

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

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**Annual and Hourly Earnings
Philadelphia Knitted-Outerwear
Industry 1943**



Bulletin No. 830

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(III)

Letter of Transmittal

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS,
Washington, D. C., May 16, 1945.

The SECRETARY OF LABOR:

I have the honor to transmit herewith a report on annual and hourly earnings in the Philadelphia knitted-outerwear industry in 1943. This report was prepared in the Bureau's Division of Wage Analysis by Kermit B. Mohn, Regional Wage Analyst for the Philadelphia region.

A. F. HINRICHS, *Acting Commissioner.*

Hon. FRANCES PERKINS,
Secretary of Labor.

*Bulletin No. 830 of the
United States Bureau of Labor Statistics*

[Reprinted from the MONTHLY LABOR REVIEW, May 1945, with additional data]

**Annual and Hourly Earnings in Philadelphia Knitted-
Outerwear Industry, 1943**

Summary

The knitted-outerwear industry in Philadelphia employed a total of 4,051 individual workers for varying periods of time in 1943. Of these, 1,380 worked at least 46 weeks and had average gross annual earnings of \$1,739. The average straight-time hourly earnings for all workers who were employed 6 weeks or more were 72.8 cents; over a fourth received less than 50 cents an hour and about 16 percent at least \$1 an hour.

Comparatively full employment was afforded during 1943 to all workers during their varying period of service in the industry. Weekly hours during the year averaged 39 for all workers, indicating a considerable amount of overtime work at premium rates. However, a sizable turnover of workers, especially among the lowest skilled occupations, resulted in an average workyear of only 27.2 weeks among the whole group who worked in the industry at some time during the year.

Characteristics of the Industry

The manufacture of knitted outerwear, although reflecting certain characteristics of the apparel trades, is generally classified among the textile industries. It is a relatively small industry, normally employing about 25,000 workers, of whom the majority are women and girls. Most of the establishments in this industry are in the East.

The segment of the industry that is situated in Philadelphia has had a long history of successful collective bargaining. Forty-seven of the establishments operating in 1943, or all but 1 or 2 of the knitted-outerwear manufacturers in the city, operated under agreements with the Knit Goods Workers' Union, Local 190 of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (A. F. of L.). Of the 47 concerns, 43 were members of the Knitted Outerwear Manufacturers Association operating under a master agreement. The other 4, although not members of the association, worked under identical union agreements. Rather unusual records, maintained under the terms of these agreements, provide significant information regarding the annual earnings of workers in a light manufacturing industry during the war and constitute the basis for the present article.

The product of the Philadelphia industry was valued at somewhat more than \$10,000,000 in 1943 and the number of workers employed

averaged about 2,700 during the year. Employment in individual plants ranged from 8 to 172 workers; 27 plants had fewer than 50 workers, 10 had from 50 to 100 employees, and 10 had over 100.

All of the establishments operated full-process plants in that they knit their own fabrics and manufactured finished products. A few purchased no yarn on their own account but instead worked on a contract basis, with the yarn furnished. The products were knit primarily from woolen yarns, and in 1943 from 70 to 80 percent of the total product was for civilian use.

The agreements made with the Knit Goods Workers' Union stipulate that employers shall furnish the union with weekly transcripts of payroll records for each employee, by occupation.¹ The union posts figures from these pay-roll transcripts to individual members' record cards, so that the hours and total earnings, by weeks, are listed for the entire year. After consultation with the Knitted Outerwear Manufacturers Association, the union made these individual record cards for 1943 available to the Bureau for use in this special study.

It is recognized that there were slight imperfections in the data. It was impossible, for example, to exclude learners and handicapped workers, as is normally done in the Bureau's wage studies. Furthermore, the occupational classifications were not always up to date, and working foremen were probably included in some cases under other occupational titles. It is believed, however, that the results are fairly accurate, and that the slight inaccuracies that may exist do not seriously limit the value of the material.

Employment and Earnings

REGULARITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Altogether 4,051 different wage earners were employed for varying periods during 1943 by the 47 union establishments in the Philadelphia knitted-outerwear industry. However, these workers averaged only 27.2 weeks of employment (see table 1). This low average must be attributed to turnover among employees, since there was relatively little fluctuation in the total working force during the year.

Over 22 percent of those employed worked less than 6 weeks and slightly more than half worked less than 26 weeks. On the other hand, more than a third were employed for at least 46 weeks and about one of every eight worked 52 weeks.

Among the selected occupations shown in table 1, the cutters and menders showed the greatest continuity of employment, on the average. The former had an average work-year of 43 weeks and the latter had one of 41 weeks. Almost three-fourths of the cutters worked 46 weeks or more and not quite half put in 52 weeks. Among the menders, 61 percent worked at least 46 weeks and almost a fourth were employed for a full year.

In contrast, the greatest turnover is indicated for examiners and trimmers and folders and packers, with average work-years of 21.5

¹ Under the arrangement with the union in 1943, the union shops in the knitted-outerwear industry contributed amounts equal to 3 percent of the total weekly wages of the union members for the purpose of financing various benefits to union members. These contributions were paid for 40 weeks during the year, beginning with the sixth calendar week. From this fund the union provided vacation pay to its members, based on total income for a designated period, with a maximum of \$35. Persons in military service received \$25. In addition, sick benefits of \$5 per week were paid for a maximum of 5 weeks during the year after an initial 2 weeks of illness.

TABLE 1.—Distribution of Workers in Philadelphia Knitted-Outerwear Industry, by Number of Weeks Worked During 1943

Number of weeks worked	All workers ¹	Selected occupations							
		Cutters	Examiners and trimmers	Folders and packers	Knitters	Menders	Marrow operators	Pressers	Singer operators
1 to 5 weeks.....	901	1	208	58	25	1	51	5	54
6 to 10 weeks.....	443	5	82	44	11	2	36	4	29
11 to 15 weeks.....	256	2	49	21	2	1	26	3	18
16 to 20 weeks.....	235	1	50	12	6	4	24	3	22
21 to 25 weeks.....	198	4	28	8	3	7	15	3	17
26 to 30 weeks.....	181	5	22	12	7	3	21	3	17
31 to 35 weeks.....	149	2	33	15	6	2	17	2	10
36 to 40 weeks.....	144	5	26	6	5	4	18	5	18
41 to 45 weeks.....	164	4	23	4	7	6	29	5	15
46 to 51 weeks.....	860	26	82	35	60	29	141	20	124
52 weeks.....	520	49	54	25	64	18	63	21	35
Total.....	4, 051	104	657	240	196	77	441	74	359
Yearly average (weeks).....	27.2	43.0	21.5	22.7	38.7	41.0	34.0	38.4	32.0

¹ Includes occupations not shown separately.

weeks and 22.7 weeks, respectively. Almost 30 percent of their total number were employed in the industry for less than 6 weeks and about 22 percent were employed at least 46 weeks.

The hours worked within these weeks were fairly high, on the average. The tabulation below shows that average weekly hours worked during the year for all employees amounted to 39, with a range among the selected occupations from 37 for singer operators to 46 for knitters. Cutters worked sufficient overtime to give them an average workweek of 44 hours, and pressers had an average workweek of exactly 40 hours.

	Number of workers	Average weekly hours
All workers.....	4, 051	39. 0
Selected occupations:		
Cutters.....	104	44. 0
Examiners and trimmers.....	657	38. 0
Folders and packers.....	240	38. 5
Knitters.....	196	46. 0
Menders.....	77	38. 5
Marrow operators.....	441	37. 5
Pressers.....	74	40. 0
Singer operators.....	359	37. 0

ANNUAL EARNINGS

Workers who were employed at least 46 weeks in the knitted-outerwear industry in Philadelphia had average gross annual earnings of \$1,739 in 1943 (table 2). Actual gross annual earnings ranged from \$642 to \$5,508, and over three-fourths of the total group had earnings of at least \$800, but less than \$2,200. Almost all of the others averaged more than the latter figure. Because of pay-roll deductions for various purposes, the net amounts taken home by these workers were, of course, substantially less than the gross earnings.

TABLE 2.—Distribution of Workers Employed 46 Weeks or More in Philadelphia Knitted-Outerwear Industry During 1943, by Annual Earnings

Classified annual earnings	All workers ¹	Selected occupations							
		Cutters	Exam-iners and trim-mers	Folders and packers	Knitters	Menders	Mer-row operators	Pressers	Singer opera-tors
\$600 to \$799.....	9		4	2					1
\$800 to \$999.....	118		33	13		1	1		8
\$1,000 to \$1,199.....	196		46	21		11	14		10
\$1,200 to \$1,399.....	169		24	9		14	13	1	21
\$1,400 to \$1,599.....	199		21	6	1	13	49	2	33
\$1,600 to \$1,799.....	165		4	3	8	6	44	2	37
\$1,800 to \$1,999.....	123		1	2	7	1	30	1	13
\$2,000 to \$2,199.....	104	2	2	1	17	1	25	4	18
\$2,200 to \$2,399.....	70	6			17		13	3	10
\$2,400 to \$2,599.....	64	11		2	16		9	8	4
\$2,600 to \$2,799.....	48	16			17		2	7	
\$2,800 to \$2,999.....	35	7	1	1	10		2	8	2
\$3,000 to \$3,199.....	25	10			10			2	1
\$3,200 to \$3,399.....	21	10			9		1		
\$3,400 to \$3,599.....	13	2			5			3	1
\$3,600 to \$3,799.....	3	1			2				
\$3,800 to \$3,999.....	11	6			3				
\$4,000 to \$4,199.....	3				2				
\$4,200 and over.....	4	4							
Total.....	1,380	75	136	60	124	47	204	41	159
Yearly average annual earn-ings.....	\$1,739	\$3,016	\$1,206	\$1,259	\$2,601	\$1,381	\$1,811	\$2,538	\$1,678

¹ Includes occupations not shown separately.

Cutters were the highest-paid workers in the industry, with average annual earnings of \$3,016. Their hourly rates (table 3) were augmented by considerable amounts of premium overtime pay. Exactly 72 percent of the cutters who worked at least 46 weeks had total earnings between \$2,400 and \$3,400 for the year. A number of those with earnings over \$3,400 supervised the work of other workers in addition to performing their regular duties of cutting.

In contrast, the group having the lowest annual earnings consisted of examiners and trimmers, with an average of \$1,206. Nine of every 10 workers in this occupational group averaged between \$800 and \$1,600 for the year's work, with over 58 percent averaging between \$800 and \$1,200.

Knitters and pressers ranked second and third in average annual earnings with figures of \$2,601 and \$2,538, respectively. The former exceeded the latter despite the reverse relationship of their straight-time hourly earnings (table 3), because the knitters, as a group, put in more overtime at premium rates than did the pressers. The same sort of relationship existed between the merrow operators and the singer operators. Almost 69 percent of the combined machine-operating group (merrow and singer) earned between \$1,400 and \$2,200, on the average.

In considering these annual-earnings figures by occupation, it is well to bear in mind that nearly all cutters, knitters, and pressers are males, while most of the workers in the other selected occupations are females.

HOURLY EARNINGS

The straight-time hourly earnings of 3,150 workers who were employed for at least 6 weeks in the Philadelphia knitted-outerwear

industry in 1943 averaged 72.8 cents (table 3). Individual averages ranged from the legal minimum of 40 cents to over \$2.00 per hour. However, slightly more than half of the workers received less than 65 cents, over a third were paid less than 55 cents, and well over a fourth had earnings of less than 50 cents per hour. Comparatively well-paid workers were also numerous; about 16 percent of the 3,150 workers covered in the study had earnings of at least \$1.00 per hour, on the average.

TABLE 3.—Distribution of Workers Employed 6 Weeks or More in Philadelphia Knitted-Outerwear Industry During 1943, by Straight-time Hourly Earnings

Classified hourly earnings	All workers ¹	Selected occupations							
		Cutters	Exam-iners and trim-mers	Folders and packers	Knitters	Mend-ers	Mer-row oper-ators	Pressers	Singer oper-ators
\$0.400 to \$0.449	512		170	47		3	5		6
\$0.450 to \$0.499	352		84	53		2	9		13
\$0.500 to \$0.549	271		57	30		7	16		9
\$0.550 to \$0.599	249		45	14		15	23		21
\$0.600 to \$0.649	203		28	9		15	25		14
\$0.650 to \$0.699	178		20	9		8	22		25
\$0.700 to \$0.749	183		12	6	1	14	38	5	14
\$0.750 to \$0.799	138	1	13	3		4	35	2	15
\$0.800 to \$0.849	144		6	3	16	2	35	6	25
\$0.850 to \$0.899	168		2	2	49	4	31	3	28
\$0.900 to \$0.949	138	1	1	1	31	1	34		27
\$0.950 to \$0.999	111	2	2		15		33	4	20
\$1.000 to \$1.049	99	15	2	1	17		18	6	27
\$1.050 to \$1.099	101	20	5	1	5	1	16	6	15
\$1.100 to \$1.149	69	19	1	1	7		12	3	17
\$1.150 to \$1.199	57	5		1	5		19	3	11
\$1.200 to \$1.249	48	7	1	1	5		6	5	5
\$1.250 to \$1.299	24	1			4		5	4	5
\$1.300 to \$1.349	23	1			4		1	3	3
\$1.350 to \$1.399	13	4			3		1	3	2
\$1.400 to \$1.449	17	5			3		2	6	1
\$1.450 to \$1.499	6	2			1		1	1	1
\$1.500 to \$1.549	8	5			2		1		
\$1.550 to \$1.599	6						1		2
\$1.600 to \$1.649	9	6					1	2	
\$1.650 to \$1.699	8	2							4
\$1.700 to \$1.749	3				1				
\$1.750 to \$1.799	3	3							
\$1.800 to \$1.849	2	2							
\$1.850 to \$1.899									
\$1.900 to \$1.949	1								
\$1.950 to \$1.999									
\$2.000 and over	6	2					3		
Total	3,150	103	449	182	171	76	390	69	305
Average hourly earnings	\$0.728	\$1.241	\$0.524	\$0.531	\$1.005	\$0.652	\$0.846	\$1.172	\$0.867

¹ Includes occupations not shown separately.

Cutters were generally the highest-paid employees, with an average hourly rate of \$1.241. Pressers ranked next, with an average of \$1.172, and knitters were third with \$1.005. Male workers are employed in these three occupations. Although pressing is not considered as skilled an occupation as knitting, the workers in this classification were able to raise their hourly earnings to a higher level because of favorable piece-work systems of wage payment. Knitters were usually paid on a time basis.

Among the remaining five selected occupations, in all of which females were used almost exclusively, average straight-time hourly earnings ranged from 86.7 cents for singer operators to 52.4 cents for examiners and trimmers. Singer and merrow operators and most of

the trimmers were paid on a piece-work basis, but all of the menders, most of the folders and packers, and most of the examiners, were paid hourly rates.

All of the figures shown in table 3 exclude premiums for overtime work but include any payments for piece work or other incentive earnings.

Quarterly changes in employment and in hourly earnings are shown for selected occupations in tables 4 and 5. In both of these tables a quarter represents a 13-week period rather than 3 calendar months.

TABLE 4.—Average Weeks and Weekly Hours Worked in Selected Occupations in Philadelphia Knitted-Outerwear Industry, by Quarters, 1943

Occupation	First quarter			Second quarter			Third quarter			Fourth quarter		
	Number of workers	Average weeks worked	Average weekly hours	Number of workers	Average weeks worked	Average weekly hours	Number of workers	Average weeks worked	Average weekly hours	Number of workers	Average weeks worked	Average weekly hours
Cutters.....	93	11.7	44.0	97	11.8	45.5	93	12.2	42.5	97	12.3	44.0
Examiners and trimmers.....	388	8.8	38.0	388	9.3	39.0	372	9.1	37.5	328	9.9	39.5
Folders and packers.....	113	10.8	38.5	131	9.8	41.5	143	9.0	39.0	152	9.2	37.0
Knitters.....	157	11.8	44.0	156	12.1	47.0	161	11.4	43.5	146	12.2	45.5
Menders.....	69	12.1	39.0	69	12.1	38.5	64	11.1	40.0	59	12.1	40.0
Marrow operators.....	362	11.4	37.0	367	11.3	37.5	360	10.5	36.0	358	11.0	37.5
Pressers.....	58	11.1	40.0	59	11.9	44.0	56	11.6	42.5	60	11.9	41.5
Singer operators.....	329	10.5	37.5	291	11.2	34.0	297	10.2	36.5	290	11.0	37.5

TABLE 5.—Number of Workers and Straight-Time Average Hourly Earnings for Selected Occupations in Philadelphia Knitted Outerwear Industry, by Quarters, 1943

Occupation	6 weeks or more employment		46 weeks or more employment		6 weeks or more employment		46 weeks or more employment	
	Number of workers	Average hourly earnings	Number of workers	Average hourly earnings	Number of workers	Average hourly earnings	Number of workers	Average hourly earnings
	First quarter				Second quarter			
Cutters.....	91	\$1.180	75	\$1.180	97	\$1.206	75	\$1.220
Examiners and trimmers.....	307	.505	136	.527	338	.531	136	.565
Folders and packers.....	102	.515	60	.553	124	.530	60	.573
Knitters.....	150	.951	124	.956	153	.989	124	.998
Menders.....	69	.621	47	.626	69	.654	47	.664
Marrow operators.....	317	.818	204	.832	326	.850	204	.893
Pressers.....	57	1.130	41	1.124	64	1.157	41	1.180
Singer operators.....	254	.835	159	.842	254	.831	159	.892
	Third quarter				Fourth quarter			
Cutters.....	93	\$1.255	75	\$1.272	94	\$1.295	75	\$1.316
Examiners and trimmers.....	331	.530	136	.594	300	.536	136	.627
Folders and packers.....	134	.558	60	.602	123	.539	60	.622
Knitters.....	152	1.018	124	1.031	146	1.058	124	1.067
Menders.....	67	.664	47	.664	58	.700	47	.692
Marrow operators.....	325	.863	204	.916	311	.876	204	.937
Pressers.....	61	1.175	41	1.202	60	1.238	41	1.282
Singer operators.....	251	.877	159	.911	244	.896	159	.887

There were only slight variations in total employment among the selected occupations. The most noticeable drop occurred during the

last quarter when the total number of workers in the eight occupations was about 5 percent less than the total during the peak quarter, the first. This was caused primarily by reductions in the number of examiners and trimmers and singer operators.

Similarly there was very little fluctuation in the number of weeks worked, on the average, or in the number of weekly hours. All of these figures indicate a relatively uniform work load in the industry throughout the year.

As indicated in table 5, the straight-time hourly earnings increased progressively during the year. The fourth-quarter averages for those workers with 6 weeks or more of employment were higher than the first-quarter averages for each of the occupations, with a rise in menders' earnings of 12.7 percent and in knitters, of 11.1 percent.

Among those workers who had 46 weeks or more employment, the upward movement was generally more pronounced. The percentage increases from the first to fourth quarters for this category were generally greater than the comparable increases among all those working at least 6 weeks. It is also of interest to note that the averages for these workers having the longer tenure were usually greater than those for the whole group in each of the quarters.

The upward movement of earnings during the year reflects in part the reduction in number and simplification of civilian styles, and the introduction of large Government orders for single-style items. Piece-work earnings tended to increase under these conditions and helped to stimulate changing the rates of the time workers.