A comparative study of the female clerical labor force, Omaha, Nebraska, 1931-1956

Thelma M. Flies

University of Nebraska at Omaha

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE FEMALE
CLERICAL LABOR FORCE
OMAHA, NEBRASKA
1931 - 1956

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Graduate Division
University of Omaha

by

Thelma M. Flies

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

June, 1958
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CHAPTER I
THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

NEED FOR THE STUDY

As society becomes more complex and as its institutions grow and change their nature and structure it becomes more necessary for administrators in the fields of government, business, and education to become familiar with the ethnic, social, economic, and occupational structure of the population in order that they can successfully fulfill their obligation to society.

Spiegelman, an associate statistician for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, says:

Detailed and current data regarding the working population have become essential to administration by business, organized labor, and government at its several levels. Government relies upon such data, in part, for the study and operation of its social security program, to ascertain the general condition of the country's economy and to identify areas of labor shortage or surplus, and in planning for mobilization. To business, such data are valuable not only for measuring economic change, but also for the study of markets and for locating sources of labor supply. In collective bargaining between management and labor, both sides have occasion to make intensive use of certain data regarding the working population. Persons engaged in vocational guidance find a classification of working population data on the basis of occupation and industry essential to their activities.1

Preparing youth for vocations, of course, is not the only purpose of education; however, the importance the contribution which schools can make to the occupational adjustment

of their students can hardly be overestimated. To the extent that schools should provide guidance and preparation for vocations, this guidance and preparation should be reasonably in line with occupational realities - realities as they exist at the national and state level and especially as they exist at the local level.

Beaumont has said, "The school must, in observance of its duty to its community and its pupils, adjust its vocational offerings and its guidance program to meet changing business opportunities."\(^1\)

In order to keep in step with business, a school must know the educational needs of the business community. The survey is one of the most effective methods of discovering these needs. If all communities were alike, there would be no need for a local survey; but communities differ from one another in many respects. They differ in the kinds of business they support; they differ in the kinds of employees they need; they differ in opportunities for advancement; and they differ in the kinds of equipment they use. It is stated by Struck, "Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the importance of each school knowing the occupational opportunities in its own locality . . . local surveys should be frequent."\(^2\)

It would be unfortunate to train persons for jobs that will not exist and in skills they cannot use to advantage.

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As stated by Bell:

Changes in the kinds of work likely to be available to young workers can best be discovered through a study of the changes which are taking place in the distribution of all workers among the several broad occupational fields. The discovery of these changes and the identification of local population trends are the major functions of local market studies. The constant changes in the kinds of work men and women do are traceable not primarily to changes in population, but to such other influences as advances in technology, the discovery and use of new materials, and the creation of new industries. The total effect of such influences is to cause shifts in the distribution of workers among the broad occupational fields. In a word, these influences produce constantly changing occupational patterns.

Constant inquiries, investigations, studies, and occupational surveys are needed to determine curriculum revisions and the current needs in vocational education. One of the most striking values of local labor market studies is the light they throw upon the planning of what the schools shall offer their pupils to fit them for living and for making a living in the community.

An investigation of the literature relating to educational planning and vocational guidance in the modern school indicates that many educators and businessmen feel the school curriculum should more adequately reflect the changing conditions in the community. There is, in fact, considerable evidence that the schools often disregard the flow of change in the community when planning their school curriculum. Walters says:

"... it is unfortunate that neither those charged with the administration of business edu-
cation nor classroom teachers avail themselves fully

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1. Howard M. Bell, Matching Youth and Jobs, p. 105. Washing-
of existing opportunities to keep in touch with business. This inertia of business teachers is a serious professional fault. Too often business educators look upon business as something apart from education, even though they are preparing young people to enter this highly specialized area of vocational employment.  

The truth is that few states and communities even know what occupational opportunities exist in their area. Haas, the Director of Retail Training for Montgomery Ward, writing in 1948, found no state-wide survey that was not at least eight years old. Sometimes, he said, the situation is ridiculous, and he gave the example of a town of 13,000 population in which there was a unique sales situation - the result of which 2,098 (over one-half of the adults) were employed in distributive occupations, yet, not a single vocational course in distributive education was offered in the community high school.

In a study in Nebraska, Bedell and Nelson reported that 67 per cent of high school educators felt that occupational information should be a required part of the high school curriculum and that while many communities have made an excellent start in surveying local conditions, few continue such programs and the information collected soon becomes obsolete.


An investigation of what is being done in the Omaha area indicated that while educators in the area were aware of the importance of the use of occupational information and employment trends in school planning, and were making attempts to adjust the school curriculum to the community needs, they were greatly handicapped by the lack or scarcity of adequate data, such as local surveys.

Personal interviews with personnel of the Nebraska Employment Service and the Omaha Industrial Foundation indicated that they did not attempt to make any detailed surveys of the Omaha labor force; the Omaha Industrial Foundation, however, has organized a committee to study the occupational and employment trends in the Omaha area, but because of the magnitude of the task, they are limiting their efforts to a few specific areas. The Omaha Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Omaha Chapter of the National Management Association are conducting surveys of the clerical labor force; however, their studies are to be limited to the wage picture.

Since prominent educators and businessmen themselves recognize the value of utilizing occupational trends in organizing the school curriculum and in providing adequate vocational guidance; and since a brief survey of the research completed or underway in the Omaha area reveals a great deficiency of available and usable data, it was felt that there was a great need for all types of occupational and employment surveys in the Omaha area. It is for this reason that the present study was undertaken.
It was assumed that significant changes had occurred in the occupational pattern of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, during the period 1931 through 1956. It was assumed that the major changes which had occurred in the women's clerical labor force were those indicating an increase in the total number of women employed; an increase in the total number of married women employed; and shifts in the distribution of clerical employees within the various occupational classifications and within the various industrial classifications. Further, it was assumed that in relation to the secondary factors of the study the age distribution indicated a trend toward employing a greater number of younger and a greater number of older women in the clerical labor force, while a corresponding decrease occurred in the total number of women employed who were in the middle-age group; the permanency of the women's clerical labor force tended to be more stabilized; and salaries had generally increased.

THE PROBLEM

The specific purpose of the study was to determine the occupational and industrial composition, and the marital status of the female clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 through 1956, in an effort to determine the change, if any, in the occupational pattern of the women's clerical labor force in the City of Omaha.
The study involved five major problems:

1. Determination of the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 - 1956

2. Determination of the total number of single and the total number of married women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 - 1956

3. Determination of the total number of women employed in each of nine clerical occupational classifications in Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 - 1956.

4. Determination of the total number of women employed in each of eight industrial classifications in Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 - 1956, and

5. Determination of the changes, if any, in the occupational pattern of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 - 1956.

Secondary problems which developed as the study progressed and which would appear to give more meaning to the study are as follows:

1. Determination of the age distribution of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, 1940 and 1950.

2. Determination of the permanency of the women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, 1945, 1950, 1955, 1956, and 1957; and
3. Determination of the average wage for the women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, 1950.

DELIMITATIONS

The study was limited to the female clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska; to nine clerical occupational classifications; and to eight industrial classifications, both of which correspond closely to the occupational and industrial classifications as outlined by the U. S. Bureau of the Census.¹

The study was further limited to six five-year periods beginning with the year, 1931, and ending with the year, 1956, since the data for shorter periods of time appeared to be infeasible for the purposes set forth.

A detailed analysis of the five major problems incorporated in the study was attempted; however, only a general analysis of the three secondary problems was attempted, since the time limitations of the study made it impossible to make a detailed analysis of these factors.

The age distribution factor of the study was limited to the years, 1940 and 1950, since data for other periods of time were not available.

The permanency data was limited to the years, 1945, 1950, 1955, 1956, and 1957, for the same reason.

The wage distribution data was restricted to the year, 1950, since additional data were not available.

No attempt was made to predict future changes in the occupational or industrial composition of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, since any accurate predictions would of necessity need to include many related factors, such as the effect of the war, increased population, etc., which the time limitations of the study did not permit; nor was any attempt made to explain the reasons for the increases or decreases, as the case may be, in the number of women employed in each occupational or industrial classification.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Women's Clerical Labor Force** - includes all women listed in the *Omaha City Directory*¹ who are employed in a clerical occupation as defined in the study.

2. **Marital Status** - denotes married or single status ("single" includes persons listed as widows).

The nine clerical classifications designed for the study follow closely the classifications set up by the U. S. Bureau of the Census.² No jobs which were supervisory in character or which required advanced training were included. The nine occupational classifications are as follows: bookkeepers, cashiers, clerks (not including retail store clerks), stenographers, typists, secretaries, office machine operators, telephone and telegraph operators, and "other clerical" (includes all other clerical workers who are not included in the


². 1950 *United States Census of Population, Nebraska*, pp. 315, p. 27-162.
other eight classifications, such as "bank tellers." Also included are those persons classified in the *City Directory* as "office worker" or as "clerical worker."

The industrial classifications used were based on the industrial classifications as set up by the Business Research Bureau of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce. All persons tabulated were classified industrially in accordance with the manner in which the Omaha Chamber of Commerce classified all firms in Omaha in its publication, *Directory of Major Employers*. 2

The industrial classifications and the types of businesses included in these classifications are as follows:

1. **Wholesale Trades** - includes all wholesale firms.

2. **Retail Trades** - includes all retail firms.

3. **Manufacturing** - includes all manufacturers of products; dairies and dairy products; meat packers; printers and lithographers; grain and feed companies; bakeries; breweries; sand and gravel companies; soft drink bottling companies; and cold storage warehouses.

4. **Service Establishments** - includes such establishments as club rooms and restaurants; cafeterias; hotels; hospitals; real estate firms; industrial towel service firms; laundries and dry cleaners; welfare agencies; cemeteries; etc.

5. **Transportation, Communication, and Public Utilities** - includes telephone companies; utilities; radio and TV stations; moving and storage companies; taxi services; railroad and bus companies; and telegraph companies.

6. **Finance** - includes insurance companies; credit bureaus and collection services; savings and loan companies; and banks.

---

1. *Folk's Omaha* (Douglas County, Nebraska) *City Directory*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-1,346.

7. "Other Industrial" - includes advertising agencies; civic organizations; accounting firms; contracting firms; motion picture theaters; schools and universities; consulting engineering firms; publishing firms; livestock commissioners; clerical employees of professional persons, such as doctors and lawyers; and all persons "unclassified."

The classification "government" was added to the industrial classifications, since it appeared that such a classification would be meaningful to the study.

Government - includes all municipal, state, and national governmental employees.

Definitions for the secondary problems of the study are as follows:

1. **Permanency** - rate of duration of employment of the total women's clerical labor force as opposed to the rate of turnover.

2. **Wages** - the annual income.
CHAPTER II

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Few surveys have been made of the local labor force in the Omaha, Nebraska, area. No survey of the clerical labor force could be found with the exception of the data prepared by the personnel of the U. S. Bureau of the Census for the Bureau's decennial reports and the clerical wage surveys conducted by the Omaha Management Association and the Omaha Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Follow-up Study of South High School Graduates - Omaha, Nebraska (M.A.)

Only one research study regarding the employment of youth in the local labor market could be found which had implications for the curriculum of the local school system and this study was limited to the Industrial Arts curriculum. Mr. McConnell by an examination of school records, through personal interviews with students and businessmen, and by the use of questionnaire techniques discovered the occupational status of the graduates, the kinds of jobs in which the graduates were employed, the factors which determined beginning employment, and the strengths and weaknesses in the present industrial arts curriculum. Analyses of the data gathered indicated that guidance and counseling should be introduced at an earlier

grade level than that at which it was presently given; that a correlation existed between choice of course in school, choice of vocation, and the actual vocation followed; and that employment depended to a great extent upon physical qualifications, personal qualities, a high school education, and training in the fundamental skills.

Many occupational studies have been conducted in other parts of the United States. During the 1930's and 1940's several extensive studies were conducted by governmental agencies and independent research agencies for the main purpose of aiding the youth of America in finding a job. The majority of these studies were very comprehensive in scope, including analyses of the total composition of the labor force.

Although the present study is limited to the clerical labor force, it seems justifiable to review at least one or two of the more comprehensive studies, since they are representative of what has been done and what can be done in the area of occupational research.

A Study of the Needs of American Youth - American Youth Commission

One such study was completed by the American Youth Commission on appointment by the American Council on Education. The primary purpose of the study was to determine the needs of young people seeking jobs and to demonstrate several ways

of meeting these needs. Community research centers were set up in eight representative areas, since it was determined that local action was necessary in order to develop locally meaningful occupation research. Detailed analyses of the occupational composition of the labor force was made in each of the research centers in order to determine the occupational opportunities existing in each area. Personal interviews were conducted with 20,000 youths in an attempt to determine the problems of youth in seeking employment. It developed that the main problem facing the youth of America was that of discovering the kind of work for which they were best suited. Less than one youth in four had received vocational guidance from any source whatsoever, indicating a great need for guidance programs at the local level.

In order to test the validity of the assumption that local labor market research programs can be effectively and profitably carried forward without exorbitant costs to the schools, employment offices, and the localities involved, an interesting experiment was made by the analysts of the Joint Project in a "representative" community. A comprehensive market research program was conducted in the "representative" community, which included a complete survey of the youth of the community, a survey of local youth-serving agencies, a local labor market survey, a local occupational census, and a detailed description of all jobs in the community.

On the basis of the results of this experiment it was concluded that there are few if any communities or labor markets in America which could not, by an intelligent utilization of
existing resources in facilities and personnel, duplicate at least a substantial measure of the work done in the "representative" community, and that there are no communities that would fail to derive a profit from such activity far in excess of the modest cost involved. The main goal of such activity is one of keeping guidance, training, and placement in harmony with social, industrial, and occupational realities. Such a goal, however, necessitates the co-operation of all agencies in a community.

Employment Trends - St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Duluth, Minnesota (Employment Stabilization Research Institute)

Comprehensive studies of employment trends were also conducted in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Duluth, Minnesota. These studies were designed to indicate the changes taking place in industry in Minnesota over a period of ten years by indicating the industrial and occupational groups that had shown growth and those that had been slipping. Both trends to be used to guide the industrial development in the area and to implement the guidance programs of local agencies in advising and placing unemployed people and young people in local industry. Methodology included studies of some 500 individual businesses and case studies of some 4,000 unemployed persons. Data used were drawn from monthly payrolls of business firms and from a detailed study of employment records. Analyses of the data revealed that employment in

the retail and manufacturing industries was generally upward and that employment in the wholesale and public utility industries was generally downward. Upward and downward trends for occupational classifications varied with each of the three cities. In St. Paul, the trend was up for semi-skilled workers; down for skilled, clerical, and miscellaneous; and unchanged for the unskilled and for sales workers. In Minneapolis, the trend was up for unskilled, sales, clerical, and miscellaneous workers; and down for skilled and semi-skilled workers. In Duluth, the trend was up for skilled workers; down for unskilled and miscellaneous workers; and no change for the semi-skilled, sales, and clerical workers.

A Community Occupational Study - Cedar Falls, Iowa (A Faculty Research Study, Iowa State Teachers College)

A community occupational study of Cedar Falls, Iowa, was sponsored jointly by the Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls High School, and the Cedar Falls Chamber of Commerce.1 Iowa State Teachers College, however, was the primary sponsor, providing the funds, space, equipment, and much of the personnel.

The purpose of the study was to "... assess and enumerate the occupational classifications utilized by all firms and employing agencies in Cedar Falls, commercial and

non-commercial, and to determine in each classification the entry requirements and the numbers of employees and their characteristics.\(^2\)

A personal interview technique was used to secure data from all employers. Junior and senior, and graduate students of Iowa State Teachers College conducted the interviews.

It was found that the majority of business firms were in the service group classification - almost one-half of the business firms were so classified.

Proprietorship and partnership types of business organisation were most dominant in the community. More than 75% of the business firms in Cedar Falls were so organized.

The majority of the business firms were small - more than 70% of the distributive firms and 90% of the service firms had three or less employees. Only one-third of the industrial firms employed over twenty full-time employees.

Analysis revealed that there were 2,956 people in the working force. Opportunities for women were found to be limited primarily to rank-and-file jobs, and were most numerous in the service establishments. It was found that service firms employ the most people, 1,167, closely followed by industrial firms with 973 employees. There were 596 part-time employees in the community - a ratio of one part-time employee for every five full-time employees. Most part-time workers were found to be in the service firms.

The largest occupational groups in the community were: skilled (515), professional (457), semi-skilled (445), and clerical (432).

Male employees make up two-thirds of the total personnel employed. The skilled occupations employ more than twice as many men as any other occupational group, but women predominate in the clerical and professional classifications.

Analysis of the ages of present workers in major occupational groups within types of firms indicated that relatively few employees are in the 16-22 age group. Notable was the lack of sales employees in the younger age groups, since the majority was found to be in the 36-49 age group. Skilled job classifications in the industrial firms demonstrate an aging employee population.

Recommendations indicated that training is most needed in the clerical and skilled occupations in the community of Cedar Falls; that adult training programs were needed; and that a part-time occupational training program should be initiated.

A great many research studies have been completed which have been limited to the clerical labor force and to the implications such studies might have for the local high school curriculum. The majority of these studies were conducted by local school personnel or by graduate students in education. Many of these studies included other factors in addition to labor force statistics, such as the age, vocational training,
education, and work experience that employers require for various jobs; the types of business machines used in business establishments; the opinions of employers and employees regarding personal qualities desirable in employment, comparative value of courses of study, opportunities for promotion, etc.

**A Commercial Occupation Survey - Houston, Texas (Doctoral Dissertation)**

A commercial occupational survey of Houston, Texas,\(^1\) was designed to investigate the employment needs for office workers and the job requirements of one hundred selected business firms of Houston, Texas, in order to: (1) determine the adequacy of the commercial curriculum of the local high schools to meet these needs; and (2) recommend desirable changes in the curriculum based on the findings of the survey.

An attempt was also made to determine the office occupations available to high school graduates, as a means of providing vocational guidance; and to survey the vocational job skills and the personal traits of office employees with a view toward improving teaching techniques.

The study was divided into four major surveys, that of office occupations and employment requirements; of office machines and appliances; of businessmen's appraisal of present high school business training; and of the commercial programs of the Houston high schools.

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The survey included one hundred representative business firms in Houston and included a total of 6,682 office workers, approximately 18% of the total number of office workers employed by the businessmen in Houston, Texas.

A combination questionnaire-interview method was used for gathering the data for the study.

Office workers, including both men and women, were classified for purposes of the study under six occupational headings, i.e., "bookkeepers, cashiers, and accountants," "secretarial," "general clerical," "office machine operators," "transportation and storage (clerical)," and "executives and administrators."

The findings of the study indicated that the commercial program of the Houston Public High Schools was not meeting all of the employment needs for office workers and the job requirements of the businessmen of Houston. Adequate training was not being given for all office jobs for which high school graduates were employed; nor was sufficient training being given for the development of skills in the use of business machines. High school graduates lacked adequate training in the basic fundamentals - arithmetic, spelling, and penmanship. Personal trait training was not receiving sufficient emphasis to meet employment standards.

Female employees are preferred for most office positions. The opportunities for men are in bookkeeping and accounting, in transportation and storage (clerical), and in administrative and executive positions. Female workers are in greater demand for secretarial positions, general clerical jobs, and office machine positions.
A majority of businessmen are willing to hire students at the minimum age of eighteen years; with a minimum of a high school education.

The office equipment in the high schools is not adequate to provide for the training of students in the use of these business machines found in local offices.

Businessmen are willing to assist in a cooperative part-time training plan to give students experience in secretarial work, bookkeeping, and general clerical work.

Although the skill-building subjects have an important place in the high school program, business education should not be confined to the strictly technical subjects, but should include general business courses in order to give a broad view of business.

The high schools are not supplying enough graduates with business training to meet the employment needs of local employers.

It was recommended that the present business curriculum should be continued with modifications. Skill courses in business machine operation and courses in general office practices should be added to the present curriculum.

An effective guidance program should be initiated.

Teacher committees, including the commercial supervisor, should be set up to study the methods of improving the personal traits of the students; and to study methods of improving the training in specific skills.
Strong skill-building courses should be developed in the areas of general clerical, stenographic and secretarial, bookkeeping, and business machines; however, it is recommended that the skill subjects be deferred to the junior and senior years of high school.

A cooperative part-time training program should be initiated.

Additional office machine equipment should be added to the business education department.

An in-service training program should be conducted for business teachers in an effort to keep teachers up-to-date on modern office equipment, employment needs, employment requirements, and changing business conditions. Businessmen should be brought into the training program. Modern methods and materials should be made available to all commercial teachers.

A Study of Office Occupations - Austin, Minnesota (M.A.)

A study of office occupations in Austin, Minnesota, by Calmer Jensen brought out many significant facts that were of value in curriculum construction. The study was designed with a two-fold purpose: (1) to gain further insight into the make-up of office occupations in the City of Austin, Minnesota, and (2) to secure information that would be helpful in determining the preparation needed by high school students to equip themselves with the knowledge, skills, and personal qualities which would enable them to secure and hold jobs in the business world.

A questionnaire, presented at the time of a personal interview, was the principal source of data. The survey included all businesses in the city that employed two or more office employees.

The study indicated that of a total of 745 full-time office employees reported by the sixty-one cooperating firms, the 201 office machine operators accounted for the largest single group. The second largest group was composed of 182 clerical workers; the remaining groups were composed of 143 stenographers and secretaries; 136 general office workers; and 83 bookkeepers and accountants.

The less specialized areas, particularly the general office, clerical, and office machine areas, accounted for the 26% turnover in office personnel in 1955.

The more specialized workers, particularly the bookkeepers and accountants, and stenographers and secretaries, were the highest paid office employees. The average weekly salary for all women in all job classifications was $50.35.

Personality traits, scholastic ability, and personal appearance, followed by employer tests, references, part-time work experience, and extra-class activities were judged most important by employers.

Employers regarded accuracy, the ability to follow directions, and a sense of responsibility as most important traits. Ability and initiative were ranked above seniority when promotions were at stake.
Employers judged office workers to be most deficient in accepting responsibility, in accuracy, and in the ability to follow directions. Lack of interest was the most frequent cause for failure. Employers regarded office workers to be deficient in the areas of spelling, business vocabulary, telephone techniques, composition of letters, punctuation, stenographic skills, bookkeeping, penmanship, and various calculating machine operations.

The more specialized office jobs, particularly the bookkeeping and accounting, and the stenographic and secretarial jobs, required previous office experience.

Employers indicated that accuracy in both typewriting and shorthand transcription was more important than speed.

Typewriter, adding machines, calculating machines, and transcribing machines were the four kinds of machines used by the largest number of firms. Sixty-five percent of the mathematical processes relating to bookkeeping were done by machine.

Additional studies were examined, but due to their similarity, in method and results, with other surveys reviewed, they are listed for reference only. A state-wide survey was made in West Virginia by Edwin Hanczaryk in 1954; and in New York State by the State Education Department in the same year.


A survey of San Francisco, California, was made in 1949 by the San Francisco Unified School District; and of Dubuque, Iowa, by the Iowa Employment Security Commission in 1957. Dora A. Ames reported the findings of a survey made in Toms River, New Jersey in 1953.

SUMMARY

The occupational type of survey was used in a majority of the research studies reviewed. A combined interview-questionnaire method of research was primarily used in securing the information desired. Although the methods used and the results obtained differed with various surveys, it was evident that valuable data were obtained—data of much value to guidance programs, to curriculum planning, and, from a business viewpoint, areal development.

Other than Census data in summarized form and a single follow-up study of graduates of a local high school, no other information concerning the occupational opportunities in the Omaha, Nebraska, area was found. It is hoped that the review of previous research as incorporated in the study might


strengthen the belief that additional studies of the occupational structure of the labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, are needed; and that the values to be derived from such studies more than justify any time, effort, or expense involved.
CHAPTER III

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION AND INTERPRETATION
OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS OF THE STUDY

The procedure employed in determining the changes, if any, in the occupational pattern of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 - 1956, was as follows:

1. To determine the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force in 1931, 1936, 1941, 1946, 1951, and 1956.

2. To find the total number of single women and the total number of married women employed in the clerical labor force for the same periods of time.

3. To calculate the percentage distribution of the single women and the percentage distribution of the married women in the clerical labor force for the same years.

4. To obtain the number of women employed in each of nine clerical occupational classifications, as well as the percentage distribution of each total, for the same periods of time.

5. To discover the total number of women employed in each of eight industrial classifications and the percentage distribution of each total, for the same years; and

6. To determine the changes, if any, which have occurred in the occupational pattern of the women's clerical labor force.
An investigation of available statistical data in regard to the women's clerical labor force in Omaha for five-year periods, beginning with the years 1931, revealed that compiled data necessary for the study were not available. Neither any governmental agency, nor any industrial agency had attempted a detailed analysis of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, for shorter periods of time than every ten years. Investigation revealed that the only available source for such data was the Omaha City Directory for the years, 1931,\(^1\) 1936,\(^2\) 1941,\(^3\) 1946,\(^4\) 1951,\(^5\) and 1956.\(^6\)

Information which could be tabulated from this source included the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force; their marital status; the occupational classification of their job; and the industrial classification of their job. Approximately 70,000 employed women were so classified.

Appropriate forms were designed for tabulating the results of the investigation. (See Appendices A, B, C, D, E, and F for details of statistical data.)

TOTAL NUMBER EMPLOYED AND THEIR MARITAL STATUS

Table I indicates the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force for five-year periods from 1931 to 1956. It also includes the total number of single and the total number of married women employed in the clerical labor force and the percent of the total number who were single or who were married.

TABLE I

WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE
TOTAL EMPLOYED AND MARITAL STATUS
1931 to 1956
(Orsba, Nebraska)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1946</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1956</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Employed</td>
<td>8,458</td>
<td>8,621</td>
<td>8,864</td>
<td>13,344</td>
<td>14,245</td>
<td>15,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Single</td>
<td>7,218</td>
<td>7,333</td>
<td>7,393</td>
<td>10,458</td>
<td>8,850</td>
<td>9,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Married</td>
<td>1,240</td>
<td>1,288</td>
<td>1,471</td>
<td>2,886</td>
<td>5,395</td>
<td>5,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Single</td>
<td>85.34</td>
<td>85.06</td>
<td>83.40</td>
<td>78.37</td>
<td>62.13</td>
<td>63.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Married</td>
<td>14.66</td>
<td>14.94</td>
<td>16.60</td>
<td>21.63</td>
<td>37.87</td>
<td>36.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of women employed in the clerical labor force in 1931 was 8,458; in 1936, 8,621; in 1941, 8,864; in 1946, 13,344; in 1951, 14,245; and in 1956, 15,304.
indicated on Figure 1, the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force increased each five-year period from a total of 8,458 in 1931 to a total of 15,304 in 1956.

**Figure 1.** Total number of women employed in the clerical labor force and the total single and the total married, Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956.
The total number of single women employed in the clerical labor force was 7,218 (85.34%) in 1931; 7,333 (85.06%) in 1936; 7,393 (83.40%) in 1941; 10,458 (78.37%) in 1946; 8,850 (62.13%) in 1951; and 9,656 (63.09%) in 1956. The general pattern for the total number of single women employed in the clerical labor force between 1931 and 1956, as indicated on Figure 1, was that of an increase, with the exception of a substantial decrease between 1946 and 1951.

On a percentage basis, however, as indicated on Figure 2, decreases occurred in the single classification during each five-year period from 1931 to 1956, from a total of 85.34% in 1931 to a total of 63.09% in 1956, or a decrease of 22.25%.

![Figure 2: Percent distribution of the total number of single and the total number of married women employed in the clerical labor force, Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956](image-url)
The total number of married women employed in the clerical labor force was 1,240 (14.66%) in 1931; 1,206 (14.94%) in 1936; 1,471 (16.60%) in 1941; 2,866 (21.63%) in 1946; 5,395 (37.67%) in 1951; and 5,648 (36.91%) in 1956. The general pattern for the total number of married women employed in the clerical labor force between 1931 and 1956, as indicated on Figure 1, was that of an increase from a total of 1,240 in 1931 to a total of 5,648 in 1956.

On a proportional basis, as indicated on Figure 2, increases also occurred in the total number of married women employed, from a total of 14.66% in 1931 to a total of 36.91% in 1956.

Generally, therefore, increases occurred in the total number of women employed, in the total number of single, and in the total number of married women employed in the clerical labor force between 1931 and 1956; however, on a proportional basis, increases occurred only in the total number of married women employed, while a decrease occurred in the total number of single women employed.

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE

Table II indicates the occupational distribution of the women's clerical labor force for nine occupational classifications by the total number employed in each classification and by the percentage of the total number employed in the women's clerical labor force who were employed in each classification, for five-year periods - 1931 to 1956.
### Table II

**Occupational Distribution**

**Women's Clerical**

**Labor Force**

1931 - 1956

(Omaha, Nebraska)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Employed</th>
<th>Bookkeeper</th>
<th>Cashier</th>
<th>Clerk</th>
<th>Office Machine Operators</th>
<th>Other Clerical</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
<th>Stenographers</th>
<th>Telephone and Telegraph Operators</th>
<th>Typists</th>
<th>Percent Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>8,458</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>2,353</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>2,915</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>8,621</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>2,662</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>2,886</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>8,864</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>2,739</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>2,806</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>13,344</td>
<td>959</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>5,625</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>2,666</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>14,845</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>5,477</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>1,481</td>
<td>2,720</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>15,304</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>5,988</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>2,231</td>
<td>1,718</td>
<td>11.23</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Increase or Decrease Between 1931 and 1956**

+46,846

**Percent Increase or Decrease Between 1931 and 1956**

-3.93
Bookkeepers - Eight hundred and sixty-three (10.20%) of the women in the women's clerical labor force were employed as bookkeepers in 1931; seven hundred and fifty-one (8.71%), in 1936; seven hundred and eighty-five (8.86%), in 1941; nine hundred and fifty-nine (7.19%), in 1946; one thousand and seven (7.07%), in 1951; and nine hundred and sixty (6.27%), in 1956. The total number of women employed as bookkeepers, as indicated on Figure 3, generally declined between 1931 and 1936; generally increased between 1936 and 1951; and slightly declined between 1951 and 1956. Between 1931 and 1956, there was a total gain of ninety-seven in the total number of bookkeepers employed.

![Graph showing the total number of bookkeepers employed in the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, from 1931 to 1956.]

On a percentage basis, however, as indicated on Figure 4, there was a general decline in the proportion of bookkeepers employed, from a total of 10.20% in 1931 to a total of 6.27% in 1956 - a net loss of 3.93%.
Cashiers - In 1931, four hundred and forty-eight cashiers (5.30%) were employed in the women's clerical labor force; in 1936, three hundred and sixty-nine (4.28%); in 1941, four hundred and ten (4.63%); in 1946, four hundred and ninety-seven (3.72%); in 1951, five hundred and twenty-five (3.69%); and in 1956, five hundred and thirty-two (3.48%). As indicated on Figure 5, the total number of cashiers generally decreased between 1931 and 1936, but generally increased from 1936 to 1956. Between 1931 and 1956, there was a total gain of only eighty-four in the number of cashiers employed.

On a proportional basis, however, there was a general decrease (a total decrease of 1.82%) in the total number of cashiers employed between 1931 and 1956, as indicated on Figure 6, even though a slight increase occurred between 1936 and 1941.
FIGURE 5. TOTAL NUMBER OF CASHIERS EMPLOYED IN THE WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE, OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956

FIGURE 6. PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CASHIERS EMPLOYED IN THE WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956
Clerks - The total number of clerks employed in the women's clerical labor force in 1931 was 2,353; in 1936, 2,612; in 1941, 2,719; in 1946, 5,625; in 1951, 5,477; and in 1956, 5,988. As indicated on Figure 7, the total number of women employed as clerks greatly increased between 1931 and 1956, with the exception of a slight decrease between 1946 and 1951.

![Graph showing the total number of clerks employed from 1931 to 1956](image)

**FIGURE 7. TOTAL NUMBER OF CLERKS EMPLOYED IN THE WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE, OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956**

In 1931, 27.82% of the women employed in the clerical labor force were employed as clerks; in 1936, 30.30%; in 1941, 30.67%; in 1946, 42.15%; in 1951, 38.45%; and in 1956, 39.13%. Therefore, on a proportional basis, as indicated on Figure 8, there was a very significant increase (that of 11.31%) in the total number of women employed as clerks between 1931 and 1956, even though a decrease occurred between 1946 and 1951.
Office Machine Operators — The total number of office machine operators employed in the women's clerical labor force in 1931 was two hundred and forty-one (2.65%); in 1936, three hundred and seventy-four (4.34%); in 1941, three hundred and sixty-seven (4.14%); in 1946, six hundred and forty-three (4.82%); in 1951, six hundred and fifty-four (4.59%); and in 1956, six hundred and ninety-five (4.54%). As indicated on Figure 9, the number of women employed as office machine operators generally increased from 1931 to 1956 by a total of 454, with the exception of a small decrease between 1936 and 1941.

On a proportional basis, as indicated on Figure 10, there was also a general increase in the total number of office machine operators employed between 1931 and 1956 (a total increase of 1.69%), even though a slight decrease occurred between 1936 and 1941, and between 1946 and 1956.
Figure 9. Total number of office machine operators employed in the women's clerical labor force, Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956

Figure 10. Percent distribution of the total number of office machine operators employed in the women's clerical labor force, Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956.
Other Clerical - Fifty-one (.60%) women were employed in the "other clerical" classification in 1931; eighty-seven (1.01%), in 1936; one hundred and eighty-two (2.05%), in 1941; three hundred and seventy-seven (2.83%), in 1946; nine hundred and eight (6.37%), in 1951; and one thousand, two hundred and seventy (8.30%), in 1956. Figure 11 indicates the significant increase in the total number of women employed in the "other clerical" classification between 1931 and 1956, a total increase of 1,219.

On a percentage basis a significant increase also occurred in the total number of women employed in the "other clerical" classification of the clerical labor force. Figure 12 indicates the proportional increases that occurred from 1931 to 1956 - from .60% in 1931 to a total of 8.30% in 1956, a total proportional increase of 7.70%.)
Secretaries — The total number of secretaries employed in the women's clerical labor force in 1931 was 349 (4.13%); in 1936, 409 (4.74%); in 1941, 541 (6.10%); in 1946, 1,112 (8.33%); in 1951, 1,481 (10.40%); and in 1956, 2,231 (14.58%). As indicated on Figure 13, the total number of secretaries employed in the female clerical labor force significantly increased between 1931 and 1956 by a total of 1,882.

On a proportional basis, as indicated on Figure 14, a significant increase also occurred in the total number of secretaries employed between 1931 and 1956 — a proportional increase of 10.45%.
Figure 13. Total number of secretaries employed in the women's clerical labor force, Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956.
Stenographers - In 1931, two thousand, nine hundred and fifteen (34.47%) stenographers were employed in the women's clerical labor force; in 1936, three thousand and four (34.84%); in 1941, two thousand, eight hundred and eighty-six (32.56%); in 1946, two thousand, six hundred and eighty-six (20.13%); in 1951, two thousand, three hundred and ten (16.22%); and in 1956, one thousand, seven hundred and eighteen (11.23%). The total number of women employed as stenographers, as indicated on Figure 15, greatly declined between 1931 and 1956, with a total decline of 1,197, even though a slight increase occurred between 1931 and 1936.

Proportionally, the total number of women employed as stenographers decreased by 23.24% (a very significant decrease) between 1931 and 1956, as indicated on Figure 16.
Telephone and Telegraph Operators - Nine hundred and forty-five (11.17%) telephone and telegraph operators were employed in the women's clerical labor force in 1931; five hundred and ninety-eight (6.94%), in 1936; six hundred and twenty-six (7.06%), in 1941; nine hundred and forty-one (7.05%), in 1946; nine hundred and sixty-five (6.77%), in 1951; and one thousand and forty-three (6.81%), in 1956. Figure 17 indicates an increase of ninety-eight in the total number of women employed as telephone and telegraph operators between 1931 and 1956, even though a substantial decrease occurred between 1931 and 1936.

Proportionally, however, the total number of women employed as telephone and telegraph operators decreased by a total of 4.36% between 1931 and 1956, as indicated on Figure 18.
FIGURE 17. TOTAL NUMBER OF TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH OPERATORS EMPLOYED IN THE WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE, OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956

FIGURE 18. PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH OPERATORS EMPLOYED IN THE WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE, OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956
**Typists** - The total number of typists employed in the women's clerical labor force in 1931 was two hundred and ninety-three (3.46%); in 1936, four hundred and seventeen (4.84%); in 1941, three hundred and forty-eight (3.93%); in 1946, five hundred and four (3.78%); in 1951, nine hundred and eighteen (6.44%); and in 1956, eight hundred and sixty-seven (5.66%). Therefore, the total number of typists employed in the women's clerical labor force, as indicated on Figure 19, increased by 574 between 1931 and 1956. Decreases, however, did occur between 1936 and 1941, and between 1951 and 1956.

**Figure 19.** Total number of typists employed in the women's clerical labor force, Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956.
Proportionally, the number of women employed as typists in the women's clerical labor force also increased—a total increase of 2.20%. Decreases, however, did occur between 1936 and 1946, and between 1951 and 1956. Figure 20 indicates the percentage increases and decreases which occurred in the total number of typists employed in the women's clerical labor force between 1931 and 1956.

**FIGURE 20. PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF TYPISTS EMPLOYED IN THE WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE, OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956**
INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE
WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE

Table III indicates the industrial distribution of the women's clerical labor force for eight industrial classifications by the total number employed in each classification and by the percentage of the total number employed in the women's clerical labor force who were employed in each classification, for five year periods - 1931 to 1956.

Finance - The total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in businesses classified as "Finance" was one thousand, eight hundred and ten (21.40%) in 1931; one thousand, five hundred and ninety-nine (18.55%), in 1936; one thousand, eight hundred and forty-three (20.79%), in 1941; two thousand, seven hundred and six (20.28%), in 1946; three thousand, nine hundred (27.38%), in 1951; and four thousand five hundred and twelve (29.48%), in 1956. As indicated on Figure 21, the number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in businesses classified as "Finance" slightly decreased between 1931 and 1936, but greatly increased between 1936 and 1956. Between 1931 and 1956 a very significant increase of 2,702 occurred in the total number of women employed in businesses classified as "Finance."

On a proportional basis, as indicated on Figure 22, the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in businesses classified as "Finance" also generally increased between 1931 and 1956. Although slight decreases occurred between 1931 and 1936, and between 1941 and 1946,
### TABLE III

**INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTION**

**WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE**

1931 - 1956

(Omaha, Nebraska)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Employed</th>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Manufacturing</th>
<th>Other Industrial</th>
<th>Retail Trades</th>
<th>Service Establishments</th>
<th>Transportation Communications and Public Utilities</th>
<th>Wholesale Trades</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1,910</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>1,690</td>
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<td>772</td>
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<td>859</td>
<td>267</td>
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<td>503</td>
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<td>905</td>
<td>351</td>
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<tr>
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<td>940</td>
<td>486</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
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<td>893</td>
<td>1,092</td>
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<td>1,278</td>
<td>429</td>
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<tr>
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<td>562</td>
<td>2,939</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>5.41</td>
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</table>

**Total Increase or Decrease Between 1931 and 1956**

|                | 46,846 | 42,702 | 1,074 | 706 | 582 | 83 | 348 | 1,066 | 427 |

**Percent Increase or Decrease Between 1931 and 1956**

|                | +8.00  | +5.88  | +0.99 | -5.64 | -3.00 | +2.17 | -3.00 | -3.00  |
Figure 21. Total number of women in the clerical labor force employed in businesses classified as "finance" - Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956.
proportional increase of eight percent occurred in the total number of women employed in businesses classified as "Finance" between 1931 and 1956.

**Government** - Two hundred and fifteen (2.54%) women in the clerical labor force were employed by the government in 1931; one thousand, one hundred and eighty-one (13.70%), in 1936; eight hundred and twenty-five (9.31%), in 1941; one thousand, three hundred and nine (9.81%), in 1946; eight hundred and ninety-three (6.27%), in 1951; and one thousand, two hundred and eighty-nine (8.42%), in 1956. Figure 23 indicates the increases and decreases which occurred in the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed by the government between 1931 and 1956 - from a total of 215 in 1931.

![Graph showing the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed by the government in Omaha, Nebraska, from 1931 to 1956.](image-url)
to one thousand, two hundred and eighty-nine in 1956. Decreases, however, occurred between 1936 and 1941, and between 1946 and 1951.

On a proportional basis, as indicated on Figure 24, the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed by the government also increased, from 2.54% in 1931 to 8.42% in 1956 - a total increase of 5.88%. Proportionally,

![Figure 24. Percent Distribution of the Total Number of Women in the Clerical Labor Force Who Were Employed by the Government, Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956](image)

decreases occurred between 1936 and 1941, and between 1946 and 1951. The greatest proportional increase occurred between 1931 and 1936 - from a total of 2.54% to a total of 13.70%.
Manufacturing - The total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in businesses classified as "manufacturing" was eight hundred and fifty-one in 1931; seven hundred and seventy-two in 1936; seven hundred and ninety-five in 1941; one thousand, one hundred and ten in 1946; one thousand and ninety-two in 1951; and one thousand, five hundred and fifty-seven in 1956. As indicated on Figure 25, the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in businesses classified as "manufacturing" generally increased between 1931 and 1956 - from a total of 851 in 1931 to a total

![Graph showing the total number of women in the clerical labor force employed in businesses classified as "manufacturing" in Omaha, Nebraska from 1931 to 1956.](image-url)
of 1,557 in 1956. A slight decrease occurred, however, between 1931 and 1936, and between 1946 and 1951.

In 1931, 10.06% of the total number of women in the clerical labor force were employed in businesses classified as "manufacturing;" in 1936, 8.95%; in 1941, 8.97%; in 1946, 8.32%; in 1951, 7.67%; and in 1956, 10.17%. As indicated on Figure 26, on a proportional basis, the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in manufacturing remained relatively stable between 1931 and 1956 - from a total of 10.06%

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![Graph showing the percent distribution of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in manufacturing businesses classified as "manufacturing" in Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956.](image-url)
in 1931 to a total of 10.17% in 1956. Decreases occurred, however, between 1931 and 1951.

"Other Industrial" — One thousand, six hundred and ninety (19.98%) women were employed in the "other industrial" classification in 1931; one thousand, nine hundred and sixty-one (22.75%), in 1936; two thousand, ninety-seven (23.66%), in 1941; two thousand, three hundred and sixty-three (17.71%), in 1946; two thousand, eight hundred and seven (19.70%), in 1951; and two thousand, one hundred and ninety-four (14.34%), in 1956. As indicated on Figure 27, the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in the "other industrial" classification generally increased from 1931 to 1951, and decreased in 1956. An over-all increase of 524 occurred between 1931 and 1956 in the total number of women employed in this classification.

![Figure 27](image)

**Figure 27.** Total number of women in the clerical labor force employed in businesses classified as "other industrial" Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956.
On a proportional basis, as indicated on Figure 28, the
number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in
the "other industrial" classification increased between 1931 and
1941; significantly decreased between 1941 and 1946; increased
between 1946 and 1951; and significantly decreased between 1951
and 1956. Between 1931 and 1956, the over-all pattern was that
of a decrease from a total of 19.28% in 1931 to a total of
14.34% in 1956.

Excel Chart: Percent distribution of the total number of
women in the clerical labor force who were employed
in businesses classified as "other industrial"
OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956

**Retail Trades** - The total number of women in the clerical
labor force who were employed in businesses classified as
"retail trades" was 1,000 (11.82%) in 1931; 859 (9.96%), in
1936: 905 (10.21%), in 1941: 940 (7.04%), in 1946: 1,278 (8.97%), in 1951; and 1,383 (9.04%), in 1956. Therefore, as indicated on Figure 29, the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in businesses classified as "retail trades" decreased between 1931 and 1936, but increased steadily from 1936 to 1956. Between 1931 and 1956, an increase of 383 occurred in this classification.

![Graph](image)

**FIGURE 29. TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN IN THE CLERICAL LABOR FORCE WHO WERE EMPLOYED IN THE "RETAIL TRADES" CLASSIFICATION OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956**

Proportionally, however, as indicated on Figure 30, the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in businesses classified as "retail trades" generally decreased between 1931 and 1956 — from a total of 11.82% in 1931 to a total of 9.04% in 1956. A significant increase, however, did occur between 1946 and 1956.
Service Establishments - Three hundred and eighteen (3.76%) women in the clerical labor force were employed in "service" types of businesses in 1931; two hundred and sixty-seven (3.10%), in 1936; three hundred and sixty-one (4.07%), in 1941; four hundred and eighty-six (3.64%), in 1946; four hundred and twenty-nine (3.01%), in 1951; and six hundred and two (3.93%), in 1956. As indicated on Figure 31, the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in businesses classified as "service establishments" generally increased from a total of 318 in 1931 to a total of 602 in 1956; however, decreases occurred between 1931 and 1936, and between 1946 and 1951.

Proportionally, as indicated on Figure 32, the total number of women employed in this classification remained relatively constant between 1931 and 1956.
Figure 31. Total number of women in the clerical labor force employed in the "service establishment" classification, Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956.

Figure 32. Percent distribution of the total number of women employed in the "service establishment" classification, Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956.
Transportation, Communications, and Public Utilities -
In 1931, 1,873 (22.15%) women in the clerical labor force were
employed in transportation, communications, or public utilities
types of businesses; in 1936, 1,479 (17.6%); in 1941, 1,521
(17.04%); in 1946, 3,521 (26.39%); in 1951; 2,950 (20.71%); and
in 1956, 2,939 (19.21%). The total number of women in the
clerical labor force who were employed in transportation, com-
munications, or public utilities types of businesses, as indi-
cated on Figure 33, increased from 1,873 in 1931 to 2,939 in
1956. Substantial decreases, however, occurred between 1931 and
1936, but a very substantial increase occurred between 1941 and
1946.

**Figure 33. Total Number of Women in the Clerical Labor Force
Employed in Businesses Classified as "Transportation, Com-
munications, and Public Utilities" - Omaha, Nebraska
1931 to 1956**
On a proportional basis, however, as indicated on Figure 34, the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in transportation, communications, or public utilities types of businesses declined between 1931 and 1956 - from a total of 22.15% in 1931 to a total of 19.21% in 1956. A substantial decrease in the total number of women employed in transportation, communications, or public utilities types of businesses occurred between 1931 and 1936; a very substantial increase occurred between 1941 and 1946; and a gradual decline occurred between 1946 and 1956.

![Figure 34](image-url)

**FIGURE 34. PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN IN THE CLERICAL LABOR FORCE EMPLOYED IN BUSINESSES CLASSIFIED AS "TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS, OR PUBLIC UTILITIES" OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956**
**Wholesale Trades** - The total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in "wholesale trades" was seven hundred and one (8.29%) in 1931; five hundred and three (5.83%), in 1936; five hundred and twenty-seven (5.95%), in 1941; nine hundred and nine (6.81%), in 1946; eight hundred and ninety-six (6.29%), in 1951; and eight hundred and twenty-eight (5.41%), in 1956. As indicated on Figure 35, the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in "wholesale trades" increased from 701 in 1931 to 828 in 1956. A decline occurred between 1931 and 1936, and a significant increase occurred between 1941 and 1946; however, the total number of women employed in "wholesale" businesses remained relatively constant between 1931 and 1956.

![Figure 35: Total Number of Women in the Clerical Labor Force Employed in Businesses Classified as "Wholesale Trades" Omaha, Nebraska, 1931 to 1956](image-url)
On a proportional basis, as indicated on Figure 36, a decrease occurred in the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in "wholesale trades" — from a total of 8.29% in 1931 to a total of 5.41% in 1956. A decrease occurred between 1931 and 1936, but from 1936 to 1956 the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in "wholesale trades" — on a proportional basis — remained relatively constant.

**FIGURE 36. PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN EMPLOYED IN BUSINESSES CLASSIFIED AS "WHOLESALE TRADES" OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956**
SUMMARY

A continuing upward trend has occurred in the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, between the years, 1931 and 1956 — an upward trend which has almost doubled the total number of women employed in this area of the labor force. This trend corresponds closely with national figures, as follows: "The greatest expansion in the number of women employed occurred among the clerical workers. Their numbers more than doubled from 1940 to 1956, as 3-1/2 million more women joined their ranks."1

One of the most significant trends in the women's clerical labor force has been the continued increase, between 1931 and 1956, in the total number of married women employed — from a total of 14,663 in 1931 to a total of 36,913 in 1956.

As a result of the increased numbers of women employed in the clerical labor force, increases have also occurred in each of the nine occupational classifications, with the exception of a substantial decrease in the total number of stenographers employed; and in each of the eight industrial classifications.

Substantial increases occurred in the total number of women employed as clerks, "other clerical," and as secretaries. Industrically, significant gains occurred in the total numbers of women employed in businesses classified as "finance," and as "transportation, communications, and public utilities," and in the total number employed by the government.

Proportionally, however, significant increases and decreases, as the case may be, occurred in the total numbers of women employed in the nine occupational and in the eight industrial classifications.

Figure 37, page 66, indicates the shifts that have occurred in the occupational composition of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, between the years, 1931 and 1956.

Occupationally, the most significant increase occurred, on a proportional basis, in the total numbers of women employed as clerks and as secretaries, with an over-all increase of 11.31% and 10.45%, respectively. Significant increases also occurred, proportionally, in the total numbers of women employed as "other clerical," typists, and as office machine operators.

A very significant decrease occurred in the total number of stenographers employed - an over-all decrease of 23.24%. Significant decreases also occurred in the total number of women employed as telephone and telegraph operators, bookkeepers, and as cashiers.

Figure 38, page 67, indicates the shifts that have occurred in the industrial composition of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, between the years, 1931 and 1956.

Industrially, significant proportional increases in the total number of women in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, who were employed in businesses classified as
FIGURE 37. TRENDS IN THE OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN OF THE WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE (BY PERCENTS) OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956
FIGURE 38. TRENDS IN THE INDUSTRIAL PATTERN OF THE WOMEN’S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE (BY PERCENTS)
OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1931 TO 1956
"finance" (an over-all increase of 8%); and who were employed by the government (an over-all increase of 5.68%). The total number of women employed in businesses classified as "service establishments" and as "manufacturing," on a proportional basis, remained relatively constant.

Significant decreases, on a proportional basis, occurred in the total numbers of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in businesses classified as "other industrial," "retail trades," "transportation, communications, and public utilities," and as "wholesale trades."
CHAPTER IV

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION AND INTERPRETATION
OF THE SECONDARY PROBLEMS OF THE STUDY

A thorough investigation, utilizing many sources, was made in an effort to locate available data in regard to the age distribution, the permanency, and the wage picture of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska. Such investigation included personal interviews with personnel of the Nebraska State Employment Service, the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, and many individual businessmen. Letters were written to the U. S. Bureau of the Census and the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Nebraska State Department of Labor, the University of Nebraska Business Research Bureau, the National Education Association, the United Business Education Association, and many other research agencies specializing in labor market research. All of the responses from these agencies, which was almost 100%, indicated that such data were not available, with the exception of the U. S. Bureau of the Census data published in 1940 and in 1950.

It is realized that the use of data which were more up-to-date would have been desirable; however, such data were not available and the time limitations of the study did not permit a detailed examination of the records of local business firms, which appeared to be the only possible source. Interviews with local businessmen indicated that such data might not be available even from the records of local business firms, since most firms do not keep personnel records for any length of time
and records which are available are not usually kept in a form which could be easily tabulated.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

An investigation of available statistical data in regard to the age distribution of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, revealed that compiled data, which was comparable, were available only from the decennial reports of the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the years, 1940\(^1\) and 1950.\(^2\) The age distribution pattern, therefore, is limited to these two periods of time.

The procedure employed in determining the age distribution of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, for the years, 1940 and 1950 was as follows:

1. To find the total number of women in each of four age-group classifications who were employed in the clerical labor force for the year, 1940 and for the year, 1950

2. To calculate the percentage distribution of the total number of women in each age group for the same periods of time

3. To compare the age distribution of the women's clerical labor force in 1940 with that of 1950 to determine the

---


percentage increase or decrease, as the case may be, in the total number employed who were in each age group.

4. To find the occupational distribution of each age group for the year, 1940 and for the year, 1950

5. To calculate the percentage distribution of the age groups as to occupational classifications, and

6. To compare the occupational distribution of each age group for the years, 1940 and 1950.

Table IV indicates the total number of women in the clerical labor force by each age group classification for the years, 1940 and 1950; the percentage distribution of the totals in each age group; and the distribution of each age group classification by occupation - totally and proportionally - for the same periods of time.

Increases occurred in the total number of women employed in each age group between 1940 and 1950, since the total number employed in the clerical labor force increased during that period of time.

Analysis on a percentage basis, as indicated on Figure 39 reveals the proportional increases or decreases which occurred between 1940 and 1950 in each of the age-group classifications. In both 1940 and 1950, the majority of the women employed in the clerical labor force were between the ages of twenty to thirty-four - 60.13% in 1940 and 48.21% in 1950. Between 1940 and 1950, however, there was a decline of 11.92% in the total number employed who were in this age-group classification.
### TABLE IV

**AGE DISTRIBUTION (BY TOTALS AND OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION)**

**WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE**

*Years 1940 and 1950*

*Omaha, Nebraska*

<table>
<thead>
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<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent Increase or Decrease Between 1940 and 1950

- 6.54
- 11.92
- 1.87
- 3.51
In 1940, 29.98% of the women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, were in the thirty-five to fifty-four age-group classification; in 1950, 31.8%, representing an increase of 1.87% in the total number employed who were in this age-group classification.

The total number of women employed in the clerical labor force who were from fourteen to nineteen years of age represented 6.49% of the total clerical labor force in 1940; 13.03%, in 1950. The total number employed who were in the age group of fourteen to nineteen, therefore, increased by 6.54% between 1940 and 1950.

In 1940, 3.40% of the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force were fifty-five years of age or over;
in 1950, 6.91% — representing an increase of 3.51% between 1940 and 1950.

Between 1940 and 1950, therefore, the total number of women who were in the age-group of twenty to thirty-four substantially decreased, while the total number of women in all other age-group classifications increased.

Increases occurred in the total number of women employed in each age group by each occupational classification. These increases were, also, the result of the increase in the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force between 1940 and 1950.

Figure 40 indicates the proportional distribution of each age-group classification as to occupation for the years, 1940 and 1950.

In 1940, the majority of the women who were between fourteen and nineteen years of age were employed as "stenographers, typists, or secretaries" (49.44%); in 1950, the majority were employed in the "other clerical" classification (52.77%). In both 1940 and in 1950, however, the majority of the women in this age-group were either employed as "stenographers, typists, and secretaries" or in "other clerical" jobs; few were employed as bookkeepers, cashiers, or as telephone operators.

The same pattern was also true of the 20-34 years of age group. The majority of women in the 20-34 years of age group were employed as "stenographers, typists, and secretaries" in 1940 (51.15%); in 1950, the majority were employed as "other
FIGURE 40. PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF EACH AGE-GROUP CLASSIFICATION BY OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OMAHA, NEBRASKA, 1940 AND 1950
clerical" (45.96%). Relatively few of the women in this age group were employed as bookkeepers, cashiers, or telephone operators.

The majority of the women in the 35-54 years of age group were also employed as "stenographers, typists, and secretaries" in 1940 (37.97%); and as "other clerical" in 1950 (44.15%). A significant proportion of the women in this age group, however, were employed as bookkeepers and as cashiers. The highest proportional number of telephone operators employed were in the 35-54 years of age group.

Women who were fifty-five years of age or over were predominantly employed as "other clerical" in both 1940 and in 1950 - 43.26% and 49.25%, respectively.

PERMANENCY OF THE WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE

Data in regard to the permanency of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, were not available from any source. An attempt was made to obtain a random sample of permanency data from local business firms. Personal interviews were made with the personnel directors of a number of firms in Omaha, Nebraska. A limited amount of data, however, was obtained. All of the personnel directors were very cooperative and indicated that they would do all that they could to locate the desired data. All but four of the persons interviewed, however, telephoned to say that their company's records were not of sufficient detail to obtain the data. Only two of the four returns contained data earlier than 1950.
It is evident that the data obtained is not adequate for interpretation. Such data as were obtained, however, is indicated on Table V. The data obtained represents approximately

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>1945</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1957</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Employed</td>
<td>Percent Permanency</td>
<td>Total Employed</td>
<td>Percent Permanency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1,047</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>265</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,565</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Percent</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12% of the total clerical labor force employed in 1956, for example, but cannot be considered representative, since the data returned is predominantly from businesses specializing in either finance or in the public utility trades. On the basis of the data gathered, the permanency of the women's clerical labor force in 1945 was approximately 66%; in 1950, approximately 56%; in 1956, approximately 57%; and in 1957, approximately 63%. It would appear that the women's clerical labor force were more
stable in 1945 than in any year since that time; and also that the degree of permanency appears to be higher in 1957 than it was in 1950 or in 1956.

It is noteworthy that all of the businessmen interviewed indicated that within the past two or three years they had become aware of the need for keeping detailed business records and that they were all initiating comprehensive record-keeping programs.

WAGE PATTERN OF THE WOMEN'S CLERICAL LABOR FORCE

The only source of wage data for the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, was the U. S. Bureau of the Census data for the year 1950. No comparable data could be found.

It is possible that such data may have been secured from the records of local business firms, but it was felt that securing information of this nature should not be attempted without an advanced, well-organized publicity program. The limitations of the study did not make this possible.

The procedure used to determine the wage pattern of the women's clerical labor force in 1950 was as follows:

1. To find the total number of women in the clerical labor force whose annual income fell within each of six wage classifications.

2. To calculate the percentage distribution of the total employed in each wage classification.

1. Ibid., p. 27-174.
3. To compare the wage-group classifications as to the total number of women in each group.

4. To determine the total number, as well as the percentage distribution, of women in each wage group as to occupational classification, and

5. To compare the wage-group classifications as to occupational distribution.

Table VI indicates the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force whose wages fell within six wage-group classifications; the percentage distribution of the total in each wage-group classification; and the distribution of each wage-group classification by types of occupation — totally and percentagewise.

The majority (53.42%) of the women in the clerical labor force in 1950 received an annual wage of between one dollar and $1,999. Five thousand of the women in the clerical labor force, or 36.10%, received wages of between $2,000 and $2,999. Therefore, in 1950, 89.52% of the women in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, received less than $3,000 annually.

In 1950, the majority (49.25%) of the women who received an annual salary of between one dollar and $1,999 were employed in the "other clerical" classification, as indicated on Figure 41, page 81. Slightly over thirty-one percent of the women in this wage classification were employed as "stenographers, typists, and secretaries,"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Classifications</th>
<th>Total Employed</th>
<th>(1) $1 to $1,999</th>
<th>(2) $2,000 to $2,999</th>
<th>(3) $3,000 to $3,999</th>
<th>(4) $4,000 to $4,999</th>
<th>(5) $5,000 to $6,999</th>
<th>(6) $7,000 and Over</th>
<th>Income % Distribution</th>
<th>Median Income</th>
<th>Total $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14,405</td>
<td>7,695</td>
<td>53.42</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>36.10</td>
<td>1,340</td>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeepers</td>
<td>1,355</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>8.38</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>11.54</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashiers</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenographers, Typists,</td>
<td>4,965</td>
<td>2,415</td>
<td>31.39</td>
<td>2,010</td>
<td>38.65</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>35.45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Operators</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>7.02</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>7.09</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Clerical</td>
<td>6,565</td>
<td>3,790</td>
<td>49.25</td>
<td>2,070</td>
<td>39.81</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>48.51</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14,405</td>
<td>7,695</td>
<td>5200</td>
<td>1,340</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>1,933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Women receiving from $2,000 to $2,999 annually were predominantly employed as "other clerical" (39.81%) and as "stenographers, typists, and secretaries" (38.65%). A significant proportion of women in this wage classification were also employed as bookkeepers = 11.54%.

A predominant proportion of the women earning between $3,000 and $3,999 annually were employed as "other clerical" -
followed closely by those employed as "stenographers, typists, and secretaries" - 35.45%. A significant proportion of the women in this wage classification were employed as cashiers (15%) and as bookkeepers (10%).

The majority (35%) of the women earning an annual wage of from $4,000 to $4,999 were employed as "stenographers, typists, and secretaries," followed closely by those women employed in "other clerical" jobs, who constituted 30% of the women in this wage classification. A significant proportion of women who earned from $4,000 to $4,999 were employed as cashiers (15%); bookkeepers (10%); and as telephone operators (10%). Less than one percent of the total women's clerical labor force, however, received an annual salary falling within this wage classification.

A total of only fifty women in the clerical labor force received an annual wage of from $5,000 to $6,999 and only twenty received more than $7,000. Thirty of these women were employed as "stenographers, typists, and secretaries;" twenty-five, were employed in the "other clerical" classification; and fifteen were employed as bookkeepers. There were no cashiers, nor any telephone operators in the over $5,000 classifications.

The median income for the total women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1950 was $1,933. Telephone operators received the highest median income in 1950 - $2,046; bookkeepers received the second highest median income - $2,036;
and "stenographers, typists, and secretaries" received the third highest median income - $2,024.

SUMMARY

The majority of the women in the Omaha, Nebraska, clerical labor force were between the ages of twenty and thirty-four in both 1940 and 1950. Between 1940 and 1950, however, there was a decline of 11.92% in the total number employed who were in this age group.

A proportional increase occurred between 1940 and 1950 in the total number of women employed in all of the other age-group classifications - in the 14-19 age group, an increase of 6.54%; in the fifty and over age group, an increase of 3.40%; and in the 35-54 age group, an increase of 1.87%. Between 1940 and 1950, therefore, the total number of women who were in the age group of 20-34 substantially decreased, while the total numbers of women in all other age-group classifications increased.

The majority of the women in the 14-54 years of age groups were employed predominantly as "stenographers, typists, and secretaries" and in "other clerical" jobs. Few of the 14-34 years of age group were employed as bookkeepers, cashiers, or as telephone operators. A significant proportion of the women in the 35-54 years of age group were employed as bookkeepers, cashiers, and as telephone operators.

Women who were fifty-five years of age or over were predominantly employed in "other clerical" jobs in both 1940 and 1950.
The permanency data was very limited and no conclusions could be reached as to the trend in the stability of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska. On the basis of the limited data obtained, it appeared that the women's clerical labor force was most stable in 1945; and that since 1950, the stability appears to be increasing.

Approximately 89.52% of the women in the Omaha, Nebraska, clerical labor force received less than $3,000 annually in 1950.

Less than 10% of the women in the clerical labor force earned an annual salary in 1950, of between $3,000 and $3,999; and less than one percent earned an annual salary of between $4,000 and $4,999. Only seventy women (.49%) in the clerical labor force received an annual income of over $5,000 in 1950.

The median annual income for the women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1950 was $1,933. Telephone operators received the highest median income in 1950 = $2,046; bookkeepers received the second highest median income = $2,036; and "stenographers, typists, and secretaries", the third highest median income = $2,024.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A great need exists in all communities for a knowledge of the local labor force. In Omaha, Nebraska, little has been done toward increasing the knowledge of the occupational structure of the community.

The present study, therefore, was designed to determine the composition of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, over a period of twenty-five years in an effort to find the changes that have occurred in the occupational patterns of the women's clerical labor force in this city.

A review of historical data was used for gathering the majority of the data.

The study attempted to answer the following specific questions:

1. How many women were employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1931, 1936, 1941, 1946, 1951, and 1956?

2. What proportion of these women were married; what proportion were single?

3. What was the occupational distribution of the women in the clerical labor force during these same periods of time - totally and proportionally?

4. What was the distribution of the women in the clerical labor force as to industrial classifications during the above periods of time - totally and proportionally?
5. What changes, if any, occurred in the marital, occupational, and industrial composition of the women's clerical labor force between 1931 and 1956? Additionally, the study attempted to answer the following related questions:

1. What was the age distribution of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1940 and in 1950?
2. How stable was the women's clerical labor force between the years, 1945 and 1957?
3. What was the average wage of the women in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1950?

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. A continuing upward trend has occurred in the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, between 1931 and 1956, from a total of 8,456 in 1931 to a total of 15,304 in 1956.

2. One of the most outstanding trends has been the continued increase between 1931 and 1956 in the total number of married women employed, from a total of 14,66% in 1931 to a total of 36,91% in 1956 - a total proportional increase of 22,25%.

3. Increases occurred in the total number of women employed in all but one of the nine occupational classifications between 1931 and 1956.

4. The greatest total increases occurred in the number of women employed as clerks (a total increase of 3,635);
as secretaries (a total increase of 1,802); and in
"other clerical" jobs (a total increase of 1,219), in
that descending order.

5. The greatest decrease occurred in the total number
of stenographers employed - a total decrease of
1,197.

6. Proportionally, increases occurred in the total
number employed in each occupational classification
between 1931 and 1956, as follows:
   (a) An increase occurred in the total number of
       women employed as clerks - an increase of
       11.31%.
   (b) The total number of women employed as secretaries
       increased by 10.45%.
   (c) Women employed in "other clerical" positions
       increased by a total of 7.70%.
   (d) The total number of women employed as typists
       increased by 2.20%.
   (e) The total number of women employed as office
       machine operators increased by 1.69%.

7. Proportionally, decreases occurred in the total
number of women employed in each occupational classi-
fication between 1931 and 1956, as follows:
   (a) The greatest decrease occurred in the total
       number of women employed as stenographers - a
decrease of 23.24%.
(b) A decrease occurred in the total number of women employed as telephone and telegraph operators — a decrease of 4.36%.

(c) The total number of bookkeepers employed decreased by 3.93%.

(d) The total number of cashiers employed decreased by 1.82%.

8. Increases occurred in the total number employed in all of the industrial classifications between 1931 and 1956 as a result of the increase in the total number of women employed.

9. Proportionally, however, increases occurred in the total number employed between 1931 and 1956 in the following industrial classifications:

(a) The total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in businesses classified as "finance" increased by a total of 8%.

(b) An increase occurred in the total number of women employed by the government — an increase of 5.88%.

10. On a proportional basis, decreases occurred in the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were employed in businesses classified as follows:

(a) A decrease of 5.64% occurred in the total number of women employed in businesses classified as "other industrial."

(b) The total number of women employed in retail trades decreased by 3%. 
(c) A decrease of 3% also occurred in the total number of women employed in transportation, communications, and public utility types of businesses.

(d) A decrease of 3% also occurred in the total number of women employed in the wholesale trades.

11. The total number of women employed, proportionally, in businesses classified as "service establishments" and as "manufacturing" remained relatively constant.

12. The total number of women employed in the clerical labor force who were in all of the age-group classifications increased between 1940 and 1950.

13. Proportionally, in 1940 and 1950, more women who were 20-34 years of age were employed in the clerical labor force, than were those who were in any other age group.

14. Between 1940 and 1950, however, the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were between the ages of 20-34 declined by a total of 11.92%.

15. Proportionally, increases occurred in the total number of women in the clerical labor force who were in the following age-group classifications:

(a) The total number of women employed who were between the ages of 14-19 increased by 6.54% between 1940 and 1950.
(b) The total number of women employed who were fifty-five years of age or over increased by a total of 3.51% between 1940 and 1950.

c) The total number of women employed who were between the ages of 35-54 increased between 1940 and 1950 by a total of 1.67%.

16. In 1940, the majority of the women employed in the clerical labor force who were under 54 years of age were employed as "stenographers, typists, and secretaries" — in 1950, in "other clerical" positions.

17. Few women in the clerical labor force who were below the age of thirty-five were employed as bookkeepers, cashiers, or as telephone and telegraph operators.

18. A significant proportion of the women in the 35-54 years of age group were employed as bookkeepers, cashiers, and as telephone operators in 1940 and in 1950.

19. Women who were fifty-four years of age or over were predominantly employed in "other clerical" jobs in 1940 (43.26%) and in 1950 (49.25%).

20. On the basis of the very limited data obtained, it appears that the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, was more stable in 1945 than it has been in any year since that time; however, since 1950, the stability of the women's clerical labor force appears to be increasing.
21. Approximately 69.52% of the women in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, received less than $3,000 annually in 1950.

22. Less than 10% of the women in the clerical labor force earned an annual income of between $3,000 and $3,999 in 1950.

23. In 1950, less than one percent of the women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, earned an annual salary of between $4,000 and $4,999.

24. Only seventy women (.49%) in the clerical labor force received an annual income of over $5,000 in 1950.

25. The median income for the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1950, was $1,933.

26. Telephone operators received the highest median income in 1950 = $2,046; bookkeepers received the second highest median income = $2,036; and "stenographers, typists, and secretaries" received the third highest median income in 1950 = $2,024.

CONCLUSIONS

It was assumed that significant changes had occurred in the occupational pattern of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, during the period 1931 through 1956. It was assumed that the major changes which have occurred in the women's clerical labor force were those indicating an increase
in the total number of women employed and an increase in the
total number of married women employed; shifts in the dis-
tribution of clerical employees within the various occupational
classifications; and shifts in the distribution of women
clerical workers within the various industrial classifications.
Further, it was assumed that in relation to the secondary
factors of the study, that the age distribution indicated a
trend toward employing a greater number of younger and a greater
number of older women in the women's clerical labor force,
while a corresponding decrease occurred in the total number of
women employed who were in the middle-age group; that the
permanency of the women's clerical labor force tended to be
more stabilized; and that salaries had generally increased.

The findings of the study verify the following assump-
tions:

1. An increase in the total number of women employed
in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, from a total of 8,458 in 1931 to a total of 15,304
in 1956.

2. An increase in the total number of married women
who were employed in the clerical labor force in
Omaha, Nebraska, from a proportional total of
14.66% in 1931 to a proportional total of 36.91%
in 1956.

3. Shifts in the occupational pattern of the women's
clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, between
1931 and 1956, as follows:
(a) Proportionally, decreases occurred in the total number of women who were employed as stenographers, telephone and telegraph operators, bookkeepers, and as cashiers.

(b) Increases also occurred, proportionally, in the total number of women who were employed as clerks, secretaries, in "other clerical" positions, as typists, and as office machine operators.

(c) The most significant shift which occurred was the decrease of 23.24% in the total number of stenographers employed, and the increase of 11.31% in the total number of clerks employed, as well as the increase of 10.45% in the total number of secretaries employed.

4. Shifts in the industrial pattern of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, between 1931 and 1956, as revealed by the facts of the study, are:

(a) Proportionally, decreases occurred in the total number of women who were employed in businesses classified as "other industrial;" retail trades; wholesale trades; and as transportation, communications, and public utilities.

(b) Relatively, increases occurred in the total number of women who were employed in businesses classified as finance and in the total number who were employed by the government.
5. An increase in the total number of younger women (ages 14-19) employed in the women's clerical labor force, between 1931 and 1956 - a proportional increase of 6.54%.

6. An increase in the total number of older women (ages 55 and over) employed in the women's clerical labor force, between 1931 and 1956 - a proportional increase of 3.51%.

7. A decline in the total number of women employed in the clerical labor force, between 1931 and 1956, who were in the "middle-age" group - a proportional decrease of 10.05% in the total number employed who were between the ages of 20-54.

A lack of evidence made it impossible to verify the assumptions that the women's clerical labor force tended to be more stable and that the wages of the women in the clerical labor force had increased.

Although not predicted by any previous assumption, the findings of the study indicate the following additional conclusions:

1. Women who were under fifty-four years of age were predominantly employed as stenographers, typists, or as secretaries in 1940; but were predominantly employed in "other clerical" positions in 1950.

2. The majority of the women who were employed as bookkeepers, cashiers, and as telephone and telegraph operators were over thirty-five years of age in both 1940 and 1950.
3. Women who were fifty-five years of age or over were predominantly employed in "other clerical" jobs in both 1940 and in 1950.

4. Over three-fourths of the women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, earned an annual income of less than $3,000 in 1950.

5. Less than 10% of the women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, earned an annual income of from $3,000 to $3,999 in 1950.

6. Less than one percent of the women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1950, earned an annual income of from $4,000 to $4,999.

7. Only seventy women (.49%) of the women employed in the clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, earned an annual income of over $5,000 in 1950.

8. The median income for the women in the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, was $1,933 in 1950.

9. Telephone operators received the highest median income in 1950, with bookkeepers and "stenographers, typists, and secretaries" receiving the next highest annual income, respectively.
CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

An attempt was made in the study to review the trends which occurred over a twenty-five year period of time in the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska. Many questions arose as the study progressed to its completion, such as:

1. What implications do the results of the study have for curriculum planning in the local high schools?

2. What implications do the results of the study have for the guidance programs of the local high schools?

3. How does the composition of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, compare with state and national trends?

4. What have been the changes in the composition of the women's clerical labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, during the very significant recent months?

5. What additional studies should be made to implement the present study?

6. What is the composition of the total labor force in Omaha, Nebraska, including all occupations and all industries?

7. What are some of the methods for conducting occupational surveys in a community?
No attempt was made to interpret the findings of the study in relationship to the objectives of the business education programs, or to those of the guidance programs of the local high schools. It would appear that such an interpretation might be of value. For example, it is possible that the increase in the total number of women employed as clerks and in "other clerical" positions may indicate a need for a more diversified type of training for business education students as opposed to a highly specialized type of training.

Additionally, it may be possible to gain further insight into the opportunities available for young workers by further analysis of the findings of the study, since the size of the occupation is often a main factor in replacement.

It may also be possible to gain further insight into the future occupational trends in the area, since a study of the growth and decline of an occupation over a period of years often offers a guide to the future trend of that occupation.

The above areas are those which may warrant additional investigation.

There is a need for additional research in regard to regional and national trends as they influence the local labor market. It is incorrect to assume that national trends will operate similarly in all local communities, but it is equally wrong to ignore completely the impact of broad regional and national trends upon the character of the local labor market. Any basic fact which is true of the nation, or any trend which operates generally is likely to make itself felt in many local communities.
The community survey should be a continuous process. It is necessary to conduct surveys frequently in order to keep pace with business changes. Methods of maintaining a continual survey of the local labor market should be investigated.

Many additional studies of the labor market are needed in Omaha, Nebraska, before an evaluation of the curriculum and of the guidance programs of the local high schools could and should be made. There would appear to be a need for research in the following areas:

1. **Local Job Analysis**:
   
   (a) Local job descriptions - including analysis of the various operations undertaken in business occupations; conditions under which the work was performed; and the necessary and desirable qualifications of the worker.
   
   (b) Educational requirements of local jobs.
   
   (c) Business standards survey.
   
   (d) Opportunities for advancement.
   
   (e) Wage data.
   
   (f) Current trends in job openings.
   
   (g) Data on the number of unemployed in each category as well as estimates of employment trends in the area.

2. **Equipment Survey** - survey of the kinds of business machines most likely to be used by office employees in the community as a basis for purchasing equipment for the business department of the local high schools.
and also for the implications such data might have for curriculum planning and for guidance programs.

3. **Follow-up Studies of Graduates and Drop-outs** - follow-up surveys of graduates and drop-outs during the past few years to determine the types of jobs in which they were employed. Such surveys could also include the opinions of the graduates and drop-outs as to how well they felt they were prepared for beginning jobs. Facts from a follow-up study could later be compared with similar facts from a subsequent study. Thus, through a succession of such studies, year after year, it would be possible to discover changing or stable conditions in the occupations of graduates.

4. **Survey of Local Training and Placement Facilities** - including local and on-the-job training facilities.

5. **Survey of the Opinions of Local Businessmen** - including their opinions as to the adequacy or deficiencies in the training needs of young workers. A survey of the reasons for employees failing in business is also of value.

6. **Survey of the Curriculum and the Guidance Practices of the Local High Schools** - such a survey would be necessary in order to determine what revisions, if any, may be needed.
There is a need for a survey of all businesses and all industries in Omaha, Nebraska. Such a survey would show the employment needs, not only for office occupations, but for all phases of business and industry. A survey of this nature would be expensive, and would require a large number of workers, but it would be of immeasurable value to businessmen and to the school system. A survey of this proportion should be a joint undertaking of business and the schools.

Many guides are available for use in conducting community occupational surveys. Marguerite Zapoleon has compiled a bulletin on conducting occupational surveys which gives suggested procedures for the survey and illustrates several questionnaires and schedules for use in conducting such surveys. Although this publication is now out of print, copies are readily available in most libraries. The Bureau of Occupational Information and Guidance in California has also prepared a guide to the community occupational survey. The U. S. Office of Education has established an Occupational Information and Guidance Service from which valuable assistance may be had in conducting a community occupational survey.

Much research has been completed in the area of local occupational surveys and any group desiring to initiate such a


survey would have little difficulty in locating an abundance of data in regard to the methods of initiating, conducting, completing, and interpreting a local labor market survey.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


**Bulletins**


**Magazines**


Publications of Learned Organizations and Societies


Unpublished Materials


APPENDIX
### Female Clerical Labor Force

#### Omaha, Nebraska

**Year 1931**

#### Occupational Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Classification</th>
<th>Bookkeeper</th>
<th>Cashier</th>
<th>Clerk</th>
<th>Stenographer</th>
<th>Typist</th>
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#### Total: Occupational Classification

| % Distribution Occupational Classification | 10.20 | 5.30 | 27.82 | 34.47 | 3.46 | 4.13 | 11.17 | .60 | 2.85 | 14.66 | 85.34 | 100% |

**M** - Married  
**S** - Single
### FEMALE CLERICAL LABOR FORCE
OMAHA, NEBRASKA
YEAR 1936

**OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION**

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**% DISTRIBUTION OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION**

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N - Married
S - Single
## FEMALE CLERICAL LABOR FORCE

**OMAHA, NEBRASKA**

**YEAR 1941**

**OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION**

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M - Married  
S - Single
## Female Clerical Labor Force
### Omaha, Nebraska
#### Year 1946

### Occupational Classification

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| Total: Occupational Classification | 959 | 477 | 5,625 | 2,686 | 504 | 1,112 | 941 | 377 | 643 | 2,886 10,458 |

| % Distribution Occupational Classification | 7.19 | 3.72 | 42.15 | 20.13 | 3.78 | 8.33 | 7.05 | 2.83 | 4.82 | 21.63 78.37 |

M - Married
S - Single
### OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Industrial Classification</th>
<th>Bookkeeper</th>
<th>Cashier</th>
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<th>Stenographer</th>
<th>Typist</th>
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<td>3.69</td>
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<td>6.37</td>
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### OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION

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<tr>
<th>Industrial Classification</th>
<th>Bookkeeper</th>
<th>Cashier</th>
<th>Clerk</th>
<th>Stenographer</th>
<th>Typist</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
<th>Telephone Operators</th>
<th>Other Clerical Workers</th>
<th>Office Machine Operators</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHOLESALE TRADES</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>189</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RETAIL TRADES</strong></td>
<td>117</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MANUFACTURING</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC UTILITIES</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FINANCE</strong></td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>295</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>291</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER</strong></td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>287</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
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<td>3,722</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>1,134</td>
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<td>570</td>
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**TOTAL:** OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION

<table>
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<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th>S</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>960</td>
<td>532</td>
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<tr>
<td>5,968</td>
<td>1,718</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,718</td>
<td>867</td>
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<td>1,270</td>
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<td>5,648</td>
<td>9,656</td>
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**% DISTRIBUTION OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M - Married</th>
<th>S - Single</th>
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<td>6.27</td>
<td>3.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.13</td>
<td>11.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>14.59</td>
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<td>6.81</td>
<td>8.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>36.91</td>
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