

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

L. B. Schwellenbach, *Secretary*

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

A. F. Hinrichs, *Acting Commissioner*



Workers' Experiences During First Phase of Reconversion



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Letter of Transmittal

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS,
Washington, D. C., June 5, 1946.

The SECRETARY OF LABOR:

I have the honor to transmit herewith a report on workers' experiences during first phase of reconversion. This report was prepared in the Bureau's Wage Analysis Branch by Nathan Weinberg. The data summarized here were collected and tabulated under the supervision of the Bureau's Regional Wage Analysts.

A. F. HINRICHS, *Acting Commissioner.*

Hon. L. B. SCHWELLENBACH,
Secretary of Labor.

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Workers' Experiences During First Phase of Reconversion

Summary

In communities throughout the country reconversion to peacetime activity moved ahead after VJ-day but at different speeds and with different effects on the men and women who had been employed during the war. In the spring of 1945, while war production was still at a high level, the Bureau of Labor Statistics began a study of the work and wage experiences of workers in war industries. Early in the winter of 1945-46 the same workers were resurveyed for the purpose of determining what changes had occurred in their jobs, wages, location, and other conditions bearing on their economic status.

Based on the reports of 3,600 workers, it was found that:

A fourth of the war workers were unemployed in the winter of 1945-46; a considerably higher proportion of women than of men were jobless and more older than younger workers.

Those who had jobs in the winter of 1945-46 were earning substantially less than in war work but as much as the average factory wage earner.

In most cases, wages during the first phase of reconversion were inadequate for the maintenance of living standards permitted by earnings in the year preceding the Pearl Harbor attack.

More than a quarter of the women in war plants in the spring of 1945 had left the labor market by the winter of 1945-46; most of them are housewives.

Considerable geographical mobility was indicated; a fourth of the war workers had moved out of their wartime communities, less than half of them back to where they had lived in January 1941. In contrast, workers who had been employed in essentially nonwar establishments during the spring of 1945 were in large part still employed in the same establishments.

Added to the geographical reshuffling of workers was a redistribution along industrial and occupational lines. In the winter of 1945-46 the distribution of workers among industries no longer resembled the wartime pattern, and—of greater importance—the prewar pattern

had not been reestablished. The same was true with respect to the distribution of workers among occupational groups.

The flow of war workers tended to be in the direction of lower-wage industries and lower-wage jobs. Although the reduced earnings reported in the winter of 1945-46 were largely the result of a decline in hours worked, with consequent loss of overtime and other premium pay as well as downgrading, the redistribution of workers, occupationally and industrially, undoubtedly contributed to the diminution in wage income.

TABLE 1.—*Employment Status, Earnings, and Migrations of War and Nonwar Workers, by Sex*

Item	War workers		Nonwar workers	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Percentage distribution				
Employment status:				
Employed.....	74	34	93	91
By same employer as in spring 1945 ¹	18	5	73	82
By different employer from spring 1945.....	48	28	17	9
Self-employed.....	8	1	3	-----
Unemployed and seeking work.....	20	37	5	4
Not seeking work ²	6	29	2	5
Total.....	100	100	100	100
Average weekly earnings: ³				
1941 ⁴	\$38.15	\$21.65	\$46.65	\$23.95
Spring 1945.....	68.60	53.75	63.55	40.65
Winter 1945-46.....	47.70	34.40	58.65	37.95
Percent of workers reporting				
Migrations between spring 1945 and winter 1945-46:				
No migrations.....	73	73	91	99
Migration ⁵	27	27	9	1
Back to 1941 residence.....	13	10	1	(*)
To community different from January 1941 residence.....	14	17	8	1
Total.....	100	100	100	100

¹ A change from one plant to another operated by the same company was considered a change of employer.

² Includes men in armed forces.

³ Includes wage and salary earnings only. Earnings data for spring 1945 and winter 1945-46 are for identical workers. Data for 1941 are for a smaller number of individuals since not all received or reported wages or salaries for 1941.

⁴ Based on earliest weekly earnings figure reported by each individual for year 1941.

⁵ Includes workers with whom no direct contact was made but for whom a new address was obtained outside the community in which they were living when first interviewed in the spring of 1945.

⁶ Less than one-half of 1 percent.

Background and Scope of Study

In the spring of 1945, representatives of the Bureau of Labor Statistics interviewed 5,100 workers to lay the foundation for a recurrent study of the experiences of workers in the transition from war to peace. The workers were grouped in 24 individual projects or study units, each representing an industry or a craft in a given community or area, and selected primarily with a view to the impact of the war's end.

For purposes of the analysis, the aircraft, shipbuilding, and ordnance groups were considered as war-industry study units and all the others as nonwar. As will appear, however, the New England small-arms

group¹ and the Mountain States metal-mining group have some of the characteristics of the war units. The rate of departure from the New England small-arms group, for instance, was greater than that of the shipyard workers surveyed in Tacoma, Wash.

Workers in 21² of the original 24 groups were resurveyed by mail or personal interview during December 1945 and the first 2 months of 1946. The 21 groups studied were as follows:³

War industry:

Aircraft—Los Angeles, Calif., Wichita, Kans., and Willow Run, Mich.
 Aircraft parts—St. Paul, Minn.
 Ordnance—Houston, Tex. and Mead, Nebr.
 Shipbuilding—Houston, Tex., Mobile, Ala., Tacoma and Vancouver, Wash., and Wilmington, Del.

Nonwar industry:

Carpenters, building trades—San Francisco, Calif.
 Textile spinners and weavers—Fall River, Mass., and Lewiston, Maine.
 Textile loom fixers—Charlotte, N. C.
 Printing pressmen—Chicago, Ill.
 Metal mining—Mountain States (Montana, Idaho, Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico).
 Molders and coremakers—Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Dayton, Ohio.
 Compositors—St. Louis, Mo.
 Sewing-machine operators on women's apparel—Cleveland, Ohio.
 Small arms—New Haven and Hartford, Conn.
 Steel—Pittsburgh, Pa.
 Tool and die makers—Cleveland and Dayton, Ohio.

Within the limits imposed by the sample, statistical generalization is appropriate for the entire worker groups represented by the individual study units. The figures for all the war and all the nonwar groups were combined without any attempt at selective weighting. They may, therefore, be accepted as indicating the direction, though not necessarily the magnitude, of the changes affecting workers at large during the reconversion period.

The war-industry group, as established in the spring of 1945, consisted of 2,522 workers and the nonwar group of 2,010.⁴ Of these, 1,998 and 1,591, respectively, were reached during the resurvey. Seven had died in the interval; the remainder either did not return mail questionnaires or could not be located or reached for interview during the time allotted for the resurvey.

Extent of Employment

Twenty-four percent of the former war workers studied were unemployed and seeking work in the winter of 1945-46. Another 11 percent were neither working nor seeking work. Only 15 percent were still with the same employers⁵ for whom they had been working when first interviewed. More than two-fifths (43 percent) were working for different employers, and the remaining 7 percent were self-employed.

¹ This unit was included with the nonwar groups because the sample of workers was drawn from companies normally manufacturing small arms as a peacetime product, as well as from another company, a prewar producer of business machines. The latter was expected to reconvert.

² Two of the 24 groups not resurveyed included East and West Coast merchant seamen. The third consisted of workers drawn from a Dallas, Tex., aircraft plant.

³ Except where otherwise specifically noted, the study units cover representative groups of all plant employees.

⁴ Exclusive of about 600 workers in the projects not resurveyed.

⁵ A change from one plant to another operated by the same company was considered a change of employer.

Among the nonwar workers, the situation was markedly different. Less than 5 percent were unemployed and less than 3 percent had withdrawn from the labor market, and a little more than 2 percent had become self-employed. Over three-fourths were still working for their wartime employers. The relative stability of employment among this group is attributable not only to their employment in peacetime industries but also to the predominance among them of skilled workmen who even under unfavorable business conditions, tend to have greater job security.

Unemployment among ex-war workers varied widely from group to group though, in all cases, it was substantially greater than the 5 percent of the nonagricultural labor force estimated by the Bureau of the Census to have been unemployed in January 1946. Among the groups studied, unemployment struck with greatest severity at the Mobile shipyard workers, of whom 34 percent were seeking work in the winter of 1945-46. Among the St. Paul propeller workers, however, less than 18 percent were unemployed.

There was no apparent relationship between the severity of unemployment and the regional location of the war plants in which the workers had been employed. Among the northwest shipyard workers 28 percent of those who had worked in Vancouver were without jobs and seeking work, compared with 13 percent of those drawn from a Tacoma shipyard. In the South, 23 percent of the Houston shipyard workers were unemployed; in Mobile the proportion was 34 percent.

Unemployment was greatest among workers whose employment had been in communities like Mobile, Mead (Nebr.), and Wichita, which were virtually dependent during the war on one industry. The lesser extent of unemployment among aircraft workers in Los Angeles and St. Paul, and among ordnance and shipbuilding workers in Houston, reflect, in part, the greater capacity of these more diversified areas to absorb the laid-off wartime workers.

Involuntary unemployment fell most heavily on the older workers; a third of the ex-war workers aged 45 and over were unemployed, compared with only a fifth of those under 45. A third of the older white men were unable to find work, as contrasted with only about a seventh of the younger group. Among white women and the small group of Negroes age was somewhat of a handicap to reemployment. Of the white women 42 percent were unemployed in the older group, compared with 35 percent of those under 45 years of age. In varying degrees the relationship between age and extent of unemployment was reflected in all the study units.

In general, Negroes in the war-industry units studied, fared about as well as whites in getting new jobs or in holding their old ones.⁶ Of those still in the labor market, 75 percent of the Negroes and 73 percent of the whites were employed in the winter of 1945-46. The proportion of self-employed whites (7 percent) was much greater than the proportion of Negroes (2 percent).

The proportion of unemployed among women (37 percent) was about twice as great as among men (20 percent). However, because considerably more women than men had left the labor market, the

⁶ Because only 179 Negroes were included in the sample studied, the findings reported here cannot be considered typical of the reconversion experience of Negroes generally.

proportion of unemployed among women still in the labor force was 52 percent, compared with 21 percent for men. Late entrance into the labor market and the resultant handicap in accumulating seniority explains why three times as large a proportion of men as women were still working for their wartime employers.

At the time of the resurvey only 34 percent of the women were gainfully employed, as against 74 percent of the men. Withdrawal from the labor market was the major factor. More than a fourth (28 percent) of the women but only 6 percent of the men were neither working nor seeking work; most of the men were in the armed services. Of the 133 women who had left the labor market, 103 or almost four-fifths had become housewives; most of these women had entered the labor market for the "duration" only. A few young men and women had returned to school, several older men had retired and others were not looking for work because of illness or unspecified "personal" reasons. The proportion of whites who had withdrawn from the labor market was twice that of Negroes.

Opportunities for continued employment with the companies that operated the war plants were meager. Two-fifths of the Northwest shipbuilders and a third of the Los Angeles aircraft workers were still with the plants that had employed them in the spring of 1945. The Houston shipyards still employed 21 percent, the Mobile yards 12 percent, and the Wichita aircraft plants 10 percent. In Wilmington only 5 of 155 workers reporting still held jobs in the shipyard. The remaining war plants studied had ceased operations and the few workers who remained acted as caretakers.

The Willow Run workers suffered less dislocation than most. Of the 121 men employed at the time of the resurvey, 58, or 48 percent, had been able to shift to other plants operated by the Ford Motor Co.⁷

As already noted, job displacement was considerably greater among the war than among the nonwar workers studied. Five times as many nonwar workers were still in the same plant as in the spring of 1945; the proportion of unemployment was only a fifth as great as among war workers. Most of the nonwar study units showed even greater stability of employment than is indicated by the over-all figures (75 percent with the same employer and 5 percent unemployed for all the nonwar groups combined). In this relatively stable group the greater part of both separations and unemployment was accounted for by the Connecticut small-arms unit, representing plants which experienced great wartime expansion, and by the Mountain States metal-mining unit.

Industry Shifts

With war production over, it was to be expected that in the winter of 1945-46 the distribution of workers among industries would differ sharply from that of the war years. Only 52 percent of those gainfully employed at the time of the resurvey were in manufacturing, though all had been engaged in factory work in the spring of 1945. Of greater interest was the finding that the pattern of distribution

⁷ The high proportion able to shift is probably not representative of the experience of all former Willow Run workers. The original survey at Willow Run was made after lay-offs were well under way and those who remained were the longest-service employees, many of whom had retained seniority after transferring to Willow Run from other Ford plants.

was still far removed from that of the prewar years. In contrast with the 52 percent still attached to manufacturing, only 35 percent of the workers normally in the labor market had reported manufacturing as their usual field of industry.⁸

The spring-to-winter drift away from manufacturing was apparent in all the study units. Among the workers from the Mead ordnance plant, which was situated in the midst of an agricultural area, only 16 percent had continued in factory work. At the other extreme were the workers of the Willow Run plant, 67 percent of whom were still in manufacturing. The Northwest shipbuilders and the Los Angeles aircraft workers, each had 65 percent continuing in factory work. These last three groups had suffered less dislocation than any of the other war units, because many of the workers continued to work for the same companies.

The proportion of men and women, whites and Negroes, who were employed during the resurvey and had remained in manufacturing industry was remarkably uniform. Fifty-two percent of both sexes were still employed in factories; the ratio for whites of both sexes was 53 percent and that for Negroes 48 percent. Because of the heavier unemployment and larger labor-market withdrawals among the women, however, only 18 percent of the total resurveyed were in manufacturing employment as compared to 39 percent of the men.

There was an apparent absence of any substantial back-to-the-land movement. When first interviewed, 14 percent of the ex-war workers had reported agriculture as their usual industry. At the time of the resurvey, only 4 percent of those gainfully occupied were engaged in farming. Most of those found on farms had been farmers before the war.

Three explanations for the limited return to farming may be suggested. First, the farmers who went into the war plants came largely from the marginal group who were unable to extract a good living from their land even under favorable wartime conditions. Secondly, it is probable that the return to the land had not yet been fully realized, because major war-plant lay-offs did not occur until the late summer and early fall of 1945. With the coming of spring, some of the workers may have returned home in time to plant next year's crops. Finally, it is possible that among those not reached for resurvey were individuals who had returned to farming.

Mining also lost substantially to other industries. Almost 3 percent of the workers had been miners before taking on war work, but only 1 percent had returned to mining at the time of the resurvey. Construction, the service industries, transportation and other public utilities also employed relatively fewer workers in the winter of 1945-46 than before the war. Losses in these industries, however, were considerably smaller than in agriculture and mining.

The new pattern of employment by industry found during the first phase of reconversion involved a much greater reshuffling of individual workers than is suggested by the total figures, because, to some extent, movements of individuals across industry lines were compensatory.

⁸ By "usual industry" is meant the industry in which an individual had his longest period of employment. However, if he was employed for relatively long periods in more than one industry, the one in which he was most recently employed was considered his usual industry.

Workers in the nonwar industries generally remained at their jobs and, at least for the time being, did not have to shift to new fields. The exceptions, relatively few in number, involved mainly workers employed during wartime expansion who were dropped when contraction began. Such was the case in the Connecticut small-arms group.

Occupational Shifts

In the winter of 1945-46 the occupational distribution was in sharp contrast to the wartime pattern and substantially different from that of the prewar years.⁹ Reflecting the increase of employment in manufacturing, the proportion engaged as craftsmen and manual workers increased from 53 to 62 percent between January 1941 and the time of the resurvey. Within this group, there appears to have been a redistribution of workers with respect to skills. Before the war, the skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled accounted for 45, 39, and 16 percent, respectively, of those who worked with their hands in nonagricultural activities. The corresponding percentages at the time of the resurvey were 43, 34, and 23.

This was not entirely the consequence of the inability of ex-war workers to find new jobs at their prewar skill levels, though there was some evidence of that. To a more important degree the changes were caused by the entrance of new individuals as craftsmen and manual workers and by the exodus of some who were in this group before the war.

Except for manual work, the only occupational category which reclaimed from the wartime labor pool relatively more workers than it had put in was the groups of proprietors, managers, and officials. This group accounted for 8 percent of the workers at the time of the resurvey, as compared to 6 percent before the war. The proportion not in the labor market also increased from 7 to 11 percent.

Aside from farming, in which 3 percent were employed in the winter of 1945-46, as compared to 13 percent before the war, the largest declines were in the professions (from 4 percent prewar to 2 percent) and in the white-collar occupations (from 12 to 9 percent). During this first phase of reconversion there seems to have been a strong resistance to returning to traditionally low-paid clerical and sales jobs. Service occupations, similarly, showed a drop, though a small one.

In the nonwar groups, most of the workers remained at the same jobs they had held during the war and in the period immediately preceding the war. In a few of these study units, however, the end of the war was followed by a reduction in employment; some who had been employed relatively recently were laid off and downgraded.

Despite the fact that many of the industry and occupational changes made by ex-war workers were compensatory, there was a noticeable tendency for workers to move toward lower-wage industries and lower-wage occupations. Income opportunities were, therefore, less attractive in the winter of 1945-46 than during the war.

⁹ The discussion of occupational changes refers only to workers with prewar employment experience. Except where otherwise noted, percentages for the winter 1945-46 are computed on a base excluding the unemployed and those in the armed forces.

Wages of Workers

The end of the war meant reduced earnings for most of the workers surveyed and, for many, living standards lower than before the war. All the war-industry groups¹⁰ showed sharp declines in average weekly earnings between the spring of 1945 and the winter of 1945-46. In the nonwar groups, reductions tended to be less severe and workers in some of the units averaged more per week when resurveyed than during the spring of 1945.

The ex-war workers who were employed in the winter of 1945-46 averaged \$46.01 per week, or 31 percent less than in the spring of 1945.¹¹ Those who had been employed in 1941 earned \$47.13 per week when resurveyed, or 27 percent more than in 1941. Meanwhile, however, prices of living essentials had risen even more, and the tax collector had dipped more deeply into their pay envelopes.

Between the two surveys, the decline in the earnings of the war workers ranged from 23 percent for the Los Angeles aircraft workers to 41 percent for the St. Paul propeller makers.

On the average, workers who remained in the war plants showed a decline of 26 percent in weekly earnings. Those who found employment elsewhere had an average decrease of 33 percent. A decrease, though not necessarily of the magnitude found in this survey, was to be expected, since in the recruitment of workers for war plants an attractive wage had to be offered.

In the nonwar groups, the average drop in weekly earnings between the two surveys was 10 percent. Only the small-arms workers, with a

TABLE 2.—Average Weekly Earnings of Identical Workers, by Study Group, Spring of 1945 and Winter of 1945-46

Study group	Number of workers	Average weekly earnings		Percent of change
		Spring of 1945	Winter of 1945-46	
All war-industry study groups ¹	919	\$66.70	\$46.01	-31
Aircraft and parts:				
Los Angeles.....	141	60.47	46.65	-23
St. Paul.....	102	70.31	41.61	-41
Wichita.....	63	67.57	40.26	-40
Ordnance:				
Houston.....	88	80.73	52.40	-35
Mead.....	40	51.79	35.19	-32
Shipbuilding:				
Houston.....	107	69.79	50.42	-28
Mobile.....	86	58.50	37.56	-36
Northwest.....	211	63.83	50.98	-26
Wilmington.....	81	63.53	43.49	-32
All nonwar-industry study groups.....	1,374	59.96	54.29	-10
Carpenters, San Francisco.....	36	82.31	67.91	-18
Compositors, St. Louis.....	75	59.74	65.11	+9
Metal mining, Mountain States.....	348	56.55	53.68	-5
Molders and coremakers, Ohio.....	75	69.27	60.74	-12
Printing pressmen, Chicago.....	60	101.34	86.13	-15
Sewing-machine operators, Cleveland.....	143	54.07	55.20	+2
Small arms, New England.....	176	64.63	48.53	-25
Steel, Pittsburgh.....	91	53.38	42.68	-20
Textiles, New England.....	145	38.39	39.24	+2
Textiles, Charlotte.....	137	39.31	37.83	-4
Tool and die makers, Ohio.....	88	103.09	87.22	-15

¹ Willow Run study group omitted because hours of work had already been reduced to 40 at the time of the original survey. Weekly earnings were therefore not representative of the wartime situation.

¹⁰ The Willow Run study unit is omitted from this discussion of changes in weekly earnings between the spring of 1945 and the winter of 1945-46, since hours had already been cut to the peacetime level of 40 per week when the workers involved were first surveyed.

¹¹ All period-to-period comparisons are for identical workers.

decrease of 25 percent, experienced an earnings loss within the 23- to 41-percent range of the declines of the war-industry study units. Workers in three of the nonwar groups were earning more when resurveyed than when first interviewed.

Weekly earnings losses of the nonwar workers were due primarily to reductions in hours worked. In the war-industry groups this factor was supplemented by lower wage rates associated mainly with changes of employers, though there was also some evidence of rate reductions affecting workers who remained in the same plants as at the time of the earlier survey. The 41-percent decline in the earnings of the St. Paul propeller makers involved a reduction in average weekly hours from 50.5 to 45.1 between the spring of 1945 and the winter of 1945-46; straight-time hourly earnings¹² fell from \$1.26 to \$0.87. The Wichita aircraft workers' 40-percent decline in weekly earnings resulted from an average of 5.2 hours' less work per week, accompanied by a decline of 36 cents per hour in estimated straight-time hourly earnings (from \$1.15 to \$0.79 per hour).

In some instances weekly earnings declined sharply, despite increases in hours worked. The 12 women among the Mead ordnance workers reinterviewed took a drastic 52-percent cut in their average weekly earnings, from \$41.88 to \$20.29, though their hours of work had increased from 48.0 to 49.6 per week.

Though workers in all units, nonwar as well as war, reported shorter hours on the average than at the time of the spring survey, prewar levels had not yet been restored. Only the Cleveland sewing-machine operators, whose usual scheduled workweek is 35 hours, were working less than 40 hours per week. Metal miners averaged 49 hours per week. Textile workers in Charlotte, employed in a reconversion bottleneck industry, were working 48.5 and 43.7 hours in the case of men and women, respectively. The Houston ordnance workers, who were working alternating 60- and 70-hour weeks when first surveyed, still averaged 49 hours per week—longer hours than those of any of the other war-industry groups, despite the fact that they had practically all scattered to new, peacetime jobs.

Though hours had not yet receded to prewar levels, in only 2 of the 10 war-industry units were men¹³ receiving spendable earnings greater in purchasing power than those earned in 1941.¹⁴ Compared with the earnings of identical workers in that year, increases ranged, project by project, from 3 to 56 percent. The average increase for men in all the war-industry study units combined was 26 percent. Houston ordnance workers averaged only 10 percent more than in 1941, though still working an average 49-hour week. The Tacoma-Vancouver shipyard workers, with a 34-percent increase in their average earnings, had barely kept pace with the rise in the cost of living.

If there be added to rising prices the effect of sharply increased income taxes, even the Wichita and Los Angeles aircraft workers, who earned 54 and 56 percent more, respectively, than in 1941, had

¹² Straight-time hourly earnings were roughly estimated by dividing weekly earnings by an hours figure representing actual average hours worked plus 50 percent of the excess over 40. It was assumed that all workers reporting were paid time and a half after 40 hours per week, though some, at the time of the resurvey, were in industries not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

¹³ The discussion of changes in earnings of the former war workers from the prewar period is based on reports of the men only, since the number of women reporting 1941 wages or salaries is too small to justify comparison.

¹⁴ 1941 average earnings were computed from the earliest figure reported by each individual for that year.

enjoyed far less improvement in their real income than the figures seem to suggest. The Los Angeles workers averaged \$52.00 per week when resurveyed. Based on their average of two dependents, \$3.50 per week was deducted for income-tax purposes. Considering the increased cost of living essentials, the remaining \$48.50 was equal to about \$36.50 in terms of early 1941 purchasing power, or a little over \$3 more per week than the \$33.36 which these same workers earned at that time. The Wichita aircraft workers, whose earnings of \$28.23 in 1941 were lower than those of any of the other war-industry groups, averaged \$43.47 when resurveyed. Allowing for tax deductions and adjusting for price rises, their spendable income was equivalent to about \$31 of 1941 earnings.¹⁵

By and large the earnings of the war workers studied did not reflect the 55-percent rise of average weekly earnings in manufacturing industry as a whole which had occurred between January 1941 and the resurvey. This is to be expected in view of the fact that many of the workers found jobs outside of manufacturing where the increase in earnings was smaller. For those who found other jobs in manufacturing plants, it is probable that the change sent many to the bottom of the line of promotion in their new plants and brought them the minimum of the rate range on jobs for which "spread rates" prevailed. Some of the sharpest wage cuts, however, were taken by workers who returned to their usual lines of work, in a number of instances to their prewar employers.

In relation to 1941 earnings, the Negro men studied fared just about as well or as poorly as the whites. The 81 Negro men in the war-industry groups who reported weekly wage or salary earnings for both 1941 and the winter of 1945-46, showed an increase of 26 percent for the period. Throughout the war and to the time of the resurvey, however, they had averaged considerably less than the white workers. When resurveyed they were earning \$37.77 per week, as compared with \$49.43 for the white men.

Workers in the nonwar group fared better than the ex-war workers. The improvement in their earnings over 1941 levels was great enough to meet the rise in consumer prices, though not enough to maintain their purchasing power in the face of both higher prices and increased income taxes. Considered as a unit, the nonwar workers studied had increased their gross weekly earnings by 34 percent from 1941 to the time of the resurvey. Their weekly hours of work, however, were still above prewar levels.

Postwar Migrations

An extensive geographical redistribution of workers was essential in the mobilization of the economy for war. In response to the demand for labor from mushrooming war production centers, thousands of men and women migrated, frequently threatening to engulf the facilities available to provide for their needs. By the time of the resurvey, the tide was rapidly ebbing.

¹⁵ The Mobile shipyard workers, whose earnings were 34 percent higher than in 1941, had an average of 3 dependents and earned \$37.53 per week when resurveyed. An individual worker with those earnings and that many dependents would be exempt from taxation and therefore about as well off as in 1941. However, those workers who deviated from the average by having fewer dependents or greater earnings would have had to pay income taxes. Thus, in actuality, the Mobile workers, like most of the others, had suffered depreciation of their purchasing power.

In the winter of 1945-46 more than a fourth of the war workers reporting¹⁶ (27 percent) had already left the communities where they were living during the spring of 1945. From nine States, they had scattered to 36 States and the Territories of Alaska and Hawaii.

For the most part, they did not retrace their steps. Less than half (46 percent) returned to States in which they had resided in January 1941. The majority had broken ties with their former homes and were exploring opportunities in new locations.

Of the 325 war workers who did not return to their 1941 homes, almost half (47 percent) remained within the States where they had worked in war plants; of the remainder, California drew more workers than any other State. Only in 1 of the 10 war-industry study units, the Mead ordnance group, were there no workers who had gone to California.

Negroes and whites moved in approximately equal proportions—slightly more than a quarter of the total reporting in both cases. Similarly, the percentages of men and women who had moved were almost identical. Negro men, however, with nearly a third moving, were the most mobile group and Negro women the least. Of the latter, only 3 of the 49 reporting had migrated.

Age appeared to be closely associated with the tendency to move; the differences among the age groups were surprisingly uniform as between men and women. Among those under 20 years of age, about two-fifths of each sex had moved since the spring of 1945. Somewhat over a quarter of both men and women from 20 to 45 were no longer living where they were first surveyed. Among the older workers, about a fifth each of the men and of the women had left their wartime homes.

The extensive migration of workers in the war-industry study units are in marked contrast to the stability of the nonwar workers. Of the 1,591 workers from the latter units reporting, only 115, little more than 7 percent, had moved from the communities in which they were first surveyed. The great majority of these, 85 in number, came from a single study group, Mountain States metal mining. If these are excluded,¹⁷ the proportion of migrants among the nonwar workers falls to less than 2 percent. Of these, in turn, a majority came from the San Francisco building-construction carpenters who, because of the nature of their work, are accustomed to move to the sites of big construction jobs.

Among the nonwar workers who moved during the first phase of reconversion 96 were found living in places different from their 1941 residences. Of the remainder, 14 were from the metal-mining study unit. Excepting the metal miners, most of those who did move traveled relatively short distances and tended to remain within the areas where their occupations were in demand.

¹⁶ For purposes of this study a new address obtained for a worker outside the community in which he was living when first surveyed was considered equivalent to a report that he had moved to that address, even though no direct contact was established with him.

¹⁷ The peculiarities of the metal-mining group would perhaps justify its inclusion among the war-industry study units for purposes of analyzing migration experience. The acute shortage of manpower in the non-ferrous-metal mines forced the armed services early in the war to release experienced miners. This fact of itself brought in men who in January 1941 had lived in many different States. A total of 46 veterans, 41 from the Army and 5 from the Navy, were included among those originally surveyed for this study unit. In addition, national publicity on the shortage of manpower for mines attracted others from great distances. With the end of the war, the forces which had brought these men to the Mountain States mines disappeared.

Appendix A.—Effect of Incomplete Coverage on Findings

The tabulations on which this report is based did not include all of the workers in the original, spring 1945 samples. By coincidence the coverage was 79.2 percent for both the war and the nonwar groups.

Failure to obtain complete coverage did not appear to bias significantly the results of the resurvey. Tables A below and table B, on page 13, show a close correspondence between distributions of workers, by race, sex, and age and by usual industry, in the two surveys. With respect to these characteristics, therefore, the workers resurveyed are representative of those in the original sample. Moreover, examination of 253 schedules received after tabulations were completed indicated that their inclusion would not have altered the findings.

The data on the proportion of workers engaged in farming deserves special attention since it might be supposed that the relative inaccessibility of farms resulted in under-representation of such workers. While this may have been the case to some extent, the number of such individuals not resurveyed does not appear to be sufficiently large to affect the conclusion that there has been no significant back-to-the-land movement. Those who reported their usual industry as agriculture, forestry, and fisheries were not seriously under-represented in the resurvey. As compared to 13.7 percent of the original sample, they accounted for 12.8 percent of those included in the resurvey tabulations.

Of those in farming at the time of the resurvey, 27 reported farming as their usual industry and 23 came from other industries. The former accounted for 10.6 percent of all the ex-farmers resurveyed and the latter for 1.1 percent of the total of all workers resurveyed. These proportions could be substantially increased among those not reporting without affecting the conclusion with respect to the back-to-the-land movement.

TABLE A.—*Distribution of War Workers by Color, Sex, and Age, Original Sample and Resurvey Sample*

Color, sex, and age	Number		Percentage distribution	
	Original sample	Resurvey sample	Original sample	Resurvey sample
Total	2,522	1,993	100.0	100.0
White workers	2,269	1,819	90.0	91.0
Men	1,720	1,391	68.2	69.6
Under 20 years	49	31	2.0	1.6
20-44 years	1,118	912	44.3	45.6
45 years and over	553	443	21.9	22.4
Women	549	423	21.8	21.4
Under 20 years	26	22	1.0	1.1
20-44 years	444	342	17.6	17.1
45 years and over	79	64	3.2	3.2
Negro workers	253	179	10.0	9.0
Men	205	139	8.1	7.0
Under 20 years	5	4	.2	.2
20-44 years	156	106	6.2	5.3
45 years and over	44	29	1.7	1.5
Women	48	40	1.9	2.0
Under 20 years	46	35	1.8	1.9
20-44 years	2	2	.1	.1

That conclusion is, in fact, supported by data available from other sources with respect to recent changes in farm population. There has apparently been an increase in the number of persons on farms, but most of it seems to be attributable to the return of war veterans.

TABLE B.—*Distribution of War Workers by Usual Industry, Original Sample and Resurvey Sample*

Industry	Number		Percentage distribution	
	Original sample	Resurvey sample	Original sample	Resurvey sample
Total.....	2,522	1,998	100.0	100.0
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.....	346	255	13.7	12.8
Mining.....	81	52	3.2	2.6
Construction.....	246	194	9.8	9.7
Manufacturing.....	709	629	28.1	31.5
Wholesale and retail trade.....	815	263	12.5	12.7
Finance, insurance, and real estate.....	21	20	.8	1.0
Transportation, communication, and other public utilities.....	151	132	6.0	6.6
Services (business, personal, entertainment, etc.).....	318	229	12.6	11.5
Government (Federal, State, and local).....	53	30	2.1	1.5
Industry not reported.....	49	20	2.0	1.0
Not gainfully employed.....	233	184	9.2	9.2

Appendix B

TABLE C.—*Employment Status, Former War Workers, by Sex and Color, Winter 1945-46*

Employment status	All workers	Number				Percent ¹			
		Men		Women		All workers	Men		Women ²
		White	Negro	White	Negro		White	Negro	
Total.....	1,998	1,391	139	428	40	100	100	100	100
Employed.....	1,299	1,026	112	147	14	65	74	81	34
By same employer as in spring 1945.....	298	252	20	24	2	15	18	14	5
By different employer from spring 1945 ³	862	644	89	117	12	43	46	64	28
Self-employed.....	139	130	3	6	-----	7	9	2	1
Unemployed and seeking work.....	477	279	24	155	19	24	20	17	37
Not seeking work.....	222	186	13	126	7	11	6	2	28

TABLE D.—*Employment Status, Nonwar Workers, by Sex,⁴ Winter 1945-46*

Employment status	Number			Percent ¹		
	All workers	Men	Women	All workers	Men	Women
Total.....	1,591	1,235	356	100	100	100
Employed.....	1,473	1,149	324	93	93	91
By same employer as in spring 1945.....	1,197	907	290	75	73	81
By different employer from spring 1945 ³	240	207	33	15	17	9
Self-employed.....	36	35	1	2	3	-----
Unemployed and seeking work.....	75	60	15	5	5	4
Not seeking work.....	43	42	17	3	2	5

¹ Discrepancies in percentages due to rounding.

² Percentages not shown separately for Negro women because of small numbers.

³ A change from one plant to another operated by the same company was considered a change of employer.

⁴ Includes men in the armed forces.

⁵ Not broken down by color since there were only 38 Negroes reporting in the entire nonwar group.

TABLE E.—*Employment Status, Former War Workers, by Sex and Age, Winter 1945-46*

Employment status	All workers	Number			
		Men		Women	
		Under 45	45 and over	Under 45	45 and over
Total.....	1,998	1,053	477	402	66
Employed.....	1,299	833	306	141	20
By same employer as in spring 1945.....	298	172	100	20	6
By different employer from spring 1945 ¹	802	572	161	115	14
Self-employed.....	139	89	44	6	-----
Unemployed and seeking work.....	477	151	152	147	22
Not seeking work ²	222	69	20	114	19
Percent ³					
Total.....	100	100	100	100	100
Employed.....	65	79	64	35	30
By same employer as in spring 1945 ¹	15	16	21	5	9
By different employer from spring 1945.....	43	54	34	29	21
Self-employed.....	7	8	9	1	-----
Unemployed and seeking work.....	24	14	32	37	41
Not seeking work ²	11	7	4	28	29

¹ A change from one plant to another operated by the same company was considered a change of employer.

² Includes men in armed forces.

³ Discrepancies in percentages are due to rounding.

TABLE F.—*Employment Status, Former War Workers, by Study Group, Winter 1945-46*

Study group	Number						
	Total worker reporting	Total employed	By same employer as in spring 1945	By different employer from spring 1945 ¹	Self-employed	Unemployed and seeking work	Not seeking work ²
All study groups.....	1,998	1,299	298	862	139	477	222
Aircraft and parts:							
Los Angeles.....	244	158	81	61	16	51	35
St. Paul.....	233	164	5	136	23	41	28
Wichita.....	174	106	18	69	19	50	18
Willow Run.....	277	159	-----	153	6	66	52
Ordnance:							
Houston.....	157	104	2	91	11	35	18
Mead.....	91	57	-----	52	5	26	8
Shipbuilding:							
Houston.....	163	121	35	72	14	37	5
Mobile.....	187	106	22	69	15	63	18
Northwest.....	317	232	130	82	20	66	19
Wilmington.....	155	92	5	77	10	42	21
Percent							
All study groups.....	100	65	15	43	7	24	11
Aircraft and parts:							
Los Angeles.....	100	65	33	25	7	21	14
St. Paul.....	100	70	2	58	10	18	12
Wichita.....	100	61	10	40	11	29	10
Willow Run.....	100	57	-----	55	2	24	19
Ordnance:							
Houston.....	100	66	1	58	7	22	12
Mead.....	100	63	-----	57	6	28	9
Shipbuilding:							
Houston.....	100	74	21	44	9	23	3
Mobile.....	100	57	12	37	8	34	9
Northwest.....	100	73	41	26	6	21	6
Wilmington.....	100	59	3	50	6	27	14

¹ A change from one plant to another operated by the same company was considered a change of employer.

² Includes men in armed forces.

TABLE G.—*Industrial Distribution of Former War Workers, Usual¹ and Winter 1945-46*

Industry	Usual	Winter 1945-46	Percent of those employed ²	
			Usual	Winter 1945-46
Total.....	1,998	1,998		
Total employed.....			100	100
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.....	255	50	14	4
Mining.....	52	8	3	1
Construction.....	194	103	11	8
Manufacturing.....	629	683	35	52
Wholesale and retail trade.....	253	193	14	15
Finance, insurance, and real estate.....	20	11	1	1
Transportation, communication, and other public utilities.....	132	77	7	6
Services (business, personal, entertainment, etc.).....	229	128	13	10
Government (Federal, State, and local).....	30	46	2	4
Industry not reported.....	20			
Not employed ³	184	699		

¹ The industry in which the individual had worked longest was considered his usual industry except if he was employed for extensive periods in more than one industry. In the latter case he was considered as usually attached to the industry in which he was most recently employed for a relatively long period of time.

² Excluding those for whom industry was not reported. Discrepancies in percentages due to rounding.

³ Includes those not seeking work, and for winter 1945-46, the unemployed and men in the armed forces.

TABLE H.—*Occupational Distribution of Former War Workers With Prewar¹ Employment Experience, Usual and Winter 1945-46*

Occupational group	Usual	Winter 1945-46	Percent of those employed or not seeking work ²	
			Usual	Winter 1945-46
Total.....	1,816	1,816		
Total employed and not seeking work ³			100	100
Professional and semiprofessional.....	68	25	4	2
Proprietors, managers, and officials.....	101	104	6	8
Farmers and farm laborers.....	228	40	13	3
Clerical, sales and kindred workers.....	220	122	12	9
Service workers ⁴	116	80	6	6
Craftsmen and manual workers.....	953	869	53	62
Skilled ⁵	433	378	24	27
Semiskilled.....	369	293	20	21
Unskilled.....	151	198	8	14
Not seeking work ⁶	120	168	7	12
Not reported.....	10	11		
Unemployed.....		397		

¹ Before January 1, 1941.

² The base for calculation of the percentages shown excludes those who were unemployed and whose occupational group was not reported. Discrepancies are due to rounding.

³ Includes protective, domestic, and personal service workers, also building service workers and porters.

⁴ Includes foremen.

⁵ Includes men in armed forces.

TABLE I.—Average Weekly Earnings of Identical Former War Workers, by Study Groups,¹ Spring 1945 and Winter 1945-46

Study group	Number of workers	Average weekly earnings		Percent of change
		Spring 1945	Winter 1945-46	
All study groups.....	919	\$66.70	\$46.00	-31
Aircraft and parts:				
Los Angeles.....	141	60.45	46.65	-23
St. Paul.....	102	70.30	41.60	-41
Wichita.....	63	67.55	40.25	-40
Ordnance:				
Houston.....	88	80.75	52.40	-35
Mead.....	40	51.80	35.20	-32
Shipbuilding:				
Houston.....	107	69.80	50.40	-28
Mobile.....	86	58.50	37.55	-36
Northwest.....	211	68.85	51.00	-26
Wilmington.....	81	63.55	43.50	-32

¹ Willow Run study group omitted because hours of work had already been reduced to 40 at time of original survey and weekly earnings were therefore not representative of the wartime situation.

TABLE J.—Average Weekly Earnings of Identical Nonwar Workers, by Study Group, Spring 1945 and Winter 1945-46

Study group	Number of workers	Average weekly earnings		Percent of change
		Spring 1945	Winter 1945-46	
All study groups.....	1,374	\$60.00	\$54.29	-10
Carpenters, San Francisco.....	36	82.30	67.90	-18
Compositors, St. Louis.....	75	59.75	65.10	+9
Metal mining, Mountain States.....	348	56.55	53.70	-5
Molders and coremakers, Ohio.....	75	69.2 ^a	60.75	-12
Printing pressmen, Chicago.....	60	101.35	86.15	-15
Sewing machine operators, Cleveland.....	143	54.05	55.20	+5
Small arms, New England.....	176	64.65	48.55	-25
Steel, Pittsburgh.....	91	53.40	42.70	-20
Textiles, New England.....	145	38.40	39.25	+2
Textiles, Charlotte.....	137	39.30	37.85	-4
Tool and die makers, Ohio.....	88	103.10	87.20	-15

TABLE K.—Average Weekly Earnings¹ of Identical Men² in War Industry Groups 1941 and Winter 1945-46

Study group	Number of men	Gross weekly earnings		Percent of increase
		1941 ³	Winter of 1945-46	
All men.....	686	\$38.15	\$48.05	26
Aircraft and parts:				
Los Angeles.....	74	33.35	52.00	56
St. Paul.....	68	43.65	44.90	3
Wichita.....	43	28.25	43.45	54
Willow Run.....	97	43.85	49.75	13
Ordnance:				
Houston.....	63	47.40	52.10	10
Mead.....	21	31.95	41.00	28
Shipbuilding:				
Houston.....	88	37.83	50.15	33
Mobile.....	59	28.03	37.55	34
Northwest.....	111	39.03	52.15	34
Wilmington.....	62	36.80	45.40	23

¹ Includes only men working for wages or salaries during both periods.

² Women excluded because too few reported wage or salary earnings in 1941.

³ Based on earliest weekly earnings figure reported by each individual for year 1941.

TABLE L.—Comparison of Spendable Purchasing Power of Identical Men¹ in War Industry Groups, 1941 and Winter 1945-46

Study group	Gross weekly earnings		Average number of dependents ²	Estimated average income tax deductions for 1945-46 earnings ³	Net earnings after deductions for income tax	Net earnings adjusted for rise in cost of living ⁴	Percent of change in purchasing power of spendable earnings, 1941 to 1945-46 ⁵
	1941	Winter 1945-46					
	(1)	(2)					
All men.....	\$38.15	\$48.06	2	\$2.80	\$45.25	\$34.05	-11
Aircraft and parts:							
Los Angeles.....	33.35	52.00	2	3.50	48.50	36.45	+9
St. Paul.....	43.65	44.90	2	2.10	42.80	32.20	-26
Wichita.....	28.25	43.45	2	2.00	41.45	31.20	+10
Willow Run.....	43.85	49.75	2	3.00	46.75	35.15	-20
Ordnance:							
Houston.....	47.40	52.10	3	1.70	50.40	37.90	-20
Mead.....	31.95	41.00	2	1.60	39.40	29.60	-7
Shipbuilding:							
Houston.....	37.85	50.15	2	3.20	46.95	35.30	-7
Mobile.....	28.05	37.55	3	-----	37.55	28.20	+1
Northwest.....	39.05	52.15	2	3.50	48.65	36.60	-6
Wilmington.....	36.80	35.40	2	2.30	43.10	32.40	-12

¹ Women excluded because too few reported wage or salary earnings for 1941.

² The average (median) number of dependents is for all men surveyed in the spring of 1945 including some who were not resurveyed.

³ Based on withholding deductions in effect in 1946 for workers earning the amounts shown in column 2 and having the number of dependents shown in column 3. Variations in taxes paid by individuals earning different amounts and having different numbers of dependents would cause the actual average deductions to differ somewhat from those shown.

⁴ Assumes 33 percent rise in cost of living. The figures shown in this column were obtained by dividing those in column 5 by 1.33.

⁵ This column shows percentage differences between figures in column 1 and column 6. No allowance is made in either case for the 1-percent social security tax deduction in effect during both periods.

TABLE M.—Extent of Migration Among Former War Workers, by Color, Sex, and Age, Spring 1945 to Winter 1945-46

Color, sex, and age	Total	Number migrating	Percentage migrating
All workers reporting.....	2,234	1,605	27
White workers.....	2,007	546	27
Negro workers.....	227	59	26
Men.....	1,718	465	27
Under 20 years.....	48	19	40
20-44 years.....	1,158	332	29
45 years and over.....	512	114	22
Women.....	516	140	27
Under 20 years.....	25	10	40
20-44 years.....	424	116	27
45 years and over.....	67	14	21

¹ Includes workers with whom no direct contact was made but for whom a new address was obtained outside the community in which they were living when first interviewed in the spring of 1945.

