.4	21.10
Elevator operators	158	.496	41.2	20.43
Hair-room workers, unskilled	202	.528	41.4	21.89
Haulers, beam house	1,583	.618	38.7	23.90
Haulers, tan house	1,800	.376	39.0	22.48
Janitors	237	.463	39.6	18.36
Laborers, beam house	721	.566	39.1	22.15
Laborers, finishing	1,467	.529	38.3	20.24
Laborers, hide house	472	.533	37.3	19.90
Laborers, shipping and stock	266	.524	39.8	20.86
Laborers, tan house	364	.518	38.7	20.09
Laborers, miscellaneous	531	.484	36.7	17.74
Learners	63	.488	35.6	17.34
Measuring-machine helpers	119	.489	41.0	20.02
Packers, leather	616	.512	40.0	20.46
Plating and embossing press helpers	304	.564	37.1	20.95
Set-out machine helpers	106	.506	36.9	18.68
Stampers, hides and leather	89	.613	36.8	22.55
Strippers, leather, other than patent	268	.467	36.5	17.06
Watchmen	515	.456	46.8	21.38
Miscellaneous workers, beam house, unskilled	213	.573	36.5	20.92
Miscellaneous workers, finishing, unskilled	519	.547	38.8	21.20
Miscellaneous workers, tan house, unskilled	245	.525	38.2	20.04
Miscellaneous workers, other, unskilled	236	.495	39.0	19.28
Females	4,009	.445	37.4	16.64
Skilled				
Glazing-machine operators	335	.495	37.7	18.65
Miscellaneous workers, skilled	260	.504	37.0	18.67
Miscellaneous workers, skilled	75	.465	40.0	18.60
Semiskilled				
Clerks, plant	3,036	.449	38.0	17.05
Clerks, plant	97	.423	39.3	16.61
Finishers or seasoners, hand	1,277	.449	37.3	16.74
Finishing- or seasoning-machine operators	318	.497	37.7	18.74
Ironers, leather, machine	118	.434	38.1	16.53
Measuring-machine operators	78	.444	37.8	16.79
Sprayers, leather	153	.423	37.6	15.91
Trimmers, leather, hand	439	.452	38.2	17.27
Miscellaneous hand workers, semiskilled	248	.405	38.8	15.72
Miscellaneous machine operators, semiskilled	308	.457	40.0	18.28
Unskilled				
Driers, leather	638	.395	34.5	13.63
Learners	150	.419	35.7	14.96
Learners	80	.355	21.1	7.48
Measuring-machine helpers	110	.395	40.8	16.12
Miscellaneous workers, unskilled	298	.389	35.2	13.70

Generally speaking, employees in the beam house averaged somewhat more than those performing similar work in the tan house. This was particularly true of some of the unskilled occupations for males. Haulers in the beam house, for example, averaged 61.8 cents an hour,

as against 57.6 cents for haulers in the tan house. Similarly, common laborers in the beam house showed an average of 56.6 cents, as compared with 51.8 cents for common laborers in the tan house.

In contrast with the wide range of hourly earnings among the male occupations, those of female workers were confined to rather restricted limits. The range of occupational averages among female employees was less than 15 cents, the highest average (50.4 cents) being shown for glazing-machine operators, a skilled occupation, and the lowest average (35.5 cents) for learners. Among the semiskilled female occupations, average hourly earnings ranged from 40.5 cents for the miscellaneous hand workers to 49.7 cents for finishing- or seasoning-machine operators. Of the few occupations in which both males and females were employed, the average hourly earnings of males were without exception considerably higher than those of females, but the differences declined as the skill of the occupation decreased.

Variations by Race of Workers

Of the total wage earners in the leather industry, 4.1 percent were Negroes. The proportion of colored workers, however, varied from one region to another. There were hardly any Negroes employed in leather in the New England States, but the proportion amounted to 4.5 percent in the Middle Atlantic and 4.2 percent in the Middle Western States. In these States, moreover, the colored workers showed a tendency to concentrate in the larger metropolitan areas. In the Southern States, on the other hand, 17.0 percent of all employees were Negroes.

Since the plants in the Southern States specialize primarily on sole and belting, as well as harness, leather, the proportion of Negroes working on those products was considerably greater than on other products. Moreover, the proportion of colored workers was substantially higher in the beam and tan houses than in other departments, the respective figures amounting to 9.7, 8.1, and 2.0 percent.¹⁸ The most unpleasant jobs in the industry are located in the beam and tan houses. The great majority of the Negroes were in semiskilled and unskilled occupations. Thus, the colored workers constituted 4.1 percent of the semiskilled and 7.0 percent of the unskilled males, as against less than 1 percent of the skilled males. Virtually all of the Negroes employed in the industry were males, the number of females amounting to only 2.3 percent.

A careful check of the basic data indicates that, in all plants where whites and Negroes were employed side by side on the same work, there was no difference in their rates of pay. In some establishments, especially in the Southern States, Negro workers were employed

¹⁸ These percentages are exclusive of workers in occupations that could not be classified by department.

exclusively in certain occupations. Owing to the other factors that play a part in the wage structure, however, it is impossible to determine whether or not the Negroes received lower rates of pay than white employees in the same occupations in other plants.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the colored employees occupied the lower rungs in the wage ladder of the leather industry. One principal reason for this is the fact that the Negroes were for the most part found in the semiskilled and unskilled occupations. Another important reason is the concentration of colored workers in the Southern States, which showed a considerably lower wage level than the Northern States.

As a result, the average hourly earnings of Negroes were lower than those of other workers in the industry. For all colored employees, the average amounted to 52.4 cents, which may be compared with 62.9 cents for all other workers. Taking the two groups in which most of the Negroes were found, the respective averages were 55.7 and 66.1 cents for semiskilled males and 49.5 and 54.6 cents for unskilled males.

Similarly, the proportion of colored workers earning under 40 cents an hour exceeded that for other employees. For all wage earners, the respective figures were 13.7 and 5.1 percent. There were 9.7 percent of Negro semiskilled workers receiving less than 40 cents, which may be compared with only 1.9 percent of other employees. For unskilled workers, the figures were 13.8 percent for colored and 5.8 percent for other employees.

Extra Rates for Overtime Work

Extra rates were provided for overtime work in virtually all establishments covered in the survey. The practices followed by the different plants, however, varied considerably. In the majority of establishments, the practice conformed with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and time and one-half was provided for all work in excess of 44 hours a week. In a substantial number of plants, the extra rates, which were either time and one-half or time and one-third, applied for all work in excess of 40 hours.

Thus far, the figures presented for the leather industry have been based on regular rates only. A substantial number of employees in the industry, however, worked overtime during the pay-roll period covered by the survey, for which they were paid extra rates. The latter no doubt increased considerably the hourly earnings of some individual employees. On the other hand, if the earnings due to the extra rates paid for overtime work are distributed among all workers in the industry, the average is raised by only one-half of a cent.

Comparisons With 1932 Survey

Prior to September 1939, the last survey of the leather industry made by the Bureau was in the spring of 1932. With respect to product and geographical distribution, the 1932 survey is fairly similar to that in 1939, which makes it possible to compare the hourly earnings between the 2 years. It should be remembered, however, that in the leather industry the low point of the depression was reached in 1932.¹⁹

As against 62.3 cents in 1939, the average hourly earnings of all workers in 1932 amounted to 47.0 cents, representing a gain of 32.6 per cent. (See table 16.) In 1932, 3.4 percent of the workers received less than 25 cents, but hardly any of the wage earners were found below this level in 1939. Taking 40 cents as the upper limit, 35.6 percent were paid under that amount in 1932, compared with only 5.8 percent in 1939. On the other hand, only 0.5 percent earned \$1 and over in 1932, as against 4.2 percent in 1939.

In 1932, the average hourly earnings amounted to 49.3 cents for males and 30.3 cents for females. The respective figures in 1939 were 63.8 and 44.5 cents.

TABLE 16.—Percentage distribution of leather workers by average hourly earnings, 1932 and 1939

Average hourly earnings	1932 survey	1939 survey
Under 20.0 cents.....	0.7	.....
20.0 and under 25.0 cents.....	2.7	(1)
25.0 and under 27.5 cents.....	3.6	0.9
27.5 and under 30.0 cents.....	4.2	.3
30.0 and under 32.5 cents.....	6.5	.7
32.5 and under 35.0 cents.....	4.4	.8
35.0 and under 37.5 cents.....	7.7	1.9
37.5 and under 40.0 cents.....	5.8	1.2
40.0 and under 42.5 cents.....	8.8	5.5
42.5 and under 47.5 cents.....	13.6	7.4
47.5 and under 100.0 cents.....	41.5	77.1
100.0 cents and over.....	.5	4.2
Total.....	100.0	100.0
Average hourly earnings.....	\$0.470	\$0.623

¹ Less than $\frac{1}{10}$ of 1 percent.

Weekly Hours and Earnings

Full-Time Weekly Hours

About two-thirds of the establishments in the leather industry were operating on an 8-hour day and 40-hour week schedule in September 1939. A substantial number of plants, however, had a full-time work-week of 44 hours. Very few establishments deviated from either the 40- or 44-hour week.

¹⁹ The 1932 hourly earnings include earnings due to extra rates paid for overtime work, although extra overtime rates were not so prevalent at that time. Moreover, due to the depression, there was actually very little overtime worked in 1932.



PLATE 5.—SETTERS-OUT, MACHINE.

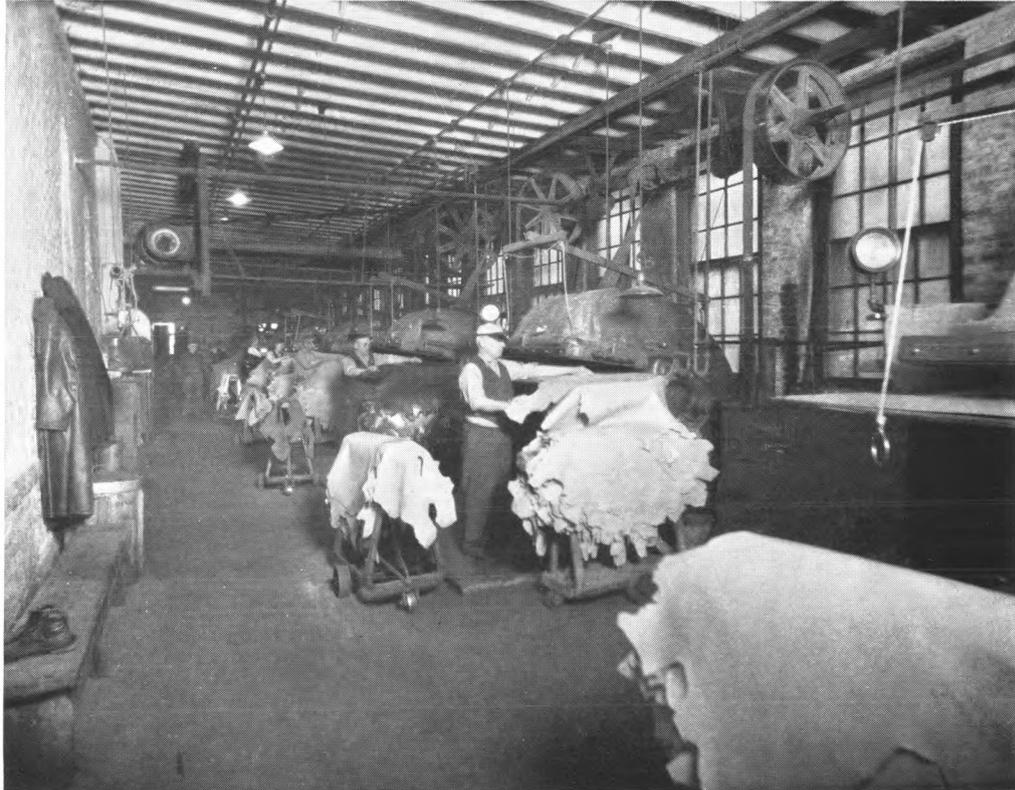


PLATE 6.—EMBOSSING-PRESS OPERATORS.

It should be noted that the full-time hours indicated above are those that applied to the majority of employees in a given plant. Maintenance, powerhouse, and service workers frequently had different scheduled hours from those of the main body of wage earners.

Actual Weekly Hours

For all wage earners, the actual weekly hours worked in the leather industry averaged 39.1 in September 1939. According to the distribution in table 17, three-tenths (30.2 percent) of the total labor force worked less than 40 hours during the week scheduled, most of these employees being on short time due to absence from work, labor turnover, and other causes. There were 36.1 percent working exactly 40 hours, 11.9 percent over 40 and under 44 hours, and 11.6 percent exactly 44 hours. One-tenth (10.2 percent) worked in excess of 44 hours.

Weekly hours were longer for males than females, the respective averages being 39.2 and 37.4. Skilled males worked longer than semi-skilled and unskilled males, the skilled group averaging 40.5 and the unskilled approximately 39 hours.

The average weekly hours varied little geographically, the averages for all workers amounting to 39.1 in the Northern and 39.5 in the Southern States. In the Northern States, the averages were 38.7 in the New England and Middle Atlantic States, as compared with 39.8 in Middle Western States, including California.

TABLE 17.—Percentage distribution of leather workers,¹ by actual weekly hours, sex, and skill, September 1939

Weekly hours	All workers	Males				Females
		Total	Skilled	Semiskilled	Unskilled	
Under 24 hours	4.4	4.3	1.9	4.3	5.3	5.9
24 and under 32 hours	6.1	5.9	4.0	6.4	5.8	8.1
32 and under 36 hours	10.1	10.2	7.4	11.4	9.2	9.1
36 and under 40 hours	9.6	9.3	7.3	10.5	8.2	12.0
Exactly 40 hours	36.1	35.5	40.5	33.4	36.7	43.6
Over 40 and under 44 hours	11.9	12.3	8.7	12.5	13.5	8.5
Exactly 44 hours	11.6	12.0	17.9	11.2	10.8	6.3
Over 44 and under 48 hours	4.0	3.9	4.6	3.9	3.7	4.8
48 and under 52 hours	2.7	2.8	3.9	2.5	2.8	1.6
52 and under 56 hours	1.4	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.5	.....
56 hours and over	2.1	2.3	2.0	2.4	2.5	.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average weekly hours	39.1	39.2	40.5	39.0	39.1	37.4

¹ Exclusive of 232 workers for whom hours were not reported.

Weekly Earnings

Average weekly earnings of all workers in the leather industry, exclusive of earnings due to the extra rates for overtime work,²⁰ amounted

²⁰ If the earnings due to the extra rates for overtime work were included, it would increase the average weekly earnings of all workers in the industry by only 20 cents.

to \$24.42 in September 1939. Like hourly earnings, however, weekly earnings varied conspicuously among the different skill-sex groups. For male employees, the averages were \$31.33 for skilled, \$25.62 for semiskilled, and \$21.18 for unskilled workers. The weekly earnings of all male workers averaged \$25.14, compared with only \$16.64 for female employees.

Looking at the distribution of individual weekly earnings for all workers, which is shown in table 18, over one-half (51.5 percent) received \$20 and under \$30 and over four-fifths (81.6 percent) earned \$15 and under \$35. Approximately one-tenth (9.7 percent) received under \$15, but less than one-tenth (8.7 percent) were paid \$35 and over. The same table also shows the distributions for the various skill-sex groups.

In the Northern States the average weekly earnings of all workers were \$24.82. The averages varied little among the several districts in the Northern States, being, respectively, \$25 for the New England, \$24.84 for the Middle Atlantic, and \$24.67 for the Middle Western States, including California. The weekly earnings in the Southern States averaged only \$18.20.

TABLE 18.—Percentage distribution of leather workers,¹ by average weekly earnings, sex, and skill, September 1939

Weekly earnings ²	All work- ers	Males				Females
		Total	Skilled	Semiskilled	Unskilled	
Under \$5.....	1.1	0.9	0.2	0.8	1.7	2.2
\$5 and under \$10.....	2.3	1.8	.9	1.3	3.0	7.6
\$10 and under \$15.....	6.3	4.8	1.4	4.3	7.6	21.6
\$15 and under \$20.....	17.6	15.0	5.2	12.3	25.0	44.3
\$20 and under \$25.....	27.7	28.6	10.7	27.4	39.5	20.2
\$25 and under \$30.....	23.8	25.7	26.9	29.9	17.0	3.6
\$30 and under \$35.....	12.5	13.7	23.3	15.9	4.9	.3
\$35 and under \$40.....	5.7	6.2	18.0	5.6	1.3	.1
\$40 and under \$45.....	1.7	1.8	7.3	1.4	(3)	.1
\$45 and under \$50.....	.7	.7	2.6	.6	(3)	-----
\$50 and over.....	.6	.8	3.5	.5	(3)	-----
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average weekly earnings.....	\$24.42	\$25.14	\$31.33	\$25.62	\$21.18	\$16.64

¹ Exclusive of 232 workers for whom weekly earnings were not reported.

² Excludes earnings at extra rates for overtime.

³ Less than $\frac{1}{10}$ of 1 percent.

Part II
Earnings and Hours in the
Leather Belting and Packing Industry

Description of the Industry and Scope of Survey

Definition of the Industry

The leather belting and packing industry, as defined by the Census of Manufactures, embraces establishments engaged primarily in the making of the following: Leather belting, chiefly for use in the transmission of power; leather packing, such as cup, U-valve, oil-retainer-seal, etc.; and "textile leathers," such as aprons, picker leathers, mill strapping, etc.¹

Taken as a whole, the industry is not large. In 1937, the latest year for which figures are available, the number of belting and packing establishments totaled 182.² During the year, these plants employed an average of 2,829 wage earners, and their total wage bill amounted to \$3,354,946.

Characteristics of the Industry

Not only is the leather belting and packing industry comparatively small, but, as a rule, its operations are carried on in very small establishments. Only about 15 to 16 wage earners were employed by the average leather belting and packing plant, according to the Census of Manufactures in 1937. Of the total number of establishments, 4 reported no wage earners, 110 between 1 and 5, 41 between 6 and 20, 17 between 21 and 50, 5 between 51 and 100, and only 5 over 100 wage earners. Owing largely to the small size of the plants, owner-management generally prevails in the industry.

Geographically, the industry is widely scattered. In 1937, approximately two-fifths of its plants with over one-third of the wage earners were found in three important industrial States, namely Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New York. The remainder of the industry, however, was broadly distributed over the country. In fact, establishments were located in virtually all important geographical areas.

Operations in the leather belting and packing industry are largely free from seasonal fluctuations. In 1935, for example, employment remained fairly steady throughout the year, according to the figures of the Census of Manufactures. The same was true throughout the greater part of 1937, although there was a decline in the fall of that year as a result of the business depression.

¹ The Census of Manufactures excludes from this industry leather belts for wear on the person and rubber belting.

² Exclusive of plants with an annual production valued below \$5,000.

Since leather belting and packing is primarily for industrial uses, employment in the industry is affected considerably by changes in business conditions. This is shown by the radical decline in number of wage earners and total wages in the industry during the depression years of 1931 and 1933. (See table 19.)

TABLE 19.—*Number of establishments, number of wage earners, and wages paid in the leather belting and packing industry, 1921-37*¹

[Based on data from Census of Manufactures]

Year	Number of establishments	Number of wage earners (average for the year)	Wages paid (thousands of dollars)
1921.....	164	2,268	\$2,842
1923.....	169	3,160	3,895
1925.....	168	2,644	3,505
1927.....	173	2,164	2,925
1929.....	207	2,602	3,550
1931.....	178	1,640	1,968
1933.....	152	1,684	1,733
1935.....	187	2,362	2,520
1937.....	182	2,829	3,355

¹ Includes only plants having an annual production valued at \$5,000 or more.

In 1937, as reported by the Census of Manufacturers, the total value of leather belting and packing amounted to \$27,047,693. Flat belting was valued at 50.2 percent of the total, with the value of other leather belting (solid, twist, and built-up) amounting to 4.3 percent. Leather packings (cup, U-valve, etc.), excluding washers, constituted 16.4 percent of the total value, while textile leathers amounted to 7.6 percent, thus leaving 21.5 percent to cover the value of other products. Among other items were included belt lacings, oil seals, and grease containers.

Scope of the Survey

In general, the present survey conformed to the definition of the leather belting and packing industry as stated by the Census of Manufactures.³ The survey covered all establishments in the industry except those with less than 3 employees. Thus defined, the survey included 108 plants with 1,956 wage earners.

The distribution of the coverage in the leather belting and packing industry by States is shown in table 20.

Average Hourly Earnings

Methods of Wage Payments

A large majority of the wage earners employed in the leather belting and packing industry are paid on a straight time-rate basis. Indeed, this method of remuneration was followed exclusively in 89

³ Establishments that are primarily belt-repair shops were excluded from the survey.

of the 108 establishments for which information was obtained. Moreover, even among the plants that paid straight piece rates, the majority of the wage earners were on a time-rate basis. Only 3 of the establishments reported production-bonus systems of wage payment.

Of the total workers covered in the survey, 9.8 percent were paid on a straight piece-work basis and 6.1 percent worked under production-bonus plans, thus leaving 84.1 percent paid on a straight time-rate basis.

Extra rates for overtime work were general throughout the industry. By far the great majority of the plants conformed strictly to the Fair Labor Standards Act, thus paying time and one-half after 44 hours of work per week, but a substantial number of establishments had a more liberal provision for overtime. Most of these plants allowed time and one-half after 40 hours of work. About one-fifth of the plants also paid double time for work on Sundays and holidays.

TABLE 20.—*Coverage of survey in the leather belting and packing industry, by States, September 1939*

State	Number of establishments	Workers	
		Number	Percentage
United States.....	108	1,956	100.0
California.....	3	28	1.4
Connecticut.....	4	50	2.6
Illinois.....	8	353	19.6
Massachusetts.....	15	388	19.8
Michigan.....	4	100	5.1
Missouri.....	4	45	2.3
New Jersey.....	5	33	1.7
New York.....	15	124	6.3
North Carolina.....	3	32	1.6
Ohio.....	6	44	2.2
Pennsylvania.....	15	262	13.4
Virginia.....	3	135	16.9
Other States ¹	23	332	7.1

¹ Includes 2 plants in Delaware, 2 in Georgia, 2 in Indiana, 2 in Louisiana, 2 in Maryland, 2 in Minnesota, 2 in New Hampshire, 2 in Rhode Island, 2 in South Carolina, 2 in Tennessee, 2 in Texas, and 1 in Wisconsin.

During the pay-roll period scheduled, a number of employees worked overtime. If the earnings due to the extra rates allowed for this overtime are considered, the average hourly earnings for all workers in the industry are increased from 56.5 to 57.8 cents, a gain of 1.3 cents. The subsequent analysis of both hourly and weekly earnings is on the basis of regular rates only.

Hourly Earnings of All Workers

In September 1939, earnings of all workers in the belting and packing industry averaged 56.5 cents an hour. Individual hourly earnings, however, varied widely, ranging from about 25 cents to above \$1, according to the distribution in table 21.

Although the spread of individual earnings was wide, the hourly earnings of a fairly large proportion of the labor force were restricted to comparatively narrow limits. Almost one-third (31.8 percent) of the wage earners were concentrated within the 15-cent range of 42.5 and under 57.5 cents. Moreover, the range for more than three-fifths (63.4 percent) was between 40 and 72.5 cents.

Despite the concentration in the intermediate intervals, a relatively substantial proportion of the leather belting and packing employees were found in the lower-wage classes. Roughly, one out of every six wage earners (17.3 percent) earned under 40 cents an hour, and 5.6 percent received less than 35 cents.

A substantial scattering of employees was also found in the higher wage classes, with almost one-fifth (19.3 percent) of the total paid 72.5 cents an hour and over. There were 7.8 percent receiving 82.5 cents and over. The distribution, however, cuts off abruptly at about 92.5 cents, and no more than 3.1 percent were at or above this level.

Variations by Sex and Skill ⁴

As in the leather industry, women are a minor proportion of the total labor force in leather belting and packing, amounting to 14.6 percent. The dominant groups are the skilled and semiskilled males; each of these groups accounted for 38 percent of the total. Only one-tenth (9.9 percent) of all workers were unskilled males.

Sharply contrasting levels of hourly earnings are shown for each of these groups of employees in the industry. Compared with an average of 68.2 cents an hour for skilled males, semiskilled males averaged 54.4 cents, and unskilled males had an average of 42.2 cents. The female employees, most of whom are semiskilled workers, averaged 40.5 cents. Hence, the extreme spread of hourly earnings among the several groups amounted to 27.7 cents. The differences in these averages are reflected in the distributions of individual hourly earnings among the various groups of workers.

Earnings of less than 40 cents are shown for only 2.8 percent of the skilled males, but 12.7 percent of the semiskilled males, and 34.9 percent of the unskilled were found below this level. Of the females, 55.1 percent received less than 40 cents. A substantial proportion of the unskilled males (11.3 percent) and more than one-third of all females received between 35.0 and 37.5 cents.

On the other hand, 64.4 percent of the skilled males were paid 62.5 cents an hour and over, which may be compared with 30.2 percent of the semiskilled males. Only 1.5 percent of the unskilled males and none of the females earned 67.5 cents and over.

⁴ The number of colored workers (1.5 percent) in the establishments covered was not sufficiently large to justify separate treatment.

TABLE 21.—Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average hourly earnings, sex, and skill, September 1939

Average hourly earnings	All workers	Males				Females
		Total	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled	
Under 25.0 cents	0.1	0.1			1.0	
Exactly 25.0 cents	1.3	1.2		0.5	8.2	2.1
25.1 and under 27.5 cents	.2	.2		.3	.5	
27.5 and under 30.0 cents	.2	.1	0.1	.1		.7
30.0 and under 32.5 cents	2.2	1.6	.4	2.2	4.1	5.6
32.5 and under 35.0 cents	1.6	1.9	.8	2.0	5.2	.4
35.0 and under 37.5 cents	8.5	3.8	.7	4.9	11.3	36.5
37.5 and under 40.0 cents	3.2	2.1	.8	2.7	4.6	9.8
40.0 and under 42.5 cents	7.0	6.1	2.3	8.7	10.8	12.3
42.5 and under 47.5 cents	10.0	9.4	4.2	12.1	19.2	13.3
47.5 and under 52.5 cents	10.6	10.7	5.4	12.9	23.3	9.8
52.5 and under 57.5 cents	11.2	12.2	11.7	14.3	7.2	4.2
57.5 and under 62.5 cents	7.8	8.4	9.2	9.1	3.1	4.2
62.5 and under 67.5 cents	8.5	9.8	11.9	10.3		1.1
67.5 and under 72.5 cents	8.3	9.8	13.9	7.7	1.5	
72.5 and under 77.5 cents	6.4	7.5	11.8	5.3		
77.5 and under 82.5 cents	5.1	5.9	9.9	3.5		
82.5 and under 87.5 cents	2.6	3.1	4.2	2.7		
87.5 and under 92.5 cents	2.1	2.5	5.0	.5		
92.5 and under 100.0 cents	.7	.8	1.8	.1		
100.0 and under 110.0 cents	1.3	1.5	3.2	.1		
110.0 and under 125.0 cents	.6	.7	1.5			
125.0 and under 150.0 cents	.4	.5	1.1			
150.0 cents and over	.1	.1	.1			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of workers	1,956	1,671	739	738	194	285
Average hourly earnings	\$0.565	\$0.592	\$0.682	\$0.544	\$0.422	\$0.405

Geographical Differences

In analyzing the data on a geographical basis, the same break-down was used in leather belting and packing as in the leather industry, which consisted of the New England, Middle Atlantic, Middle Western (including California), and Southern States.

The Southern States covered by the survey in this industry included Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. Altogether, these States employed only about one-eighth of the total workers in the industry. Generally speaking, hourly earnings were lower here than in other parts of the country. According to table 22, all but one of the southern establishments averaged below 60 cents, while two-thirds of the northern plants showed averages above that figure. This does not mean, however, that the low-wage establishments were all located in the South. As a matter of fact, there were as many establishments averaging less than 45 cents in the North as in the South.

Since there were no female workers found in the southern establishments, any comparison between the northern and southern regions should be confined to male employees. For all males, the average

hourly earnings were 62.1 cents in the Northern and 43.9 cents in the Southern States, a difference of 18.2 cents. Comparing the distributions, which are shown in table 23, there were only 5.1 percent paid under 40 cents an hour in the North, as against 44.6 percent in the South. On the other hand, the number receiving 72.5 cents and over amounted, respectively, to 26.0 and 3.2 percent.

TABLE 22.—*Distribution of leather belting and packing plants, by average hourly earnings and by districts, September 1939*

Average hourly earnings	United States	Northern States				Southern States
		Total	New England States	Middle Atlantic States	Middle Western States, including California	
35 and under 40 cents	7	4	1	2	1	3
40 and under 45 cents	5	2	2	1	1	3
45 and under 50 cents	10	7	2	3	2	3
50 and under 55 cents	13	9	3	3	3	4
55 and under 60 cents	13	9	4	2	3	4
60 and under 65 cents	20	19	5	7	7	1
65 and under 70 cents	12	12	2	6	4	-----
70 and under 75 cents	8	8	2	5	1	-----
75 and under 80 cents	9	9	3	3	3	-----
80 and under 85 cents	7	7	-----	4	3	-----
85 and under 90 cents	2	2	1	1	-----	-----
90 and under 95 cents	2	2	-----	-----	2	-----
Total	108	90	23	37	30	18

The New England States covered in the survey included New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. The Middle Atlantic States comprised New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. The Middle Western States included Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Missouri. In tabulations, it has been necessary to include California with this group. A substantial portion of the industry was found in each of these groups of States. Of the total employees, there were 30.3 percent in the New England, 24.5 percent in the Middle Atlantic, and 32.6 percent in the Middle Western States, including California.

TABLE 23.—Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average hourly earnings, region, sex, and skill, September 1939

Average hourly earnings	Northern States					Females
	All workers	Males				
		Total	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled	
Under 25.0 cents	0.1	0.1			0.6	
Exactly 25.0 cents	1.1	.8		0.5	5.4	2.1
25.1 and under 27.5 cents	.2	.2		.3	.6	
27.5 and under 30.0 cents	.1					.7
30.0 and under 32.5 cents	1.8	1.0	0.3	.8	4.2	5.6
32.5 and under 35.0 cents	.2	.1			1.2	.4
35.0 and under 37.5 cents	7.6	1.8		1.6	9.6	36.5
37.5 and under 40.0 cents	2.5	1.1		1.3	4.2	9.8
40.0 and under 42.5 cents	6.5	5.3	1.1	8.1	11.4	12.3
42.5 and under 47.5 cents	9.6	8.8	3.0	11.3	22.4	13.3
47.5 and under 52.5 cents	10.6	10.8	4.4	13.1	27.2	9.8
52.5 and under 57.5 cents	11.2	12.6	10.8	16.0	7.8	4.2
57.5 and under 62.5 cents	8.4	9.3	9.2	10.8	3.6	4.2
62.5 and under 67.5 cents	9.2	10.9	12.4	12.3		1.1
67.5 and under 72.5 cents	9.3	11.2	15.4	9.2	1.8	
72.5 and under 77.5 cents	7.3	8.8	13.4	6.3		
77.5 and under 82.5 cents	5.5	6.6	10.6	4.2		
82.5 and under 87.5 cents	3.0	3.6	4.9	3.2		
87.5 and under 92.5 cents	2.4	2.9	5.8	.6		
92.5 and under 100.0 cents	.7	.8	1.7	.2		
100.0 and under 110.0 cents	1.5	1.8	3.8	.2		
110.0 and under 125.0 cents	.6	.8	1.7			
125.0 and under 150.0 cents	.5	.6	1.3			
150.0 cents and over	.1	.1	.2			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of workers	1,709	1,424	639	619	166	285
Average hourly earnings	\$0.585	\$0.621	\$0.712	\$0.575	\$0.438	\$0.405

Average hourly earnings	Southern States					Females
	All workers	Males				
		Total	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled ¹	
Under 25.0 cents	0.4	0.4				
Exactly 25.0 cents	3.2	3.2		0.8		
25.1 and under 27.5 cents						
27.5 and under 30.0 cents	.8	.8	1.0	.8		
30.0 and under 32.5 cents	5.3	5.3	1.0	9.2		
32.5 and under 35.0 cents	11.7	11.7	6.0	12.6		
35.0 and under 37.5 cents	15.1	15.1	5.0	21.9		
37.5 and under 40.0 cents	8.1	8.1	6.0	10.1		
40.0 and under 42.5 cents	10.5	10.5	10.0	11.8		
42.5 and under 47.5 cents	12.7	12.7	12.0	16.0		
47.5 and under 52.5 cents	10.5	10.5	12.0	11.8		
52.5 and under 57.5 cents	9.7	9.7	17.0	5.0		
57.5 and under 62.5 cents	3.6	3.6	9.0			
62.5 and under 67.5 cents	3.6	3.6	9.0			
67.5 and under 72.5 cents	1.6	1.6	4.0			
72.5 and under 77.5 cents	.4	.4	1.0			
77.5 and under 82.5 cents	2.0	2.0	5.0			
82.5 and under 87.5 cents						
87.5 and under 92.5 cents						
92.5 and under 100.0 cents	.8	.8	2.0			
100.0 and under 110.0 cents						
110.0 and under 125.0 cents						
125.0 and under 150.0 cents						
150.0 cents and over						
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		
Number of workers	247	247	100	119	28	
Average hourly earnings	\$0.439	\$0.439	\$0.511	\$0.399	\$0.324	

¹ Not a sufficient number of workers to show a distribution.

Although a majority of the establishments in the New England, Middle Atlantic, and Middle Western States (including California) averaged above 60 cents an hour, there were a substantial number of plants in each of these districts with averages between 35 and 60 cents, which is the range covered by virtually all of the southern establishments. For all workers, the average hourly earnings amounted to 62.5 cents for the Middle Atlantic, 60.0 cents for the New England, and 54.3 cents for the Middle Western States, including California. Taking 40 cents as the limit, the number of employees earning under that figure was 7.7 percent in the Middle Atlantic and 10.9 percent in the New England States, which may be compared with 20.3 percent in the Middle Western States, including California. For the most part, the lower-paid workers in the Middle Western district were found in Illinois and Missouri. Each district showed a substantial number of employees in the higher-wage classes, namely, above 72.5 cents, the figures being 28.2 percent in the Middle Atlantic, 21.5 percent in the New England, and 16.2 percent in the Middle Western States, including California. (See table 24.)

TABLE 24.—*Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average hourly earnings, sex, and district, September 1939*

Average hourly earnings	All workers				Males				Females			
	New England States	Middle Atlantic States	Middle Western States, including California	Southern States	New England States	Middle Atlantic States	Middle Western States, including California	Southern States	New England States ¹	Middle Atlantic States ¹	Middle Western States, including California	Southern States
Under 25.0 cents.....		0.2		0.4		0.2		0.4				
Exactly 25.0 cents.....	1.9	1.3	0.2	3.2	1.1	1.1	0.2	3.2				
25.1 and under 27.5 cents.....		.6				.7						
27.5 and under 30.0 cents.....	.2	.9		.8				.8				
30.0 and under 32.5 cents.....	2.2	.8	2.0	5.3	1.7	.7	.5	5.3			5.6	
32.5 and under 35.0 cents.....	3	.2		11.7	.4			11.7				
35.0 and under 37.5 cents.....	3.9	2.7	14.8	15.1	2.8	1.1	1.4	15.1			44.7	
37.5 and under 40.0 cents.....	2.4	1.7	3.3	8.1	1.1	1.1	.9	8.1			8.6	
40.0 and under 42.5 cents.....	5.1	6.1	8.2	10.5	3.7	5.4	7.3	10.5			10.2	
42.5 and under 47.5 cents.....	5.2	9.2	13.9	12.7	3.4	8.3	16.1	12.7			9.1	
47.5 and under 52.5 cents.....	12.0	10.5	9.6	10.5	12.0	10.7	9.5	10.5			9.6	
52.5 and under 57.5 cents.....	13.7	10.2	9.9	9.7	15.1	10.7	12.0	9.7			5.1	
57.5 and under 62.5 cents.....	10.0	7.3	7.8	3.6	11.0	7.6	8.8	3.6			5.6	
62.5 and under 67.5 cents.....	11.0	9.0	7.8	3.6	12.1	9.6	10.7	3.6			1.5	
67.5 and under 72.5 cents.....	10.6	11.8	6.3	1.6	11.8	12.4	9.1	1.6				
72.5 and under 77.5 cents.....	8.4	9.8	4.4	.4	9.3	10.5	6.3	.4				
77.5 and under 82.5 cents.....	4.6	7.9	4.5	2.0	5.0	8.5	6.6	2.0				
82.5 and under 87.5 cents.....	3.5	3.5	2.0		3.9	3.8	2.9					
87.5 and under 92.5 cents.....	2.5	2.7	2.0		2.2	2.9	2.9					
92.5 and under 100.0 cents.....	.5	1.0	.6	.8	.6	1.1	.9	.8				
100.0 and under 110.0 cents.....	1.0	1.9	1.6		1.1	2.0	2.3					
110.0 and under 125.0 cents.....	.7	.6	.6		.7	.7	.9					
125.0 and under 150.0 cents.....	.3	.6	.5		.4	.7	.7					
150.0 cents and over.....		.2				.2						
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0			100.0	
Number of workers.....	592	479	638	247	535	448	441	247	57	31	197	
Average hourly earnings.....	\$0.600	\$0.625	\$0.543	\$0.439	\$0.621	\$0.639	\$0.603	\$0.439	\$0.395	\$0.397	\$0.409	

¹ Not a sufficient number of workers to show a distribution.

The N. R. A. code for the leather industry also included leather belting and packing, with the same minimum wages per hour applying to both industries, which were 32.5 cents for all workers in the Southern States and 35.0 cents for females and 40 cents for males in the Northern States. At the time of the survey (September 1939), there were 5.1 percent of the males earning under 40 cents an hour and 8.8 percent of the females paid below 35 cents in the Northern States. Moreover, as many as 36.5 percent of the females received between 35.0 and 37.5 cents, about one-third being paid exactly 35 cents, which is probably traceable to the influence of the code minimum. In the Southern States, 9.7 percent of the workers were paid less than 32.5 cents.

Hourly Earnings in Relation to Fair Labor Standards Act

As pointed out previously, the 25-cent hourly minimum was in effect during the period covered by the survey. Very few workers in the leather belting and packing industry were being paid below this minimum. Also, there were few who were paid exactly 25 cents, the figure amounting to only 1.1 percent in the Northern and 3.2 percent in the Southern States.

Only 1.8 percent of all employees in the industry received less than 30 cents an hour, or the minimum under the Fair Labor Standards Act shortly after the survey was made. The figure was 1.5 percent in the Northern States, as compared with 4.4 percent in the Southern States. In other words, the wage structure of the industry as a whole evidently did not have to be readjusted radically to conform to the new minimum.

Neither was the proportion of workers in the industry paid under 35 cents an hour very large. For the country as a whole, the figure amounted to 5.6 percent. It was only 3.5 percent in the Northern States, and 21.4 percent in the Southern States.

On the other hand, a substantial number of employees in the industry received less than 40 cents an hour. For the industry as a whole, 17.3 percent of the wage earners were found below this level. Below the 40 cent level were found 2.8 percent of the skilled males, 12.7 percent of the semiskilled, and 34.9 percent of the unskilled. By contrast 55.1 percent of the females received less than 40 cents. On a geographical basis, the proportions were 7.7 percent in the Middle Atlantic, 10.9 percent in the New England, 20.3 percent in the Middle Western (including California), and 44.6 percent in the Southern States.

Table 25 presents the distribution of workers by groups of plants classified according to average hourly earnings. It shows that the only establishments in which a substantial proportion (11.9 percent) of employees earned under 30 cents were those that averaged between 35 and 40 cents. Likewise, they were the only plants that had a

considerable proportion of workers paid below 35 cents, the figure amounting to 39.3 percent. These establishments were scattered widely geographically.

In the plants averaging between 35 and 40 cents an hour, 67.1 percent of the employees were paid under 40 cents, compared with 40.0 percent in those with averages between 40 and 45 cents, 29.2 percent in those averaging between 45 and 50 cents, and 13.5 percent in those with averages between 50 and 55 cents. The other groups of plants, containing about two-thirds of all establishments, had few workers earning less than 40 cents.

TABLE 25.—Simple percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average hourly earnings and by groups of plants, September 1939

Average hourly earnings	Total	Plants having average hourly earnings of—							
		35 and under 40 cents	40 and under 45 cents	45 and under 50 cents	50 and under 55 cents	55 and under 60 cents	60 and under 65 cents	65 and under 70 cents	70 cents and over
Under 25.0 cents.....	0.1		1.0		0.5				
Exactly 25.0 cents.....	1.3	8.8	2.0	1.2	.5	0.9			
25.1 and under 27.5 cents.....	.2	1.0						0.6	
27.5 and under 30.0 cents.....	.2	2.1							
30.0 and under 32.5 cents.....	2.2	11.9	3.0	.6	5.3	.4	0.4		0.5
32.5 and under 35.0 cents.....	1.6	15.5	2.0						
35.0 and under 37.5 cents.....	8.5	19.6	27.0	22.4	4.3	1.7	2.3		.5
37.5 and under 40.0 cents.....	3.2	8.2	5.0	5.0	2.9	2.2	2.5	.6	
40.0 and under 42.5 cents.....	7.0	10.3	19.0	9.4	10.6	5.7	5.3	1.2	1.0
42.5 and under 47.5 cents.....	10.0	9.3	19.0	25.9	8.2	9.1	4.1	3.6	2.4
47.5 and under 52.5 cents.....	10.6	3.1	8.0	11.2	15.5	15.8	12.3	9.5	4.3
52.5 and under 57.5 cents.....	11.2	4.6	2.0	6.5	22.7	24.9	11.4	7.7	4.3
57.5 and under 62.5 cents.....	7.8	3.1	4.0	5.3	8.7	10.4	12.1	10.7	1.4
62.5 and under 67.5 cents.....	8.5	1.0	4.0	3.5	8.7	5.2	15.8	15.5	6.3
67.5 and under 72.5 cents.....	8.3	1.0	2.0	2.7	2.4	10.4	13.5	12.5	15.1
72.5 and under 77.5 cents.....	6.4	.5		2.4	2.9	4.3	8.2	9.5	20.9
77.5 and under 82.5 cents.....	5.1		1.0	.6	3.9	3.9	5.5	14.3	13.0
82.5 and under 87.5 cents.....	2.6		1.0	.6	2.4	1.3	2.5	6.5	7.7
87.5 and under 92.5 cents.....	2.1			.9		3.0	2.3	2.4	7.2
92.5 and under 100.0 cents.....	.7			.3		.4	1.0	1.8	1.9
100.0 and under 110.0 cents.....	1.3			.9		.4	.4	2.4	7.2
110.0 and under 125.0 cents.....	.6				.5		.4	1.2	2.9
125.0 and under 150.0 cents.....	.4			.6					2.9
150.0 cents and over.....	.1								.5
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of workers.....	1,956	194	100	339	207	230	511	168	207
Number of plants.....	108	7	5	10	13	13	20	12	28

Variations by Size of Community⁵ and Unionization

As in the leather industry, plants making leather belting and packing are, for the most part, located in large industrial centers. Of the total employees in the industry, as many as 44.4 percent were found in metropolitan areas with a population of 1,000,000 and over, and one-fourth (24.4 percent) were located in communities between 250,000 and 1,000,000. There were 13.6 percent in places between 50,000

⁵ See page 25.

and 250,000, and 17.6 percent were found in towns between 5,000 and 50,000.

Due to the fact that the coverage in the Southern States is relatively small, any analysis of hourly earnings by size of community in this industry must be confined to the northern region. For all workers, average hourly earnings in this area amounted to 51.7 cents in towns with a population between 5,000 and 50,000, 55.8 cents in places between 50,000 and 250,000, 63.9 cents in communities between 250,000 and 1,000,000, and 58.1 cents in metropolitan areas with 1,000,000 and over.

Unionization⁶ has not made much headway in the leather belting and packing industry. Of the 108 establishments covered in the survey, only 4 were operating under union agreements. These plants were all located in metropolitan areas with a population of 1,000,000 and over in the Northern States. With one exception, they averaged over 65 cents, which places them in the upper half of the distribution of establishments by average hourly earnings.

Despite the fact that all of the union plants were located in metropolitan areas with a population of 1,000,000 and over, the average hourly earnings here were lower than those found in communities between 250,000 and 1,000,000. This is due to the fact that the proportion of employees working in leather-packing establishments, which generally had a lower wage level than plants making other products, was higher in metropolitan areas of 1,000,000 and over as compared with other classes of communities.

Product Differences

For all wage earners, the average hourly earnings amounted to 58.1 cents in plants making primarily leather belting, 52.6 cents in those engaged principally in making leather packing, and 58.2 cents in establishments producing other products that come within the definition of the industry.

The chief reason for the higher wage level in leather belting is the fact that the plants engaged chiefly in making this product employed relatively few women, namely, 2.3 percent of the total labor force. On the other hand, a number of establishments manufacturing leather belting are located in the Southern States where the wage level in this branch of the industry is lower. In fact, the Southern States accounted for 20.9 percent of the total workers in leather-belting plants. There were no females employed in the Southern States, so that the wage comparison must be confined to male employees. For all males, the average hourly earnings amounted to 63.2 cents in the Northern States⁷ as against 43.0 cents in the Southern States.

⁶ See page 24.

⁷ The few females in the Northern States averaged 36.4 cents.

Virtually all establishments (with 98.6 percent of the total workers) engaged largely in the production of leather packing are located in the Northern States. On the other hand, a substantial proportion of the labor force, namely, 37.3 percent, consisted of women, which is responsible for the lower wage level found in this branch of the industry. The average hourly earnings of males in leather-packing plants in the Northern States amounted to 59.4 cents, as compared with 41.0 cents for females.

Of the total wage earners employed in establishments engaged principally in making products other than leather belting and packing, only 8.2 percent were found in the Southern States. Moreover, only 12.8 percent of the labor force in these plants consisted of women. In the Northern States, the average hourly earnings were 62.5 cents for males and 39.8 cents for females. The small number of males found in the Southern States averaged 46.8 cents.

TABLE 26.—*Simple percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average hourly earnings and by product, September 1939*

Average hourly earnings	All workers	Belting ¹			Packing ²			Other ³
		United States	North-ern States	South-ern States	Total	Males	Females	
Under 25.0 cents.....	0.1	0.1	0.1					0.2
Exactly 25.0 cents.....	1.3	1.4	.8	3.9	1.4	0.6	2.9	1.0
25.1 and under 27.5 cents.....	.2	.3	.4					
27.5 and under 30.0 cents.....	.2	.3	.1	1.0	.2		.5	
30.0 and under 32.5 cents.....	2.2	2.3	1.5	5.4	1.6	1.1	2.4	2.7
32.5 and under 35.0 cents.....	1.6	3.0		14.1	.5	.6	.5	
35.0 and under 37.5 cents.....	8.5	4.9	2.1	15.6	16.5	2.0	40.6	6.5
37.5 and under 40.0 cents.....	3.2	3.6	2.3	8.3	3.0		8.1	2.7
40.0 and under 42.5 cents.....	7.0	6.9	6.0	10.2	7.0	4.6	11.0	7.3
42.5 and under 47.5 cents.....	10.0	7.4	6.3	11.7	16.1	18.0	12.9	7.7
47.5 and under 52.5 cents.....	10.6	10.8	10.9	10.2	11.2	12.5	9.1	9.4
52.5 and under 57.5 cents.....	11.2	12.9	14.0	8.8	8.9	11.1	5.3	9.9
57.5 and under 62.5 cents.....	7.8	7.1	8.2	2.9	7.3	8.5	5.3	10.2
62.5 and under 67.5 cents.....	8.5	8.1	9.5	2.9	6.6	9.7	1.4	12.1
67.5 and under 72.5 cents.....	8.3	7.7	9.3	2.0	5.4	8.5		13.8
72.5 and under 77.5 cents.....	6.4	7.2	9.0	.5	4.3	6.8		7.5
77.5 and under 82.5 cents.....	5.1	5.7	6.7	2.0	3.9	6.3		5.1
82.5 and under 87.5 cents.....	2.6	3.1	3.9	.5	2.7	4.3		1.5
87.5 and under 92.5 cents.....	2.1	3.0	3.7		1.2	2.0		1.2
92.5 and under 100.0 cents.....	.7	.6	.6		.7	1.1		1.0
100.0 and under 110.0 cents.....	1.3	2.0	2.6		.9	1.4		
110.0 and under 125.0 cents.....	.6	1.0	1.3		.2	.3		
125.0 and under 150.0 cents.....	.4	.5	.6		.4	.6		.2
150.0 cents and over.....	.1	.1	.1					
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of workers.....	1,956	983	778	205	560	351	209	413
Average hourly earnings.....	\$0.565	\$0.581	\$0.625	\$0.430	\$0.526	\$0.593	\$0.410	\$0.582

¹ Includes both male and female workers.

² Includes both the Northern and Southern States.

³ Includes both males and females in the country as a whole.

For male workers in the Northern States, the highest hourly earnings are shown for leather belting and other products, with the lowest for leather packing, the respective averages being 63.2, 62.5, and 59.4 cents. For females, the order was different, the average hourly earnings amounting to 41.0 cents for leather packing, 39.8 cents for other products, and 36.4 cents for leather belting. It must be remembered, however, that the last two averages are based on relatively few employees. In the Southern States, where the comparison is confined to males only, the averages were 57.1 cents for leather packing, 46.8 cents for other products, and 43.0 cents for belting.⁸

The distributions of individual hourly earnings by product are presented in table 26.

Occupational Differences

The average hourly earnings for the various occupations in the leather belting and packing industry for the country as a whole appear in table 27. By far the highest average, 82.6 cents, is shown for working foremen. For the remaining occupational groups among skilled males, the averages covered a narrow range—from 59.8 cents to 67.3 cents. The lowest average was for pressmen. The important occupation of all-around belt makers averaged 65.1 cents.

With two exceptions, the occupational averages among semiskilled males covered a spread from 50 to 60 cents. These two exceptions were shipping packers and picker-making workers, who averaged 47.8 and 45.7 cents, respectively. The occupations with averages of approximately 59 to 60 cents were plant clerks, lathe cup-edge trimmers, packing punch-press cutters, and scarfing-machine operators of belts and aprons.

Among the unskilled males, the highest average hourly earnings (47.1 cents) are shown for the few apprentices. The relatively few learners had the lowest average, which was 37.0 cents. Practically all of the other occupational groups averaged 41 cents.

The occupational averages of females ranged from 36.2 cents for packers to 44.4 cents for cup-forming press operators. In four occupations, figures are shown for both males and females, and in each the females averaged considerably less than the males.

⁸ Due to the small number of male employees, it is not possible to compare average hourly earnings in each region among the various products on a skill basis.

Weekly Hours and Earnings

Full-Time Weekly Hours

With very few exceptions, the full-time weekly hours in the leather belting and packing industry amounted to 44 or less in September 1939. Moreover, about one-half of the plants had a full-time workweek of 44 hours, with the great majority of the remainder operating under a 40-hour week.

As in the leather industry, employees in the maintenance, power house, and service departments in many of the leather belting and packing plants had scheduled hours that were different from those of the majority of the wage earners.

Actual Weekly Hours

The average actual weekly hours worked by all wage earners in the leather belting and packing industry amounted to 43.4 in September 1939. The male workers averaged 43.5 hours, as against 42.9 for female employees. Among the males, the averages were 44.0 for skilled, 43.1 for semiskilled, and 42.5 for unskilled workers, the averages thus declining with the degree of skill.

According to the distribution in table 28, one-fifth (20.3 percent) of all wage earners worked exactly 40 hours during the pay-roll period scheduled. Three-tenths (30.2 percent) worked exactly 44 hours, which was the maximum under the Fair Labor Standards Act at the time of the survey. There were 7.5 percent working over 40 and under 44 hours. One-eighth (12.3 percent) worked less than 40 hours, most of these employees being on short time during the pay-roll period scheduled, due to various causes. On the other hand, as many as three-tenths (29.7 percent) worked over 44 hours, for which overtime work at time and one-half was responsible in a number of cases.

The average weekly hours were considerably longer in the Southern than in the Northern States, the respective figures amounting to 46.6 and 42.9 hours. In the northern region, the highest average, 44.3 hours, was found in the Middle Western States, including California, which may be compared with 42.5 hours in the New England and 41.6 hours in the Middle Atlantic States.

TABLE 27.—Average hourly earnings, weekly hours, and weekly earnings of leather belting and packing workers, by sex, skill, and occupation, September 1939

Sex, skill, and occupation	Number of workers	Average hourly earnings	Average weekly hours	Average weekly earnings
All workers.....	1,956	\$0.565	43.4	\$24.51
Males.....	1,671	.592	43.5	25.73
Skilled.....	739	.682	44.0	30.02
Belt makers, all around.....	197	.651	44.9	29.22
Cutters, belting strips.....	28	.652	44.3	28.87
Foremen, working.....	170	.826	44.3	36.59
Pressmen, belts.....	137	.598	42.9	25.69
Shaving machine operators, belting and packing.....	26	.639	41.6	26.60
Sorters and matchers, belting.....	32	.616	45.2	27.83
Miscellaneous workers, maintenance, skilled.....	82	.648	45.7	29.59
Miscellaneous workers, other, skilled.....	67	.673	41.5	27.94
Semiskilled.....	738	.544	43.1	23.48
Clerks, plant.....	71	.600	43.3	25.95
Cup-edge trimmers, lathe.....	56	.604	42.7	25.78
Cup-forming press operators.....	82	.565	41.5	23.43
Cutters, packing, punch press.....	37	.593	46.3	27.46
Inspectors and testers, belts and packing.....	20	.563	43.6	24.54
Packers, shipping.....	39	.478	43.4	20.73
Picker-making workers, semiskilled.....	71	.457	41.8	19.08
Round-belt-making workers, semiskilled.....	40	.524	43.8	22.93
Scarfing machine operators, belts and aprons.....	32	.595	43.7	26.01
Trimmers and polishers, belt edges.....	30	.555	44.6	24.76
Miscellaneous workers, maintenance, semiskilled.....	45	.504	45.2	22.80
Miscellaneous workers, leather finishing, machine.....	18	.534	38.3	20.46
Miscellaneous workers, other, semiskilled.....	197	.536	43.2	23.15
Unskilled.....	194	.422	42.5	17.96
Apprentices.....	14	.471	42.9	20.21
Learners.....	12	.370	36.8	13.59
Material handlers and general helpers.....	86	.412	40.9	16.85
Watchmen.....	27	.410	50.4	20.65
Miscellaneous workers, maintenance, unskilled.....	35	.461	43.2	19.88
Miscellaneous workers, other, unskilled.....	20	.413	40.6	16.76
Females.....	285	.405	42.9	17.37
Cup-edge trimmers, lathe.....	32	.399	46.4	18.50
Cup-forming press operators.....	44	.444	42.9	19.05
Cutters, packing, punch press.....	54	.420	42.4	17.80
Packers, shipping.....	34	.362	44.0	15.92
Sorters.....	35	.380	45.4	17.27
Miscellaneous workers.....	86	.407	40.4	16.42

Weekly Earnings

For all wage earners in the leather belting and packing industry, the average weekly earnings in September 1939 amounted to \$24.51.⁹ As may be seen from table 29, 65.4 percent of the total earned between \$15 and \$30 during the week scheduled. One-tenth (10.1 percent) received less than \$15. The remaining one-fourth (24.5 percent) earned \$30 and over, but only 4.7 percent were paid as much as \$40.

As with hourly earnings, weekly earnings varied considerably among the several skill-sex groups. Male employees averaged \$25.73, as compared with \$17.37 for female workers. Among the males, the averages amounted to \$30.02 for skilled, \$23.48 for semiskilled, and \$17.96 for unskilled employees.

⁹ If the earnings due to the extra rates for overtime work were included, it would increase the average weekly earnings of all workers in the industry by 56 cents.

The average weekly earnings amounted to \$20.46 in the Southern States. In the northern region, the average was \$25.10, with relatively little difference among the several districts. Thus, the weekly earnings averaged \$25.98 in the Middle Atlantic, \$25.53 in the New England, and \$24.03 in the Middle Western States, including California.

TABLE 28.—Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by actual weekly hours, sex, and skill, September 1939

Weekly hours	All workers	Males				Females
		Total	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled	
Under 24 hours	2.5	2.4	1.5	2.3	6.2	2.9
24 and under 32 hours	3.7	4.0	4.5	3.3	5.2	1.8
32 and under 36 hours	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.2	3.6	1.8
36 and under 40 hours	3.4	2.5	2.3	2.6	2.6	3.2
Exactly 40 hours	20.3	20.2	18.7	21.4	21.0	9.1
Over 40 and under 44 hours	7.5	8.6	6.9	10.2	8.8	21.0
Exactly 44 hours	30.2	33.2	35.1	33.5	25.2	1.4
Over 44 and under 48 hours	11.6	6.8	6.5	7.0	6.7	12.3
48 and under 52 hours	7.4	7.1	6.6	8.0	5.7	39.5
52 and under 56 hours	6.2	7.3	8.8	6.1	6.2	8.8
56 and under 60 hours	1.5	1.8	1.8	1.5	3.1	-----
60 hours and over	3.0	3.5	4.6	1.9	5.7	-----
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average weekly hours	43.4	43.5	44.0	43.1	42.5	42.9

TABLE 29.—Percentage distribution of leather belting and packing workers, by average weekly earnings, sex, and skill, September 1939

Weekly earnings ¹	All workers	Males				Females
		Total	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled	
Under \$5	0.6	0.6	-----	0.9	2.1	0.4
\$5 and under \$10	1.7	1.4	0.8	1.2	4.6	3.6
\$10 and under \$15	7.8	6.2	2.2	5.7	23.7	16.9
\$15 and under \$20	22.8	16.8	6.5	24.3	27.9	57.7
\$20 and under \$25	22.5	22.9	15.2	27.4	34.0	19.9
\$25 and under \$30	20.1	23.4	28.7	22.3	6.7	1.5
\$30 and under \$35	14.2	16.7	23.5	14.0	1.0	-----
\$35 and under \$40	5.6	6.6	11.5	3.5	-----	-----
\$40 and under \$45	2.3	2.7	5.4	.7	-----	-----
\$45 and under \$50	1.2	1.4	3.2	-----	-----	-----
\$50 and under \$55	.6	.7	1.6	-----	-----	-----
\$55 and under \$60	.3	.3	.7	-----	-----	-----
\$60 and over	.3	.3	.7	-----	-----	-----
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average weekly earnings	\$24.51	\$25.73	\$30.02	\$23.48	\$17.96	\$17.37

¹ Excludes earnings at extra rates for overtime.