UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
WOMEN'S BUREAU
Bulletin No. 125

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS IN DEPARTMENT STORES IN 1932–33

A STUDY IN SELECTED CITIES OF FIVE STATES

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
FRANCES PERKINS, Secretary

WOMEN'S BUREAU
MARY ANDERSON, Director

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By

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UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1936

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. - - - - - - - - - - - Price 10 cents

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

United States Department of Labor,
Women's Bureau,
Washington, March 18, 1936.

Madam: I have the honor to transmit a report on the hours and earnings of salespersons in department stores. Though comprising only a small part of this great industry, the stores included may be considered representative, and the information they supply is an important contribution to the data available in an employment field that intimately concerns the public.

I acknowledge with grateful appreciation the courtesy of the various stores in supplying the information sought.

The report has been written by Mary Loretta Sullivan, of the editorial division.

Respectfully submitted.

Mary Anderson, *Director.*

Hon. Frances Perkins,
Secretary of Labor.

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS IN DEPARTMENT STORES IN 1932–33

Part I.—INTRODUCTION

At the request of the State of New Jersey, a survey of the employment of women in department and general merchandise stores was conducted in that State by the Women's Bureau in 1933. The purpose of the survey was to secure authentic data regarding the conditions under which the women worked, their wages and hours, together with the basis of lay-offs and the practices of spreading employment among women. Following the New Jersey study, similar surveys were carried on in selected cities in Colorado, California, and Washington. The investigation was to have been more extensive, but for reasons of economy it had to be abandoned. In the process of tabulation, information regarding the work of women in stores in two cities of Arkansas, secured in November 1932, was incorporated.

To show the importance of women's work in such establishments and to define as clearly as possible the make-up of the group selected for this study, some facts from the 1930 Census of Retail Distribution, covering the year 1929, may be given. In the census classification of kinds of retail businesses, that of the general merchandise group covers the stores included in this survey. That this group is an important one among the 10 classes of retail stores is shown by the fact that it contained the largest number of wage earners in any of the groups. In amount of net sales this group ranked fourth; it was surpassed by the automotive, the food, and a miscellaneous group—"other retail stores." Over one-eighth (13.1 percent) of the money value of these sales was reported for the general merchandise group.

There are four subdivisions in the group—(1) department stores, (2) dry goods stores, (3) general merchandise stores, and (4) variety, 5-and-10, and to-a-dollar stores. In general, the first and third of these correspond to the kinds of stores studied by the Women's Bureau. The distinction between the two is defined by the Bureau of the Census, which calls them department stores if their annual sales, exclusive of food departments, are $100,000 or more, and calls them general merchandise stores if their sales are less than $100,000. In the country as a whole there were more than 17,000 such stores in 1929, though they formed only 1.1 percent of the retail stores of all kinds. By 1933 the number of department and general merchandise stores had increased to nearly 25,000. The former group shows a decline in this 4-year period, though general merchandise stores had increased by almost two-thirds.[1]

[1] U. S. Bureau of the Census. Fifteenth Census, 1930: Retail Distribution, Summary for the United States, table 1 A; United States Summary of the Retail Census for 1933. Mimeographed release of Dec. 3, 1934, p. 7.

According to the census figures of 1930, the women wage earners in these types of stores numbered nearly 400,000, comprising close to two-thirds of the 600,000 employees on the pay rolls for whom sex was reported.[2]

SCOPE AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The localities visited are so widely separated that the facts presented here must be regarded as a sample of conditions in the general mercantile industry in these specific areas rather than representative of the country as a whole. The stores visited are, however, of considerable importance in their respective communities, and the relationship that the women investigated in each locality bear to the total number employed in that section serves to make valuable the facts collected as a reflex of the industry in general.

Seventeen cities in the 5 States were visited and 46 department and general merchandise stores were covered. A list of the States and cities visited, together with the number of stores and women employees, is given here. Many more stores in New Jersey than in any other State were covered, a State-wide study having been requested by the New Jersey authorities. The 10 cities visited in this area are: Newark, Jersey City, Paterson, Trenton, Camden, Elizabeth, East Orange, Atlantic City, Union City, and Asbury Park.

Locality	Number of stores surveyed	Women regular employees	
		Number	Percent
Total	46	6, 923	100. 0
New Jersey—10 cities	21	2, 343	33. 8
Arkansas: Little Rock and Fort Smith	9	384	5. 5
Colorado: Denver	3	562	8. 1
California:			
Los Angeles	3	1, 625	23. 5
San Francisco and Oakland	6	1, 256	18. 1
Washington: Seattle	4	753	10. 9

Pay-roll data for women were copied in each of the stores for a week that was selected by the management as one in which business was fairly steady and general employment conditions were representative of the period. No week when overtime or a holiday occurred was taken. The week selected was one late in 1932 or early in 1933. To ascertain what changes had occurred in women's wages, pay rolls of a week about 2 years earlier were taken also. Arkansas was an exception to this, the early data there covering a week only 1 year before the 1932 study. In a few instances where a change such as reduction in personnel or in pay had been made before the fall of 1931, a pay roll of an even earlier date was secured.

Questions were asked at the time of interview as to the policies of management that affected employees and any changes in policy in the 2 preceding years. Among those inquired into were changes in method of pay and in hours and any permanent or temporary spread-the-work plans.

[2] U. S. Bureau of the Census. Fifteenth Census 1930: Retail Distribution, Summary for the United States, table 3A.

In addition to the data from pay rolls and from interviews with the management facts in regard to personal history were secured from the majority of the women workers.

Number of women employed.

The 46 establishments employed as a regular or permanent force close to 7,000 (6,923) women, and three-fourths of this number were in the 30 establishments visited in New Jersey and California. In addition to the employees regarded as regular workers were the extras and part-time employees brought in for special sales, rush-hour work, or other contingencies.

The study was not confined to either very large or very small stores. There were two stores each of whose pay rolls contained the names of more than 700 women regularly employed. On the other hand, almost three-fifths of the establishments had fewer than 100 women on the regular force and almost one-fourth of these stores had fewer than 25.

In the table following may be seen a comparison of the numbers in this study by the Women's Bureau with the number of saleswomen in the various localities according to the 1930 Census of Occupations.

Locality	Saleswomen 16 years of age and over	
	Reported by 1930 Census of Occupations	In Women's Bureau survey
New Jersey—10 cities	[1] 8,777	2,343
Arkansas: Little Rock and Fort Smith	925	384
Colorado: Denver	2,547	562
California:		
Los Angeles	11,989	1,625
San Francisco and Oakland	8,403	1,256
Washington: Seattle	3,515	753

[1] Excludes Asbury Park, not reported separately.

SUMMARY OF FACTS

Time of survey:

Early months of 1933.[3]

Scope:

Forty-six stores in 17 cities in 5 States were included. These employed regularly 6,923 women.

Localities visited:

New Jersey, which had asked for a survey, 21 stores; Little Rock and Fort Smith, 9; Denver, 3; Los Angeles, 3; San Francisco and Oakland, 6; and Seattle, 4.

Distribution of women workers:

New Jersey, 33.8 percent of the total; Little Rock and Fort Smith, 5.5; Denver, 8.1; Los Angeles, 23.5; San Francisco and Oakland, 18.1; and Seattle, 10.9.

Scheduled daily hours:

Percent of women whose schedule was under 8 hours, 39.5; 8 hours, 44.5; over 8 and under 9 hours, 15.6; and 9 hours, 0.4.

[3] Data of 9 Arkansas stores included in the 1932 survey of the State by the Women's Bureau are incorporated in this report.

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Scheduled Saturday hours:

Percent of women with schedule of under 8 hours, 36.6; 8 hours, 44.2; over 8 and under 9 hours, 12.7; 9 hours, 1; over 9 and under 10 hours, 3.2; and 10 hours, 2.4.

Scheduled weekly hours:

Percent of women with schedule of 46 hours or less, 11.3; over 46 and under 48 hours, 26.6; 48 hours, 44.2; over 48 and under 51 hours, 9.4; and 51 to 54 hours, 8.6.

Hours worked:

In the three Pacific coast localities over one-fourth of the women had worked a short week, one of less than 40 hours. Denver showed close to one-eighth of those reported with such a week and New Jersey one-fifteenth. Arkansas, where the scheduled week was somewhat longer than in other places visited, had less than 1 percent of the women working below 40 hours.

Week's earnings:

The medians of the women's earnings were as follows—

	Late pay roll	*Early pay roll (about 2 years before)*
New Jersey	$14.00	$17.00
Denver	12.00	15.15
Los Angeles	16.00	18.70
San Francisco and Oakland	16.00	20.65
Seattle	13.85	16.85

The percents of women earning less than $12 were—

New Jersey	18.7	7.7
Denver	44.1	14.0
Los Angeles	15.9	3.2
San Francisco and Oakland	8.3	3.8
Seattle	23.8	7.9

PERSONAL HISTORY

Number of women reporting personal history	4,341
Number of stores in which employed	28

Age:

New Jersey had by far the largest proportion (43.4 percent under 25) and Los Angeles by far the smallest proportion (only 9.2 percent under 25) of young workers. Two-thirds of the workers in Los Angeles and three-fifths of those in San Francisco were 30 and under 50 years. Very few women had reached 60.

Marital status:

Seven in every 10 women in department stores in New Jersey were single; in the other localities visited the proportions varied from approximately 3 in 10 to 4 in 10.

Denver ranked first in the proportion of married women workers; not far from half of the workers reporting in that city were married.

In Los Angeles approximately one-third of the workers were widowed, separated, or divorced.

Time with the firm:

Similar proportions of the women in New Jersey and Little Rock—3 in 20—had been with the firm less than a year. Denver shows approximately 2 in 20 in this classification and Los Angeles and San Francisco roughly 1 in 20.

Los Angeles and San Francico show 5 in 10 women, Little Rock and Denver 4 in 10, and New Jersey 3 in 10 in the class 5 years and over. With the exception of Denver, where more than three-fourths of these workers were in the 5-and-under-10-year class, the various localities reported that approximately two-fifths of the women with the firm 5 years or more had been employees of the establishment as long as 10 years.

Part II.—HOURS OF WORK

Department stores, more than other types of business, reflect the public spirit of their communities, and the hours that employees in this industry are expected to work are more or less influenced by the industrial ideals existent in the city or town.

It is obvious that the hours of work of an employee cannot always be the same as the firm's daily or weekly schedule. In many stores the regular employees are not expected to work the entire time that the store is open. It is the custom of these establishments to increase the staff of workers at times of special sales or during busy periods of the day, or to relieve the regular workers when the store's schedule is longer than the hours of work the law allows or the firm's policy dictates.

Scheduled daily hours.

Though the hours actually worked by regular employees may not be longer, frequently their hours of beginning and ending are respectively earlier and later than the hours of opening and closing the store. In the present study the day of employees in three-fifths of the stores was from 10 minutes to an hour longer than the hours that the store was open to the public. Practically all these establishments reported periods of 15 to 30 minutes longer. This time was spent in arranging the goods for the day's sales and in putting the merchandise in order for the night.

Hours of work for women in mercantile stores were regulated by law in all localities covered, and in no case did the schedules reported exceed the legal limit. In California, Colorado, and Washington 8-hour laws were in effect, and 8 hours was the schedule of all firms visited in Denver and Seattle. In the California cities, however, five of the nine firms operated on a schedule shorter than the maximum permitted by law.

In Arkansas the 9-hour maximum fixed by law was the schedule in only three of the firms, the six others reporting a schedule 15 or 30 minutes less than this.

A 10-hour day was permitted in New Jersey, but the longest scheduled day reported was 8½ hours. Thirteen of the 21 firms covered in this State reported a day of 8 hours or less.

State	Legal hours for women in mercantile establishments			
	Daily hours	Weekly hours	Days per week	Lunch period
New Jersey	10	54	6	
Arkansas	9	54	6	Not less than three-fourths of an hour.
Colorado	8			
California	8	48	6	Entitled to 1 hour and not permitted to return to work in less than half an hour.
Washington	8		(1)	Not less than 1 hour.

1 Minimum wage was set for 6-day week.

The daily and weekly hour schedules set by the firms as the work periods of their regular employees were reported to the agents of the Women's Bureau by all establishments. The schedules apply to the 6,923 women included in the survey. Daily hours were as follows:

TABLE 1.—*Scheduled daily hours of regular women workers, by locality*

Locality	Total		Number of stores and number of women whose daily hours were—							
			7½ and less		More than 7½, less than 8		8		More than 8	
	Stores	Women	Stores	Women	Stores	Women	Stores	Women	Stores	Women
Total—Number	46	6,923	6	578	9	2,154	14	3,084	[1] 17	1,107
Percent distribution of women		100.0		8.3		31.1		44.5		16.0
New Jersey—10 cities	21	2,343	3	60	7	1,468	3	92	8	723
Arkansas: Little Rock and Fort Smith	9	384							[1] 9	384
Colorado: Denver	3	562					3	562		
California:										
Los Angeles	3	1,625					3	1,625		
San Francisco and Oakland	6	1,256	3	518	2	686	1	52		
Washington: Seattle	4	753					4	753		

[1] Includes 3 stores, employing 28 women, whose scheduled hours were 9.

As a result of the community spirit existent in some of the localities studied, all stores adhered to a specified standard of work hours. The 10 establishments reporting in Los Angeles, Denver, and Seattle, comprising more than one-fifth (21.7 percent) of the stores included in the survey and employing over two-fifths (42.5 percent) of all the women, had the same scheduled workday of 8 hours. In regard to the other localities, all the stores in San Francisco and Oakland reported a day of 8 hours or less; in New Jersey the firms had hour schedules extending from 7⅓ to 8½ hours; in Arkansas five firms had an 8½-hour day, one had an 8¾-hour day, and three small firms had a day of 9 hours.

Well over two-fifths (44.5 percent) of the 6,923 women had a day of exactly 8 hours, only Arkansas being absent from this column of the table. More than one-half of the workers with an 8-hour schedule were in Los Angeles, where two of the three establishments included were the largest in the survey, together employing 21.6 percent of all the women who were regular workers.

In the San Francisco district 5 of the 6 stores had a scheduled day of less than 8 hours, as had 10 of the 21 New Jersey stores, where 1,528 women, almost two-thirds of the number reported in the State, were employed. Most of these New Jersey workers had a schedule of 7¾ hours.

In only two localities, Arkansas and New Jersey, had any stores scheduled daily hours of more than 8. All the 9 stores in Arkansas and 8 of the 21 in New Jersey so reported, but only 3 firms, all in Arkansas, and employing only 28 women, had hours as long as 9.

Scheduled weekly hours.

None of the 46 firms had a weekly schedule of less than 42 hours and none exceeded 54 hours. Only 2.3 percent of the women employees had a week of 42 hours, set by a firm in San Francisco, and less than one-half of 1 percent were with the firms whose scheduled week was 54 hours—two small stores in the Arkansas cities.

The fact that not far from one-half of the stores were in New Jersey, and that they employed one-third of the women reported in the study, accounts to some extent for the greater variation in the scheduled weekly hours of stores in this State, where the range was from 44½ to 51⅔ hours. Except for four establishments in Arkansas, New Jersey shows the longest hour schedules. In both States the legal maximum for weekly hours in the mercantile industry is 54.

TABLE 2.—*Scheduled weekly hours of regular women workers, by locality*

Locality	Total		Number of stores and number of women whose weekly hours were—									
			Less than 46		46, less than 48		48		More than 48, less than 51		51 and more	
	Stores	Women	Stores	Women	Stores	Women	Stores	Women	Stores	Women	Stores	Women
Total, number	46	6,923	4	533	9	2,086	13	3,057	7	650	13	597
Percent distribution of women	----	100.0	----	7.7	----	30.1	----	44.2	----	9.4	----	8.6
New Jersey—10 cities	21	2,343	1	15	7	1,400	2	65	7	650	4	213
Arkansas: Little Rock and Fort Smith	9	384	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	9	384
Colorado: Denver	3	562	----	----	----	----	3	562	----	----	----	----
California:												
Los Angeles	3	1,625	----	----	----	----	3	1,625	----	----	----	----
San Francisco and Oakland	6	1,256	3	518	2	686	1	52	----	----	----	----
Washington: Seattle	4	753	----	----	----	----	4	753	----	----	----	----

The greatest concentration of workers in any group is that with a 48-hour week, which covers 44.2 percent of the women whose hours were reported. In California, Denver, and Seattle, where the legal maximum was 8 hours daily, 48 hours was the weekly maximum in the stores surveyed. About 98 percent of the women in stores with a 48-hour week were in these localities.

Thirteen of the firms had schedules of less than 48 hours a week, and these employed three in eight of the workers, more than one-half (54 percent) being in stores in New Jersey and almost one-half (46 percent) in San Francisco and Oakland.

A week of more than 48 hours was expected of 2 in approximately every 11 women. These were in 20 of the 46 stores, and the establishments were in New Jersey and in Little Rock and Fort Smith. In all the Arkansas stores surveyed the hours were from 51 to 54, but in the 11 New Jersey stores with all women working over 48 hours, only 1 woman in 4 had a schedule of as much as 51 hours. The maximum schedule in the New Jersey stores was 51⅔ hours.

Hours actually worked.

Weeks reported as shorter than the firm's schedule may be due to illness or other personal matters on the part of the employee, to the share-the-work policy initiated by employers or employees, to the fact that the workers were new employees taken on during the week, or to other reasons.

In each of three localities—Seattle, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco district—more than one-fourth of the women in the stores visited worked a week of less than 40 hours. Denver had about 1 in 8 of its women so reported, and New Jersey had approximately 1 in 15, but Little Rock and Fort Smith had practically none (less than 1 percent).

In Denver the proportion of the women who worked a week of 40 hours even—three-tenths of them had a week of this length—is in striking contrast to the proportions shown for Los Angeles, Seattle, and the San Francisco district. In these, the numbers of 40-hour workers did not exceed 10 percent; in fact, for the last mentioned the proportion was less than 1 percent. No woman in the New Jersey and Arkansas stores surveyed worked 40 hours in the week for which data were secured.

It is interesting to note the range in the proportions of women who had worked a week of over 40 hours in the various localities visited.

	Percent
Denver	57. 8
Los Angeles	63. 8
Seattle	66. 1
San Francisco and Oakland	70. 2
New Jersey (10 cities)	93. 0
Fort Smith and Little Rock	99. 2

In Los Angeles, Seattle, and Denver no women, and in San Francisco only 1 woman, worked more than 48 hours. In Little Rock and Fort Smith, however, 96.8 percent of those reported were working more than 48 hours in the fall of 1932. The New Jersey figures show that 26.1 percent of the 2,316 women reported worked more than 48 hours in the week for which the pay rolls were taken.

Comparison of scheduled and actual weekly hours.

Most of the women whose weekly hours were reported put in shorter time than the scheduled hours of work prescribed, as noted previously. For this reason a comparison will be made here of the actual hours worked and the scheduled hours of the women as a group and by locality.

Of the group of women workers considered as a whole, approximately one-third (33.8 percent) actually worked less than 44 hours, but only 2.3 percent had so short a schedule, all of the latter being employees of one firm with a 42-hour week. Over one-sixth (17.8 percent) of the women were working less than 40 hours, though no firm had a schedule so short. Less than three-tenths (28.4 percent) of the women worked 44 and under 48 hours, but such a schedule was reported for over one-third (35.5 percent).

A schedule of 48 hours or more was reported for something over three-fifths (62.2 percent) of the women, but only about three-eighths (37.8 percent) actually worked such hours.

In Little Rock and Fort Smith, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Denver all firms reported scheduled hours as 48 or more. In the Arkansas cities hours worked were reported as this long for practically all the women (96.8 percent). But in Los Angeles, Seattle, and Denver large numbers of women worked shorter hours, as many as 39 percent, 40.4 percent, and 43.8 percent, respectively, having worked less than 44 hours. In Seattle and Los Angeles more than one-fourth of the women, 27.5 percent and 26.2 percent, respectively, worked less than 40 hours.

In San Francisco and Oakland seven-eighths (87.2 percent) of the women had scheduled hours of 44 or more, but 62.4 percent actually worked less than 44 hours. On the other hand, only 1 firm, employing 52 women, had a schedule as high as 48 hours (48 hours exactly), but 59 women were reported as having worked this long.

In New Jersey scheduled hours were 44 or more for all women, and 6 in 7 of them were reported as working at least 44 hours.

TABLE 3.—*Comparison of scheduled hours and hours actually worked, by locality*

Locality	All women with hours reported		Women with hours of—							
			Less than 40		40, less than 44		44, less than 48		48 or more	
	Scheduled hours	Hours worked	Scheduled hours	Hours worked	Scheduled hours	Hours worked	Scheduled hours	Hours worked	Scheduled hours	Hours worked
Women reported: Number	6,923	6,882	....	1,228	161	1,100	2,458	1,952	4,304	2,602
Percent distribution	100.0	100.0	....	17.8	2.3	16.0	35.5	28.4	62.2	37.8
New Jersey: 10 cities	2,343	2,316	....	163	....	190	1,415	1,301	928	662
Arkansas: Little Rock and Fort Smith	384	370	....	3	....	5	....	4	384	358
Colorado: Denver	562	562	....	66	....	180	....	71	562	245
California: Los Angeles	1,625	1,625	....	426	....	207	....	92	1,625	900
San Francisco and Oakland	1,256	1,256	....	363	161	421	1,043	413	52	59
Washington: Seattle	753	753	....	207	....	97	....	71	753	378

Saturday hours.

Saturdays in stores, unlike those in most factories and offices, usually are as long as, or longer than, the schedule for the other days of the week. It has become the custom within recent years for the leading stores in large cities not to open their doors on Saturdays during the summer months, or to open for part of the day only. The hours quoted here are those that prevailed in a week considered by the firm as representative.

Only 7 of the 46 firms, employing approximately 400 women (5.6 percent of those reported), had a Saturday schedule in excess of 9 hours. All those with a Saturday of more than 8 hours were in New Jersey or Arkansas. In 1 store in Little Rock, Saturday hours were shorter than the schedule for other days. This establishment was open for 3½ hours longer on the last day of the week, but it had arranged to have workers come in shifts and the scheduled hours reported for each woman were 8½ instead of the usual 9.

Saturday hours in the 12 stores with longer schedules on this day were from 15 minutes to 2½ hours longer than Monday to Friday hours. Two-thirds of these stores reported at least an hour more. Ten of the number were in New Jersey, the two others in Arkansas. Quite generally such a lengthening of the workday meant a very long over-all period. In 8 of the stores the spread of hours for the workers was at least 11½ hours, though in no instance did the actual working hours of an employee exceed 10.

Lunch period.

The almost universal practice in department stores is to allow employees 45 minutes or an hour for lunch. One-half of the women, employed in close to three-fourths of the establishments, had an hour's recess, while well over two-fifths, employed in about one-fourth of the stores, had 45 minutes for lunch.

Change in store hours.

Though four-fifths of the stores reporting on this had made no recent change in the time of opening and closing, 9 managers stated that some change had been made in their stores' daily schedule. Most of these reported opening from 15 to 45 minutes later in the morning. The changes were, however, of little consequence. In 2 firms the daily spread of hours for workers was the same as before, in 5 it was shortened, and in 2 it was made longer.

SPREADING THE WORK

The records of 28 firms—about two-thirds of the 43 reporting on this subject—indicated a store policy in regard to spreading work. Managements reported that this policy was made effective by furloughs of one or more days a week; lay-offs over an extended period; short time for all employees; withdrawal of some or all of the vacation-with-pay privilege.

In some cases it was revealed that the workers had agreed among themselves to ask for and accept furloughs. Such a resolution was adopted, no doubt, to insure the permanency of their own jobs at a time when thousands were without work of any kind. To accept furloughs under these conditions would serve to prolong employment, to stave off part-time work for those employed regularly, and to spread work among those who had not been able to secure sufficient employment.

Stores in New Jersey were requested to give an estimate of the proportion of their force affected by this policy, and 9 of the 16 that reported spreading work gave such an estimate. One firm stated that much less than 10 percent of its force was affected; another reported 8 percent; in 2 cases the estimate was as much as 75 percent. In the 5 others the range was from 10 percent to 25 percent.

Fifteen firms—9 of them in Arkansas, the State surveyed just before the present study—reported that for regular workers there was no policy of spreading the work. It is not possible to say how much the earlier date of the interviews in Arkansas might be responsible for this. Some of the 15 stores reported that they had been obliged to reduce the working time of extras and of part-time employees or had reduced the number on the part-time force.

BASIS OF LAY-OFFS

Only one-half the firms reported as to basis of lay-offs. Six of the 23 stated that they had made no lay-offs in the 2-year period inquired into. Three of these were in Arkansas, and 1 each were in New Jersey, California, and Colorado.

Of the 17 stores reporting the basis on which they made reductions in the force, 13 stated that the efficiency of the worker was the basis of selection. Two others considered the worker's family responsibility as well as efficiency; 1, family responsibility alone; and 1, seniority.

Part III.—WAGES

The pay of workers in department stores is on a different basis from the systems common in factories, laundries, or hotels and restaurants. It is generally supposed that the variations in earnings common in the experience of the factory worker are not suffered to any great extent by the sales clerk, whose pay check is more or less regular from week to week. Within the past few years, however, the payment policy of many department stores has undergone a radical change.

Earnings have been affected not only by a reduction in the rate paid as a commission or bonus, or by the complete withdrawal of this dividend on sales, but by an entire change in a firm's system of payment. Such a change would inevitably affect the life of every worker in the establishment. To what extent earnings have been decreased in the stores visited is reflected in the comparison of the late and early pay rolls, for the amounts earned by the women in a representative week were taken also from a pay roll prior to any change in pay or reduction of force. Wages are paid for a week, usually of 6 days, though recently the tendency to share the work so that others may hold a job in the establishment has reduced the number of days worked and likewise has affected wages.

Systems of payment.

For stores in which some change had been made in the method of payment during the 2 years immediately preceding the study, information was secured as to the wage system in force.

Salespersons usually are paid according to one of four systems, and in some stores more than one may be used. These systems are: Straight salary; straight commission; salary and commission; and quota bonus.

Doubtless all but the fourth plan are familar to the reader, for which reason only that one will be described.

The quota-bonus system of payment is based on the selling-cost percentage of the departments as shown by past experience, the period of time used as a basis varying greatly among the different establishments. The selling-cost percentage is first computed for the department and then for the individual salesperson. "The percentage set for the individual sales quota is the rate paid on net sales up to the point at which the weekly salary or drawing account is earned. For sales above this amount the salesperson is paid a bonus, usually at a lower rate than that used to determine the quota." [1]

The summary following shows in detail the pay record of one employee for a 1-year period and serves to illustrate this method.[2] The employee's salary rate, $520, was 6 percent of $8,660, which amount was distributed through the 12 months as the sales the employee was supposed to make. It was distributed unevenly—as little as 6 percent

[1] Bezanson, Anne, and Miriam Hussey. Wage Methods and Selling Costs. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930, pp. 9–10.

[2] Ibid., p. 11.

in January and in February, in contrast to 17 percent in December—according to the amount of business usually done. (The rounding of the amounts in the quota column gives a total of $8,630.) At three dates during the year the employee was paid a 3 percent bonus on the amount by which her sales had exceeded her quota. The quota was not charged against her for the week she was absent.

Name, A. J. Dept. 10. Base Rate Wk., $10. Year, $520. 6% Yearly Quota, $8,660

Month	Sales this year	Percent	Quota	Difference	Total balance	Bonus	Remarks
January	$410	6	$520	−$110			
February	500	6	520	−20	−$130		
March	650	7	600	+50	−80		
April	700	7	600	+100	+20		
May	890	8	690	+200	+220	$6.60	$220 at 3 percent.
June	700	9	780	−80			
July	700	9	780	−80	−160		
August	300	7	600	−300	−294		Absent 1 week—$10. Equivalent sales—$166.
September	700	7	600	+100	−194		
October	790	8	690	+100	−94		
November	980	9	780	+200	+106	3.18	
December	1,600	17	1,470	+130	+130	3.90	
Total		100	8,660				

As is true in manufacturing, the methods adopted by some firms had made the computation of pay so involved that workers complained frequently to the agents of the Women's Bureau of their inability to figure just how much the week's pay envelope would contain. Many said it was most confusing, for they could never be sure of the amount of earnings they would receive. To them it seemed a hopeless task to try even to approximate the amount due.

In addition to the systems of wage payments and the share-the-work plans in effect there was still another factor within the control of the management that had a direct influence on the amount the salespersons received. This consisted of plain cuts, or reductions in wage rates that lowered earnings. Accomplished by decreasing the amount of straight salaries, or by decreasing or eliminating commissions or quota bonuses, wage cuts had been made by several firms to lower selling costs.

Though not really affecting the amount received, the time of payment had been changed in some cases. Two stores had changed from a weekly to a semimonthly pay basis and one from a weekly to an hourly basis. The first of these two changes would reduce selling costs by decreasing the clerical work connected with the payment of salaries, but the second undoubtedly caused an addition to the clerical work involved.

Changes in method of pay.

Of the 45 firms reporting on changes in method of payment, 26 had made no such change in the 2 years. The two cities in Arkansas had a larger proportion of stores whose method had not changed than had other localities. Seattle had the smallest proportion.

Eight of the stores studied reported that in the period between 1930 and 1932 they had adopted the quota-bonus method.

Seven stores had changed to the quota basis from a commission basis, one of these reporting that the change had been introduced in a few departments only. One other had changed from a weekly pay period with a commission on all the week's sales to a semimonthly pay period with a quota system and a bonus for all sales over quota. This bonus was reckoned for the month and unless the quota for the month was exceeded the worker did not receive any such addition to her regular wage.

The change from a commission to a quota basis did not seem to be confined to stores of any one section of the country. Except in the two Arkansas cities, each locality had at least one establishment that had made this change at some time in the 2 years. A smaller proportion of New Jersey stores than of establishments visited in the other localities had replaced the commission method of payment with the quota-bonus system.

Complete discontinuance of a sales commission was reported by seven stores, six of them in New Jersey. The other was in a city in one of the Pacific States and at the time of the survey this establishment had introduced in some departments a quota-sales system. As the management of the store reported that few of the employees in these specific departments reached the quota set for them, it would seem that this firm's method of payment more nearly resembled the system used in stores where payment was on a straight salary basis.

WEEK'S EARNINGS

As already mentioned, facts were secured in this study as to earnings of the women employees for a representative week in the year of the survey and also for workers in a week of an earlier period, in most cases 2 years before.

Median week's earnings.[3]

The median week's earnings of the women on the late pay rolls ranged from $16 in the two localities in California to $12 in Denver. In other words, women in department stores in Denver had a median lower by 25 percent than that of similar workers in the cities of California. The medians for women in the other localities fell between these extremes.

Minimum-wage rates as set by the Pacific Coast States, $16 in California and $13.20 in Washington,[4] indicate the minimum that firms in those States were allowed to pay to experienced full-time women workers. The $13.85 median for Seattle in the present study is 65 cents higher than the minimum provided by law. The median for the cities in California is exactly the same as the legal minimum for that State.

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[3] The median as used in this study is the actual amount earned by the woman whose place is the midpoint of the group when ranked according to earnings.

[4] After this report was written, the minimum-wage law of Washington was declared unconstitutional by a lower court of the State. This opinion was later reversed by the State Supreme Court and the case has been appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States.

The fact that $16 was the median for all the women in the California stores visited is interesting because of the proportions of the women who worked less than scheduled hours. In Los Angeles all firms reported scheduled hours as 48, but well over two-fifths of the women worked less than this. Almost two-fifths worked less than 44 hours, and one in four worked less than 40. In San Francisco seven-eighths of the women had scheduled hours of at least 44, but more than three-fifths worked less than 44 hours and about three-tenths worked less than 40. (See table 3.)

Actual week's earnings.

Regardless of time worked week's earnings ranged from less than $1 to $55, the latter for a woman in a New Jersey establishment. The proportions of workers in each locality earning specified amounts appear in table 4.

In the column showing week's earnings of less than $10 the range is from 4.1 percent of the total in San Francisco and Oakland to 21 percent of the total in Denver. Los Angeles and New Jersey had fairly small percentages in this group. From one-fourth (25.4 percent) of the women in Denver to close to two-thirds (64.9 percent) of those in Los Angeles received $15 or more as their week's earnings. As would be expected, the two California localities are among the three showing the highest proportions of women getting $20 and over. New Jersey had a slightly higher percentage than had the San Francisco district earning as much as $20. All localities had very small proportions earning as much as $25.

TABLE 4.—*Proportion of women in each locality with earnings of specified amounts—late pay roll*

Locality	Number of women reported	Median week's earnings	Percent of women whose earnings were—				
			Less than $10	Less than $12	Less than $15	$20 and more	$25 and more
New Jersey—10 cities	2,343	$14.00	8.6	18.7	52.8	10.8	3.0
Arkansas: Little Rock and Fort Smith	384	13.00	12.0	27.3	61.5	8.3	3.4
Colorado: Denver	562	12.00	21.0	44.1	74.6	5.9	1.6
California:							
Los Angeles	1,625	16.00	7.4	15.9	35.1	13.8	3.4
San Francisco and Oakland	1,256	16.00	4.1	8.3	37.1	10.1	1.7
Washington: Seattle	753	13.85	10.9	23.8	62.8	6.9	1.2

Earnings and hours worked.

For all but 41 of the 6,923 women the hours worked were reported The 41 exceptions were in New Jersey and Arkansas, and the omission of hours worked for these women did not affect the amount of the medians computed for all women in these two localities.

A table showing for each locality the number and the median earnings of women who worked a week of under 40 hours, of 40 hours and over, and of 48 hours and over follows.

TABLE 5.—*Median earnings of women who worked less than 40 hours, 40 hours and over, and 48 hours and over—late pay roll*

Locality	Total reported		Hours worked					
			Less than 40		40 and over		48 and over	
	Number of women	Median earnings	Number of women	Median earnings	Number of women	Median earnings	Number of women	Median earnings
New Jersey—10 cities	2,316	$14.00	163	$10.50	2,153	$15.00	662	$14.00
Arkansas: Little Rock and Fort Smith	370	13.00	3	(1)	367	13.15	358	13.10
Colorado: Denver	562	12.00	66	8.35	496	12.60	245	14.00
California:								
Los Angeles	1,625	16.00	426	11.25	1,199	16.25	900	17.15
San Francisco and Oakland	1,256	16.00	363	14.00	893	16.20	59	16.15
Washington: Seattle	753	13.85	207	10.65	546	14.85	378	15.30

1 Not computed; base less than 50.

When the groups of women in the two California districts and in Seattle who had worked less than 40 hours are compared with those who had worked 40 hours and longer, the difference in medians is considerable, ranging from a little over $2 to $5 a week. Los Angeles stores had medians of $11.25 for women working less than 40 hours and $16.25 for those with a week of 40 hours or more. In the San Francisco-Oakland section the corresponding amounts were $14 and $16.20, and in Seattle they were $10.65 and $14.85. In each of these minimum-wage localities (see footnote 4) approximately one-fourth of the women worked less than 40 hours, considerably larger proportions than were reported in Arkansas (0.8 percent), New Jersey (7 percent), or Denver (11.7 percent).

In Denver, where medians were lower than in the other localities visited, a week of less than 40 hours reported by as many as one-ninth of the regular workers shows $8.35 as the median of earnings. For the group working at least 40 hours the median was $12.60, still lower than in any other locality but 50 percent higher than for those in Denver who worked less than 40 hours.

In New Jersey only 1 in 14 of the employees worked less than 40 hours and their median earnings were $10.50. The median rose to $15 for the group who worked 40 hours or more. Practically all the women in Arkansas had worked more than 48 hours, so there can be no comparison of the two hour groups.

In three of the six localities studied, the medians for women who worked as long as 48 hours were lower than those for the larger groups working 40 hours or more. In two instances the difference was negligible, but in New Jersey it amounted to an even dollar, lower by close to 7 percent for the longer hours. In Seattle, Los Angeles, and Denver there was an increase instead, ranging from 45 cents to $1.40.

Earnings and time with the firm.

The length of time an employee had been with the store naturally would have some bearing on the amount of pay received. A correlation of week's earnings and length of service was possible for 4,039 women. The tabulation (unpublished) reveals some interesting data.

In each of the five localities included in this tabulation a comparatively small part of the workers had been with the firm less than a year, the proportion varying from less than 5 percent in one San Francisco store to 15 percent in New Jersey. That the week's earnings of women in this experience group have a wide range is indicated in the summary following. Because of the small numbers of workers, the figures presented show not the median but the highest and lowest week's earnings, without regard to hours worked, reported for women whose experience with the firm had been less than 1 year.

Locality	Week's earnings of women less than 1 year with the firm	
	Lowest actual earnings	Highest actual earnings
New Jersey—10 cities	Less than $5	$30, less than $35.
Arkansas: Little Rock	$6, less than $7	$15, less than $16.
Colorado: Denver	$5, less than $6	$35.
California:		
Los Angeles	$2, less than $3	$30, less than $35.
San Francisco	$6, less than $7	Over $16, less than $17.

Figures in an unpublished tabulation of earnings and time with the firm give median earnings according to experience. An analysis of such medians in the five localities reporting on this point follows.

Los Angeles maintained its minimum-wage rate, $16, in each of the six experience groups ranging from 1 year to 10 and less than 15 years.

In the San Francisco store whose workers supplied personal information to the Bureau, the women stated that they were working a shorter week in order to extend employment, especially among the temporary workers. More than two-thirds (68.1 percent) of the women reported were working a week of 42 hours. Approximately half of the women who had accepted this 42-hour schedule were earning exactly $14; as much as $16 was earned by less than one-fourth (23.4 percent). Thus the median was found to be $14 instead of the $16 basic minimum wage set by the State for this industry. Fourteen dollars was the median also for the workers who had been 1 and under 2 years with the firm. Service of 5 and under 10 years brought a slightly higher median, $14.30, while women who had been with the firm 10 and under 15 years had a median of $14.75, an amount higher by only 5.4 percent than the $14 for the group as a whole.

In Denver, women who had been with the firm 1 and under 2 years and 2 and under 3 years had the same median of earnings, $12, as was recorded for all workers in this city who reported the time they had spent with the establishment. For workers with 5 and under 10 years' experience the median was $12.45, and for those employed as much as 10 years the median was $15.35.

The 233 workers in the stores of Little Rock who reported their time with the firm had a median of $12.70, the lowest amount for any locality but Denver. Only one experience group was large enough to justify the computation of a median, and the 55 women in this group of 5 and under 10 years' experience show $13.95 as their median earnings. This is $1.25 more than the median for all who reported time with the firm.

For the 2,120 women in New Jersey who reported on this subject the median earnings were $15. Women whose experience with the firm was 1 and under 2 years had a median of $13. For the group employed 5 and under 10 years the median was $15.20, and for the groups with experience of 10 and under 15 years and 15 and under 20 years the medians were $17 and $17.05, respectively. New Jersey was the only locality reporting workers with as much as 20 years' service in sufficient number for computation of a median; these had a median of $16.15, or 90 cents less than the amount shown for those who had been with the firm 15 and under 20 years.

COMPARISON OF RATES AND EARNINGS

Rates and earnings, by locality.

In the two California localities there were great differences in the proportions of women whose rates and whose earnings on the late pay rolls were exactly $16 (the minimum wage set for a standard week). Two-thirds (66.2 percent) of the Los Angeles women, for example, had a weekly rate of $16, but only one-fifth (20.6 percent) of those reported had earnings of exactly $16. In contrast to the one-third whose rate was more than $16, almost two-fifths of the women received more than $16 in earnings. In San Francisco and Oakland $16 was the rate of almost one-third of the workers, yet only 1 in 25 of the women received that amount as their week's pay. The proportions of women with rates and with earnings exceeding $16 were almost the same, 49.8 and 48.3 percent, respectively. In Los Angeles, the number of women whose earnings were $25 or more was slightly higher than the number reported with rates of this amount—3.4 and 3.1 percent, respectively. In San Francisco-Oakland, the opposite is true: 1.7 percent of the women had such earnings while 2.1 percent had such rates.

Arkansas shows almost no differences in the proportions of women in the rates and earnings columns. Less than $15 was the weekly rate reported for 57 percent, and 59 percent had earnings of such amount. About two-fifths of these women had rates and earnings of even less than $12. As much as $25 was recorded as the rate of 4 percent, and as the earnings of more than 3 percent.

Stores in New Jersey also showed similar proportions in the rates and earnings columns. In each case, less than $15 was reported for one in two of the women. One-fourth of the number having such rates and one-third of those having such earnings were in the group less than $12. In the higher brackets, $25 and over, rates and earnings were reported for practically the same number—70 and 72 women, respectively.

In Denver, the proportions with rates and with earnings of less than $15 showed a greater contrast—66 and 75 percent, respectively. For about one in three of the women with rates below $15 they were below $12, and three in five of those with earnings below $15 received less than $12 Only very small numbers of women had rates or earnings of as much as $25, those with such rates slightly outnumbering those with such earnings.

TABLE 6.—*Rates and earnings, by locality—late pay roll*

Locality	Total number of women	Number of women with rates and with earnings of—											
		Less than $10		$10, less than $12		$12, less than $15		$15, less than $20		$20, less than $25		$25 and more	
		Rates	Earnings	Rates	Earnings	Rates	Earnings	Rates	Earnings	Rates	Earnings	Rates	Earnings
New Jersey—10 cities	[1] 2,343	59	201	255	238	857	798	905	854	194	182	72	70
Arkansas: Little Rock and Fort Smith	351	34	36	47	54	119	118	119	113	18	18	14	12
Colorado: Denver	562	38	118	82	130	252	171	161	110	18	24	11	9
California:													
Los Angeles	1,625	-----	121	-----	138	12	311	1,392	830	171	169	50	56
San Francisco and Oakland	1,256	-----	51	4	53	182	362	941	663	103	106	26	21
Washington: Seattle	753	-----	82	-----	97	319	294	376	228	50	43	8	9

[1] Weekly rate not reported for 1 of these women.

In Los Angeles, though less than 1 percent of the women had rates of less than $15 reported, as many as 35.1 percent had such earnings in the week the pay roll was taken. In no store surveyed here were women paid a rate of less than $12, but almost 1 in 6 of the women received earnings of less than $12. Of this number, approximately 1 in 10 received less than $5. Practically all the women earning less than $12 worked a short week, the majority of them putting in less than 30 hours.

In San Francisco and Oakland the lowest rate was $10, but 1 in 25 of the women received less than this in earnings. Of this number, about one in six earned below $5. Less than 30 hours' work was recorded for those earning below $10.

As reported by Los Angeles stores, more than five-sixths (84.6 percent) of the women had a rate of $16 and under $19, yet only half as many—practically five-twelfths (43.6 percent)—had earnings so classified. In the same city a rate of $25 or more was reported for 50 women and earnings of as much as that were received by 56. The addition of the bonus or commission on sales probably is responsible for this.

For two-thirds (66.2 percent) of the 1,256 women reported in San Francisco and Oakland the weekly rate was $16 and under $19, though only 38.7 percent of the women received earnings of this amount. Twenty-six women had a rate of $25 or more and 21 received as much as this for their week's pay.

COMPARISON OF LATE AND EARLY PAY-ROLL DATA

To show the trend of women's earnings in this industry in the last few years, pay-roll data were secured also for a period prior to 1932–33. As the late pay roll covered a period in the fall or winter of 1932 or the early spring of 1933, the Bureau endeavored to secure data for a week that would picture conditions in the industry before any change resulting from the business depression had been effected. For most establishments the early pay rolls were secured for a week antedating that of the late pay rolls by 2 years, and to secure the records of a normal week in some stores it was necessary to go back to a pay roll more than 2 years old.

In a majority of the firms in New Jersey early pay-roll data were copied for a week in 1931 approximately 2 years before the late pay-roll dates. Some firms reported that a change in amount or method of payment had been made earlier than that, and these firms supplied records for a week before such change.

For Denver, Seattle, and the three cities in California there was a 2-year difference in the pay rolls taken. These usually were for a week in March of 1933 and of 1931.

The following summary shows the number of establishments and the number and median earnings of women with two pay records reported, and compares the medians of their earnings for the two periods.

TABLE 7.—*Comparison of late and early pay rolls, by locality*

Locality [1]	Number of establishments	Late pay roll		Early pay roll		Percent of decrease, late pay-roll from early pay-roll medians
		Number of women	Median of earnings	Number of women	Median of earnings	
New Jersey—10 cities	21	2,343	$14.00	2,492	$17.00	17.6
Colorado: Denver	3	562	12.00	570	15.15	20.8
California:						
Los Angeles	3	1,625	16.00	1,710	18.70	14.4
San Francisco and Oakland	6	1,256	16.00	1,454	20.65	22.5
Washington: Seattle	4	753	13.85	875	16.85	17.8

[1] Arkansas omitted because early pay-roll data secured for only 7 of the 9 stores.

In summarizing the earnings of women in stores it is seen that for the week in 1933 the two localities in California had the same (and the highest) median, $16; for the week in 1931 San Francisco-Oakland had the highest, $20.65. This change in a 2-year period represents a decrease of almost one-fourth (22.5 percent) in median earnings. In Los Angeles the drop from the median of $18.70 for the week in 1931 to $16 in 1933 was a smaller decrease (14.4 percent), but it was severe to those who suffered it. In each year Denver had a low median, and between the two dates there was a decline of approximately one-fifth (20.8 percent), second only to that in the San Francisco area.

When it is considered that in each case the median is the actual earnings of the woman who was at the midpoint of her group when such group was arranged according to earnings, the seriousness of a decline in purchasing power by proportions varying from about one-seventh (14.4 percent) to not far from one-fourth (22.5 percent) becomes significant.

The following table gives certain figures for the 48-hour workers in the late and the early pay-roll periods:

TABLE 8.—*Comparison of 48-hour workers on late and early pay rolls, by locality*

Locality [1]	Number of women working a week of 48 hours		Percent 48-hour workers formed of all reported		Median of earnings of 48-hour workers		Percent of 48-hour workers earning $16 or more	
	Late pay roll	Early pay roll	Late pay roll	Early pay roll	Late pay roll	Early pay roll	Late pay roll	Early pay roll
New Jersey—10 cities	57	113	2.5	4.5	$15.00	$16.35	43.9	64.6
Colorado: Denver	245	472	43.6	82.8	14.00	16.00	26.9	50.2
California:								
Los Angeles	900	1,406	55.4	82.2	17.15	19.55	99.1	99.6
San Francisco and Oakland	58	44	4.6	3.1	16.15	(2)	86.2	(2)
Washington: Seattle	378	516	50.2	59.0	15.30	18.00	40.2	83.1

[1] Arkansas cities not included. [2] Not computed; base less than 50.

In 1933 considerably more than one-half of all the women in the stores surveyed in Los Angeles, one-half of those in Seattle, and somewhat over two-fifths of those in Denver had worked a 48-hour week. In the San Francisco district and New Jersey less than 5 percent were in this hour classification.

Of the groups working exactly 48 hours the proportions who earned $16 or more in 1933 were from 0.5 to 42.9 points below the corresponding proportions in the earlier period. The smallest decrease was in Los Angeles, the greatest in Seattle.

Denver, Seattle, and Los Angeles stores had no women working more than 48 hours in the week in 1933. In San Francisco one woman, whose earnings were slightly over $16, worked 1 hour longer than the maximum. In the early pay-roll period none of the saleswomen in these four localities worked more than 48 hours. Of those with earnings of $16 or more in New Jersey about one-fourth in each period had a week exceeding 48 hours.

A comparison of the medians of weekly rates and of week's earnings in both pay-roll periods serves to emphasize the trend toward a lower wage in each of the localities; for while at the time of the early pay roll medians of the rates extended from $15 to $18, in 1932–33 no locality showed a median of rates higher than $16, and one city had a median as low as $12.

In four of the five localities in which comparisons of median earnings and median rates of the early pay rolls were made, earnings were higher by from 1 to approximately 20 percent; in the other, earnings were lower by slightly more than 6 percent.

Analysis of the late pay roll shows that median rates and earnings were the same in three of the five districts (two of these were in a State with a minimum-wage law). In the two other districts the median earnings were less than the rates, the proportions being 6, 7, and 7.7 percent, respectively.

TABLE 9.—*Medians of rates and earnings, by locality*

Locality[1]	Late pay roll			Early pay roll		
	Number of women reported	Median of—		Number of women reported	Median of—	
		Rates	Earnings		Rates	Earnings
New Jersey—10 cities	[2] 2,343	$15.00	$14.00	2,492	$16.00	$17.00
Colorado: Denver	562	12.00	12.00	570	15.00	15.15
California:						
Los Angeles	1,625	16.00	16.00	1,681	18.00	18.80
San Francisco and Oakland	1,256	16.00	16.00	1,454	17.40	20.65
Washington: Seattle	753	15.00	13.85	875	18.00	16.85

[1] Arkansas cities not included.
[2] Weekly rate not reported for 1 of these women.

Part IV.—PERSONAL INFORMATION

Facts in regard to personal history were reported by more than 4,300 women. These were employed in 28 stores, about three-fifths of the number included in the study.

Age.

With the exception of New Jersey, where 11.3 percent of the women were not yet 20, no locality had as many as 4 percent of its workers under 20 years of age. New Jersey was the only locality that had women workers of under 18 years. Three-fifths of the women in the stores of that State were under 30 years of age and all but one-sixth were under 40. In the other localities from about one-fourth to almost two-fifths of the women were 40 or more.

The following table shows in the form of cumulative percents the ages of the women employed in the 28 department stores in different sections of the country that sent in data on this subject.

TABLE 10.—*Proportions of women in certain limited age groups, by locality*

Locality	Number of women reporting	Percent of women whose age was—					
		Under 20 years	Under 25 years	Under 30 years	Under 40 years	Under 50 years	Under 60 years
New Jersey—10 cities	2,076	11.3	43.4	60.5	84.0	95.1	99.4
Arkansas: Little Rock	267	3.7	18.4	39.0	73.4	93.6	100.0
Colorado: Denver	436	2.5	20.9	36.2	69.5	90.8	98.9
California:							
Los Angeles	715	.3	9.2	23.1	62.7	90.6	99.7
San Francisco	398	2.5	17.8	32.4	65.8	92.7	99.0

From the foregoing data it appears that only about 1 percent of the women workers in the Denver and San Francisco stores reporting had reached 60 years, that Little Rock had no women so old as this, and that in New Jersey and Los Angeles the proportions were only 0.6 and 0.3 percent, respectively.

Numbers and percentages of workers in the various localities whose ages were 30 and under 50 years may be seen in the summary following. More than half the women in Little Rock and Denver were of these ages, as were three-fifths of those reporting in San Francisco and two-thirds of those in Los Angeles. New Jersey presents a striking contrast, with not much more than one-third of its women in these age groups because of the much larger proportion under 25 years.

A further break-down of the cumulative percents in the preceding table makes it clear that in each locality much the larger group were 30 and under 40 years instead of 40 and under 50.

Locality	Women whose ages were 30 and under 50 years	
	Number	Percent
New Jersey—10 cities	720	34.7
Arkansas: Little Rock	146	54.7
Colorado: Denver	238	54.6
California:		
Los Angeles	483	67.6
San Francisco	240	60.3

Marital status.

The fact that so many of the women in the department stores of New Jersey were young would lead one to expect a high proportion of unmarried workers in this State, and figures in the next table show that 7 of every 10 of the store workers in New Jersey were single. In the other localities the proportions of single women varied only from approximately one-third to two-fifths.

Denver ranked first in the proportion of married workers; not far from one-half (46.3 percent) of the women in the stores reporting were married. New Jersey had much the lowest percent (22). Cities as far apart as San Francisco and Little Rock had very similar proportions of their workers reporting their status as married—40.8 percent and 39.7 percent, respectively. One-third of the Los Angeles women were married.

The percent of workers who were widowed, separated, and divorced was greater in Los Angeles than in any other locality visited. In contrast to the 32.4 percent shown in this city is the small proportion—less than 9 percent—found in the New Jersey stores.

TABLE 11.—*Marital status, by locality*

Locality	Number of women	Percent of women whose marital status was—		
		Single	Married	Widowed, separated, or divorced
New Jersey—10 cities	2,045	69.4	22.0	8.6
Arkansas: Little Rock	229	35.4	39.7	24.9
Colorado: Denver	415	35.9	46.3	17.8
California:				
Los Angeles	723	34.3	33.3	32.4
San Francisco	429	40.3	40.8	18.9

Time with the firm.

A correlation of time with the firm is significant, for it might well be assumed "that length of service would have a definite bearing on earnings because increased tenure of position would result in increased earnings either as a reward for staying with a store or as the outcome of increased experience which brought with it greater productivity." [1]

In the 18 stores (combined) in New Jersey and the 5 in the city of Little Rock practically the same proportions of workers reported less than 1 year's experience with the firm—respectively 15 percent and 14.7 percent, or about 3 of every 20 women. In Denver about 3 in 25 of the women had been with the store as short a time as this. In California the proportions who had been with the firm less than a year were very much smaller.

The proportion of women in the California cities who had been with the firm 5 years or more was much higher than for New Jersey, or for Little Rock or Denver. In San Francisco as in Los Angeles the proportion was 5 of 10, in Little Rock and in Denver approximately 4 of 10, and in New Jersey 3 of 10. In both Little Rock and Denver the proportion of workers with the firm 10 years or more was practically the same as the percent with less than a year's experience. Percentages in the various experience groups appear in the accompanying table.

TABLE 12.—*Time with the firm, by locality*

Locality	Number of women reporting	Percent of women whose years with the firm were—							
		Less than 1	1, less than 2	2, less than 3	3, less than 4	4, less than 5	5, less than 10	10, less than 15	15 and more
New Jersey—10 cities	2,120	15.0	18.2	16.3	13.5	7.6	17.6	6.3	5.6
Arkansas: Little Rock	245	14.7	9.4	12.2	11.0	13.9	23.3	8.2	7.3
Colorado: Denver	533	11.6	11.6	12.2	11.4	9.8	32.8	6.8	3.8
California:									
Los Angeles	721	6.8	15.5	11.7	7.9	9.2	28.4	15.4	5.1
San Francisco	432	4.4	12.7	10.6	9.0	13.4	29.2	13.4	7.2

From unpublished data it is noted that fewer than 100 of all the women workers reporting had been with the firm as long as 20 years. In no locality did the proportion of these workers reach 3 percent; in one it was less than 1 percent.

From the table following may be seen the percentages of women in the various marital-status groups whose employment with the firm had been for less than 1 year, for 5 years or more, or for 10 years or more.

[1] Bezanson, Anne, and Miriam Hussey. Wage Methods and Selling Costs. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930, p. 253.

TABLE 13.—*Proportion of women in each marital group with time with the firm as specified, by locality*

Locality	Women who were— Single	Married	Widowed, separated, or divorced
NUMBER REPORTING			
New Jersey—10 cities	1,356	411	169
Arkansas: Little Rock	80	89	57
Colorado: Denver	149	192	74
California:			
Los Angeles	246	241	234
San Francisco	173	175	81
PERCENT WITH FIRM LESS THAN 1 YEAR			
New Jersey—10 cities	15.6	13.1	13.6
Arkansas: Little Rock	11.3	18.0	19.3
Colorado: Denver	8.1	6.3	13.5
California:			
Los Angeles	4.9	5.4	10.3
San Francisco	8.1	1.7	2.5
PERCENT WITH FIRM 5 YEARS OR MORE			
New Jersey—10 cities	26.5	37.7	39.6
Arkansas: Little Rock	37.5	38.2	38.6
Colorado: Denver	43.0	48.4	40.5
California:			
Los Angeles	47.2	58.5	41.0
San Francisco	41.0	56.6	53.1
PERCENT WITH FIRM 10 YEARS OR MORE			
New Jersey—10 cities	10.9	13.9	13.1
Arkansas: Little Rock	16.3	7.9	21.1
Colorado: Denver	10.1	8.3	9.5
California:			
Los Angeles	21.5	20.7	19.2
San Francisco	18.5	20.6	24.7

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