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THE STATUS OF THE NEGRO INDUSTRIAL
WORKER IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

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APPROVED

W. R. Banks
Date

THE STATUS OF THE NEGRO INDUSTRIAL WORKER
IN
HOUSTON, TEXAS

by

Isaac Benjamin Kemp

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1945

A Thesis in Industrial Education Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment
of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Science
in the
Graduate Division
of

Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College
Prairie View, Texas

May, 1945



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Prairie View, Texas

APPROVED

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Mrs. Sarah S. Kemp, whose work in the public schools of Texas furnished the background for the employment and success of men and women in every walk of life. Her support, sacrifices, and encouragement made me what I am today.

Finally, special appreciation is acknowledged to the Houston Chamber of Commerce for their cooperation in furnishing materials and data for this thesis.

I. S. K.

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The writer wishes to express his sincere appreciation to Professor C. L. Wilson, Director, Division of Mechanic Arts; Professor T. L. Holley, Professor, Trade and Industrial Training, Houston area; Professor J. J. Abernethy, Director, ESMWT Training; Professor J. H. Windom, Director, Department of Education; and Dr. J. M. Drew, Director, Division of Arts and Sciences, all of Prairie View State College, for their painstaking considerations of the issues raised during the research and their continued interest in the work.

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Finally, special appreciation is acknowledged to the Houston Chamber of Commerce for their cooperation in furnishing materials and data for this thesis.

I. B. K.

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VITA

Historical Background

Isaac Benjamin Kemp was born three and one-half miles northwest of Hempstead, Waller County, Texas, July 19, 1899. At an early age he moved to the Shady Grove community, six miles north of Prairie View State College, and nine miles northeast of Hempstead, Waller County, Texas. His grammar school work was done in the Lawrence Key rural school in an adjoining community.

The first two years of his high school work were done in the Sam Schwarz High School, Hempstead, Texas. At the age of twelve he entered Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College as a freshman.

He was found active in the Broom and Mattress and Carpentry Departments, from which he was granted trade certificates. In 1917 he completed the course prescribed by the Normal School and received his diploma.

In 1931 he received the Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Education from Prairie View State College. He entered the Graduate School of Prairie View State College in June, 1940, working toward the Master of Science degree in Industrial Education.

The writer has served in the public schools of Texas for twenty-one years, and at this time he is principal of the Columbus High School, Columbus, Colorado County, Texas.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

From the formation of the first colony in America there has been progressive industrial activity. The landing of the first Negroes in America in 1619 made the Negro a part of the movement that designed jobs and classified labor as it affected the production and distribution of goods. The original position of the Negro was one in which he learned to obey the command of his master. This did not terminate with the end of slavery because the Negro continued to obey the instructions of the dominant race.

By the twentieth century, however, Negroes had become very efficient in many industries in the South. American industries have brought increases in wealth, the source of progress and power in community life. The Negro has been a vital factor in the maintenance of industry by his contributions in supplying the experimental materials on concepts favoring industrial achievement.

The restrictions of the supply of foreign labor led many manufacturers to experiment with Negro labor. The success of these experiments exploded the myth of inadaptability of the Negro to machine industry, and justified efforts to secure Negro workers.¹

There has been constant progress in the quantity and quality of Negro labor from 1836 to 1932.

In the original arrangement certain tasks and operations in the industrial field were considered jobs for Negroes.

¹T. J. Woofter, "Negro Problems in Cities", p. 26.

Certain wage scales for services were set as standards for Negroes. The "double" standard of wages and employment set up by the dominant race gradually affected the industrial pattern.

The transfer of many foreigners to operate industries and provide capital for their maintenance created a background for practices that tended to eliminate the Negro from receiving his share of advancement in position or wages in the industries.

A man's career is greatly influenced by the employment situations and the number employed according to the opportunity for continuing profitably in industry.

In Houston, the stronghold of the Negro Board of Trade and Working Men's Association, Negroes constituted only 30 per cent of the population, furnished 60 per cent of the unemployed. "Last to be hired, first to be fired", was the way in which colored workers expressed their dilemma.²

The Negro has worked as a helper, apprentice, journeyman, and supervisor in many types of industries. Because of the ordeals through which he has gone he has become adapted to all kinds of work and working conditions. His alertness in acquiring a trade provided rapid advancements and adjustments under all circumstances. The marked job and limited service began to spring up with the rise of capital and the exploitation of cheap labor.

In the early part of the twentieth century the roads of South Central Texas were covered with carts and wagons filled with cotton, corn, oats, wheat, chickens, turkeys, cattle, hogs, and sometimes, sheep, and goats from the fertile land and grazing pastures on their way to market. The

²Hobart P. Taylor, C. W. Rice, Labor Leader, Unpublished Thesis, Prairie View State College, 1939, p. 29.

industries depended, very largely, on increased production as a stimulus for expansion and the barter system was used as a means of exchanging commodities.

Houston had its beginning in 1836 on Buffalo Bayou, a small town named in the honor of General Sam Houston, who was the commanding officer during the battle of San Jacinto when Texas won her independence from Mexico. The republic of Texas was organized in 1836. Houston was a trading center for the farmers and merchants within a radius of fifty miles, although it was hindered in industrial growth by bad roads and limited resources. By 1850 the population was 2,396.³

The principal industries of the town consisted of: cotton gins, syrup mills, stockyards, woodyards, and livery stables. The Negroes who lived in the town usually served as attendants at the livery stables, porters at the barber shops, dish washers, ditch diggers, shine boys in small hotels, and did various types of cheap unskilled work.

Industrial growth was slow, yet by 1914 many small industries had developed. New buildings were constructed, and business establishments were enlarged. Consequently, many more laborers were needed to continue the expansion program.

During the first World War, Houston was the principal trading center of South Texas. It had grown from 44,633 in 1900 to over 100,000 in 1914 when the War started.⁴

The Negro population had increased from approximately 8,000 to 15,000

³Texas Almanac, 1943-1944, p. 86.

⁴Ibid.

during this same period. Wages became an inducement for Negro laborers to work in the industries.

Houston was rapidly becoming an important railway center and improved roads in this area gave the city access to many natural resources.

The depression of 1922, following World War I, caused many Negroes from rural areas and small towns who depended chiefly upon agriculture to migrate to industrial centers in efforts to make their livelihoods. Thus many Negroes moved to Houston. This naturally resulted in the development and expansion of residential areas for Negroes.

By 1925, the population of Houston had grown to approximately twenty-five thousand Negroes⁵, many of whom were employed in many types of industries, including: compresses, machine shops, metal works, textile mills, saw mills, lumber yards, wood yards, electric plants, automobile works, farm machinery, factories, and many subsidiary plants.

Small boats operating on Buffalo Bayou gave rise to the thought of navigation as a means of promoting commerce. The execution of this idea caused the opening of the water front and the opening of a navigable stream to the Gulf Coast.

The Bayou was dredged in 1921 to provide for the passage of small cargo ships and the "waterfront" became the Houston harbor. An improvement program provided better streets, more modern conveniences, improved roads to the city, and additional homes for the workers. The work usually done by hand soon became the task of the machine, demanding an improvement in training and an advancement in jobs for the Negro.

Houston is now the largest city in Texas with a total population of

⁵Ibid.

384,000 located on the Gulf Coast; it is the largest trade center in the State, with the largest harbor in the South. The Negro population has grown from 25,000 two decades ago to 94,000 today.⁶ Some of the industries that have been added during the past twenty-five years are automobile assembly plants, dairy products factories, glass works, creosote plants, oil mills, oil refineries, machine shops, oilwell supply houses, compresses, packing houses, tool manufacturing plants, furniture factories, steel processing plants, and many subsidiary plants that contribute to the needs of these industries by producing special parts or materials needed in the production.

The Sheffield Steel of Texas is the vital factor in helping Texas develop its own new industries faster, because steel is the "B vitamin" of industrial growth. Somewhere along the line, steel plays a vital and economic role in providing the necessities and conveniences for better living. It makes tools, machinery, and other equipment which help produce, process, and deliver the meat, grain, fruit, vegetables, cotton, wool, and oil for which the South and Southwest are noted. Almost every kind of industry flourishes where steel is made. Now the South-Southwest has its own fully integrated steel making industry. In itself this new industry calls for the mining of more native iron ore, coal, limestone and other raw materials.⁷

The Hughes Tool Company is the largest producer of oilwell supplies in the world, and a leading producer of precision tools and metal appliances. Shells for the 55 mm. guns and many automotive parts used in the war effort

⁶Ibid. Labor News, March 2, 1944, col. 2, p. 2.

⁷Houston Post, Tuesday, July 18, 1944, Sec. 1, col. 6, p. 2.

are produced by this plant.

The Brown Shipyard has developed so as to repair or build many types of ships including battleships, and large merchantmen. "Although shipbuilding is comparatively new to the Negro worker, he is rapidly becoming very efficient in this type of work."⁸

The Todd Dry Dock is equipped to load or unload any cargo vessel in record time. This company facilitates commerce by eliminating the waste of time originally used in handling large cargoes of supplies.

There are many nationally known wholesale and retail stores that supply various needs of the population of the Houston area. Among these are Sears Roebuck and Company, Montgomery Ward and Company, Foley Brothers, Sakowitz Brothers, Henke and Pilot, and Weingartens.

There are many natural resources in the Houston area. Oil that supplies the local industries with fuel and crude oil for refineries and other markets is found in large quantities. Crude salt may be obtained from mines in the Houston area. This product finds its way to world markets for both home and commercial use.

The sulphur mines of Texas are the largest in the United States. These mines supply the needs of the laboratories, furnaces, and drug counters. The derivatives of sulphur have been responsible for saving the lives of many injured workers and for the control of many contagious diseases.

Limestone from which cement and fireproof materials are made can also be found in abundance in this area.

⁸Negro Labor News, March 9, 1944, col. 3, p. 2.

In 1937 the Buffalo Bayou was dredged for the second time, to allow the passage of the largest battleship on transport vessel. The ship channel has become one of the main assets in the growth of the city.

Negroes are employed in large numbers on the waterfront. Many of these workers have grown up with the industry from its beginning and some have been on the same job for twenty years.

The new industries in the city include steel mills, foundries, ship-building companies, and processing plants. Many Negroes are employed as skilled workers in the new industries of the city. Approximately 40,000 Negroes are employed in various types of work within a fifteen-mile radius of the city. Of this number, over 10,000 have jobs that require skill and technical knowledge. There were 9,000 skilled workers in Houston registered by the Department of Labor before May, 1944. Among these were boiler makers, machinists, special machine operators, die casters, glaziers, molders, automotive engineers, oil pressmen, and locomotive engineers.

Besides the industrial advantages offered in Texas' largest city, one may find splendid educational facilities for Negroes. Among these is a senior college for Negroes that has in recent years become one of the leading institutions of the State. This institution is a great contributor to the cultural pattern of the city. There are three senior high schools, among the largest in the South, and four junior high schools offering literary work and opportunities in trade skill, including woodwork and machine operation. These institutions also furnish training in home economics, science, and physical education.

Statement of Problem

It has long been established in the literature of industrial science that population members occupy a specific place in human group life. This position is greatly affected by their status in the industrial pattern of society in which they move and have their being. Previous study has shown that this type of existence is not always the same in nature.

Because of this type of assumption, it is possible to study the industrial status of a particular occupational group.

Every individual who seeks a job is interested in two things. His first interest is in the economic returns which the job offers in the light of responsibilities and effort which it requires. His second interest is in the future it offers and the security it guarantees. The consideration of these questions depends upon the circumstances, outlook, and ambition of the potential worker. However, these interests form indexes of the individual status of individuals engaged in any type of work. Because of this theoretical possibility, this study is concerned with the following main question: What is the industrial status of Negro skilled workers in Houston, Texas?

Although this question cannot be answered fully, it is believed that if specific indexes are carefully selected and treated in relation to adequate field notes, a general picture of Negro skilled workers in their socio-industrial pattern of life can be secured. In order to realize this general objective, eight main questions must be answered by the investigation:

1. How many Negroes are employed as skilled workers in Houston, Texas, and has there been an increase or decrease in the number of skilled Negro workers from 1935 to 1944?

2. What conditions have caused increases or decreases in the number of skilled Negro workers in the Houston area?
3. What are the industrial fields in which these skilled Negro workers are employed and why are they employed in these particular fields?
4. What is the average wage of skilled Negro workers in comparison with wages paid to all skilled workers in the industries of the Houston area?
5. What is the effect of special training on wages based on a comparison of averages of salaries?
6. Why is it that all employees hired to do the same type of work do not receive the same pay?
7. What is the average tenure of the skilled Negro worker?
8. What factors affect the employment of skilled Negro workers?

Preliminary to any such analysis is the definition of significant terms which will be used in this problem. Therefore, we are defining status as the state or condition of a person, group or situation; it further represents one's standing with relation to others. All persons having Negro blood in their veins or a descendant of the first African slaves brought to this country, as well as, individuals classified as Negroes by the management of industry will be referred to as Negroes. All persons who are skilled in the manipulation and operation of tools and machinery, possessing the technical knowledge needed for the performance of a task in industry will be referred to as skilled industrial workers. These workers represent the makers and operators of the machines used by industry. Houston, the largest city in Texas, located forty-six miles southeast of Prairie View State College, had a population of 384,518, including approximately 94,000 Negroes, in 1944.⁹

⁹ Texas Almanac, 1943-1944, p. 86.

Scope of Investigation

In accordance with the definition of terms this study deals with 12,886 Negroes employed as skilled workers, drawn from an area representing a radius of fifteen miles from the City Courthouse in Houston, identified as the Houston area.

This selection represents sixteen types of industries from which complete reports were obtained for a period extending from 1935 to 1944, a period of ten years. This study indicates that definite changes have been made during the period designated. The sample of 261 individual reports of workers represents an attempt to secure an industrial pattern of the area corresponding to similar situations in industry for skilled Negro workers.

Method of Investigation

The method of investigation involved the use of questionnaires¹⁰, personal surveys, records and reports of the War Manpower Commission and reports of labor organizations.

After the problem was framed and tables made a schedule was constructed for the purpose of securing such data as the tables called for.

There were complete reports from 33 industries and 261 individual workers which provided data on the workers and their relation to industry. Because of the rapid changes in employment situations in industry from 1942-1944 it was necessary to make a personal survey in June, 1944, to determine the effect of these changes on workers and wages.

Officers of trade unions and industrial organizations were contacted for data on the skilled workers of their membership in the Houston area.

¹⁰
See Appendixes A and B.

These data were used to make certain deductions as to the scope of organizations' operations and the effect of collective bargaining on job placement and wages.

Social security payroll reports were also used as a means of determining the status of the worker in case of accident, disability, or discharge.

Personal visits were made to the industries to determine the attitude of employers and employees. A survey of records over a period of ten years was made as a means of determining changing trends and developments during this period. The investigation included a research of special reports, pamphlets, periodicals and books for any information that might assist in achieving the basic objectives of the study.

Previous Similar or Related Studies

Before proceeding with this problem it was considered desirable to review similar and related studies on the Negro in industry.

It is interesting to note that there was a very little literature available on the subject, and all the literature that was found was published in recent years.

Henry Allen Bullock's "Vocational Opportunities for Negroes in Texas", 1938, Educational Conference, Prairie View State College, is a study revealing low wage levels for Negroes, a lack of specific industrial training, and definite cases of increases in pay and better employment situations wherever technical knowledge and skill were acquired. It further advises the preparation of Negroes to enter other fields that have been dominated by other races, especially by whites.

Henry Allen Bullock, in "Negro Domestic Servants in Houston", 1942, Educational Conference, Prairie View State College, reveals the lack of

training for domestic servants, and further shows that wages are paid on the basis of the preparation to enter a chosen field. The pattern of selection on the basis of family participation in these fields forms a tentative background for continuity in a chosen type of job.

Paul E. Shroeder, in "Industrial Washington and Negro Employment", 1939, Columbia University Press, emphasizes the trend of Negro workers to transfer to white collar jobs in the nation's capital. Although industry has grown enormously in recent years, the Negro skilled worker seeks the job with the greater pay and less physical exertion.

Thomas William Grissom, in the thesis "Opportunities for Vocational Education for Negroes of Oklahoma", 1940, Arizona State Teachers College, Temple, Arizona, shows the need for better training of Negroes for job placement in Oklahoma. He also shows that the demand for Negro workers is in proportion to their interest in entering industrial fields. The thesis specifically states that the "fear" element which acts as a barrier to Negro workers entering new fields should be eliminated. It further shows that increases in preparation and efficiency will result in better job opportunities.

Thomas L. Holley, in "Survey on Vocational Education" for the Board of Education, Houston Independent Schools, September 11, 1941, submits findings conducive to the needs of better training facilities for Negroes in Houston with a definite trend for job placement after the completion of the required training period.

Wendell P. Terrell, in a thesis entitled "Vocational Opportunities for Students in the Five Cities of Texas", 1938, Colorado State College, gives an insight on the facilities for industrial training and job placement for high school trainees in industry. The reports indicate that our industrial

provisions are woefully inadequate resulting in limited job placements for high school graduates. The trend of this report is directed toward vocational specialization as a means of broadening the field of service in industry.

Hobart P. Taylor, in a thesis entitled "C. W. Rice, Labor Leader", 1939, Prairie View State College, gives a summary of many efforts to organize Negro labor in Houston and the reaction of employers to the recognition of skilled Negro workers in industry. It gives collective bargaining and industrial organization as a basis of securing pay increases and better working conditions in industry and suggests the press as a means of informing workers and the general public of policies and plans on controversial issues on labor.

Significance of the Study

At a glance, one may conclude that such a study as outlined here is of little value. A more detailed study will show that there are three types of values that may be derived from such a study. One of these values is that the study will add to a present store of knowledge concerning Negro skilled workers.

Most studies previously cited have been concerned with mere facts about Negro workers. They have been concerned with criticisms, complaints and types of work done. The relative potentiality of various types of industrial workers and types of wages paid the skilled worker are integral parts of social security. This study proposes to supply, at least in part, these data for a select sample of Houston Negroes.

So far as I know no study on the Negro skilled worker in Houston has been made, and this study of skilled Negro workers will raise questions that

may become hypotheses for further investigation. Although these data will not be sufficiently conclusive to apply to Negro skilled workers in the State, there is a possibility that they may act as a basis from which a more thorough study of this aspect of Negro life can be made.

An investigation is needed in order to determine what forces, factors, concepts and operations contribute to or hinder the Negro skilled worker in industry. In order to do this the controversial issues involving employment situations for skilled workers were chosen, as this type of worker, represents the better prepared and better paid group of workers in the industrial pattern. The administrative value of this study will supply information that may be used by educational agencies in training a corps of intelligent Negro skilled workers.

It will apply a philosophy for the continuation of progressive operation of this type of work, because the rapid growth of industries and the corresponding increase in population make it highly desirable that we obtain as many facts as possible that may affect Negro workers.

Machines have increased sevenfold, but the machinists' union bar Negroes. Trucks are replacing drays and also competing with railway transportation; and trucking, increasingly, is becoming a chain proposition instead of an individual venture. The decline of handcraft and the progressive mechanization of industry generally has meant the exclusion of Negroes from job opportunities.

Conditions have varied in different localities as Negroes point out;

CHAPTER II

THE NEGRO IN INDUSTRY AND METHODS OF SECURING EMPLOYMENT

Right from the beginning the Negroes' position in the southern non-agricultural labor market has been influenced by two forces or trends working in opposite directions. One force is the general expansion of the southern non-agricultural economy that tends to increase the employment opportunity for Negroes as well as whites. The other force is competition with white job seekers, that tends to exclude Negroes and to press them downward in the occupational hierarchy. Regarding the second trend it should be observed that there had been plenty of racial competition before the Civil War. White artisans had often vociferously protested against the use of Negroes for skilled work in the crafts. But as long as the politically most powerful group of whites had a vested interest in Negro mechanics, the protesting was of little avail--white men had usually little economic interest in having the young Negro trained for skilled work. ... The black codes and the dependent status of the Negro made him amenable to exploitation. The poorer classes of whites got more to say, at least as far as the "place" of the Negro was concerned.

In the structure of buildings, changing from lumber to steel, there has been a few structural steel workers and a few changes for apprenticeship in the new field. Wheelwrights and coopers are gone, probably forever. This work is done in a factory by machinery. Moreover, steel drums, pails, sacks and other containers have replaced the wooden barrel.¹

Machines have increased sevenfold, but the machinists' unions bar Negroes. Trucks are replacing drays and also competing with railway transportation; and trucking, increasingly, is becoming a chain proposition instead of an individual venture. The decline of handicraft and the progressive mechanization of industry generally has meant the exclusion of Negroes from job opportunities.

Conditions have varied in different localities as Embree points out;

¹Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma, Vol. 1, p. 281.

To justify their exclusion from the textile mills it is said that "of course Negroes are unable to do skilled tasks. ... Manual skill is regarded as an evidence of low mentality since it is well known that superior races are not clever with their hands. In the iron and steel mills since Negroes have been given work about the furnaces, there has grown up a tradition that they are best adapted to work in the presence of great heat. Yet formerly it was held foolhardy to try colored laborers in such jobs because they could not stand up under the trying conditions of the blast furnace."²

The place held by the Negro as a skilled worker has become one of constant plans and thought. The type of industry in which he works, the type of work done, as well as the hourly wage scale, has been, and is, of supreme importance in all job situations.

A report from the "Vocational Education Survey" for the Houston Independent schools reveals the fact that an estimated 26,170 jobs were available for Negro men in Houston. The number of Negroes employed was comparatively small with respect to those seeking employment and the type of training was not always in keeping with the work done in industry.³

The survey made on Negro skilled workers in the Houston area reveals many types of industries that are briefly described in order to show the types of laborers used by the industry, and to specify the type of work done by these laborers.

Industries Considered in this Study

The industries considered in this study include those industries from which complete reports were given on Negro skilled workers. It does not include domestic servants, carpenters, brickmasons, beauty specialists, barbers and other types of craftsmen on which some form of investigation

²Ibid., p. 283.

³Thomas L. Holley, "Vocational Education Survey", p. 20.

has been conducted.

Because of their relationship with the rapidly growing metropolitan area and the employment of skilled Negro workers in numbers sufficiently significant in affecting the security of a racial group the following industries are considered:

TABLE I

LIST OF INDUSTRIES

1	Arms and Ammunitions
2	Aircraft
3	Clothing Manufacture
4	Fruit Line
5	Iron and Steel
6	Laundry
7	Lumber Production
8	Machinery
9	Oil Production
10	Ordnance Depot
11	Paint Manufacture
12	Products of Petroleum
13	Railroad
14	Shipbuilding
15	Synthetic Rubber
16	Truck Line

A brief description of these industries showing the specific types of work done by Negroes follows:

The Arms and Ammunitions industry produces shells, firearms and parts of firearms and explosives used in peacetime as well as war operations.

Negro skilled workers are used as operators of precision tools in the construction of shells and certain parts of firearms, and as die casters. Some are foundry operators and furnace tenders. Negroes operate machines used in making explosives, as well as machinery for loading, unloading and handling the finished products.

All work done by hand is considered common labor in the industry.

The Aircraft industry includes making, assembling, repairing and maintenance of the airplane. It also includes the care of hangars, refueling devices, and the care of airports.

Negro skilled workers are used as mechanics' helpers, as operators of machines for refueling and loading supplies, and as checkers in parts rooms where supplies are stored for replacements.

The Clothing Manufacture industry includes the making of garments and supplies from cloth.

Negro skilled workers are used as operators of sewing machines and presses used in finishing a garment. Some Negroes are used in the installation of new machinery and the repair of broken machinery.

The Fruit Line industry includes the transfer of fruits and vegetables.

Negro skilled workers in this industry include operators of vehicles used in the transportation of fruits and vegetables from the orchards. Negroes are also used in the grading of fruit by special devices, and for the operation of machines used in loading and unloading fruits and vegetables.

Picking, boxing, loading and unloading and handling of fruit by hand are classified as common labor.

Many types of skilled jobs are operated by Negroes in the Iron and Steel industry. Negroes work as moulders, die casters, ladle operators, precision tool or lathe operators, and founders as well as operators of finishing machines used in polishing and giving the finishing touches to the final products. There are many Negro furnace men who keep materials steadily flowing into the production line.

The Laundry industry employs Negro skilled workers as operators of washing machines, presses and driers, as well as special machines used by the industry.

The non-skilled workers consist of sorters, stampers, checkers, bundle carriers, and janitors.

In the Lumber Production industry skilled Negro workers operate cutting and shaping machines. They also check and grade lumber, and operate devices that transfer lumber to various places for storage and use in construction. The unskilled workers operate trains, stack lumber, load and unload materials used in the production of lumber.

Machinery includes the manufacture of machines, parts of machines and the tools used in the upkeep and operation of the machinery.

Skilled Negroes are employed in assembly plants and the service and repair departments. They have the tasks of making adjustments and tests on many types of machines used in industry.

The Oil Production industry employs Negro skilled workers in loading and handling supplies. They operate loading cranes and special machines, and transfer wholesale supplies from warehouses to operating fields.

In the Ordnance Department there are mechanics for repairing, rebuilding, and replacing automotive parts on vehicles used in supplying the armed forces. Negroes are used as mechanics, special machine operators and machinists. Some operate trucks that hasten the supplies to their destinations.

The Negro unskilled worker is used to handle supplies by hand.

Paint Manufacture includes the manufacture and distribution of paint.

Negro skilled workers are used to mix, fill and check paint consignments and to handle trucks used in the distribution of paint.

In the Production of Petroleum industry we have crude oil, gas, and by-products of oil and gas.

The Negro skilled workers are sometimes used as welders, assistant

welders, transport drivers, pump operators, car inspectors for fuel tanks and vat workers in oil production plants.

In the oil industry of the Houston area there is one Negro electrician.

The Railroad industry uses many Negro skilled workers as brakemen, hostlers, boiler makers, machinists, car inspectors, engineers, car repairmen, and checkers. The railroad also uses many Negroes as cooks and specialists.

Section hands and freight handlers are classified as common workers of the company.

The Shipbuilding industry employs skilled Negro workers as operators of hoisting machines, cranes, and loading devices, welders, riveters, assistant steam fitters, pump operators, and operators of special machines used in handling the intricate parts used in ship construction and repair.

Those who serve as watchmen, janitors, and utility workers in loading and unloading materials are classed as common laborers.

In the Synthetic Rubber industry the task of producing rubber by chemical processes is important. Houston has become one of the centers for this industry.

Negro skilled workers are used as vat men in the reclaiming departments and as operators of machines used in the transfer of raw materials for plant operation. They also operate trams and dray carts used in removing the finished product to storage bins and transfer cars.

The Truck Line industry employs Negro skilled workers to operate and repair commercial trucks that deliver merchandise and transport machinery, manufactured goods and accessories.⁴ Each large industry owns or operates

⁴This does not include Negro skilled workers who operate trucks for the Fruit Line Industry.

a fleet of trucks that require trained operators.

Some independent lines operate trucks for moving special equipment. This service has speeded up industrial operations in South Central Texas by permitting the transfer of needed supplies rapidly and economically.

Number of Negro Skilled Workers Employed

The number of Negroes employed as skilled workers in sixteen types of industries included in this study has increased greatly during the last ten years as may be seen in Table II. In 1935 there were 3,481 Negro skilled workers employed in these industries, while in 1944 the number of Negro skilled workers had grown to 12,886 in the Houston area.

In some types of industries the number of Negroes employed has not increased proportionately with the number of machines. This is true in the Oil Production, Paint Manufacture, and Aircraft industries. The industries have grown very rapidly in the Houston area. However, only a few Negroes have been employed as skilled workmen. Large numbers of Negroes have been employed in the Laundry for the past ten years. The working hours in this industry are usually long, with hazardous working conditions that offer a health menace. Exposure to disease and constant operations requiring abuses of the laws of health suggest early retirement, as well as the low income paid in this industry.

The low wage rates in any industry forces the worker to cheap working quarters and low standards of living. The Laundry employs more migratory workers than most industries because of the simplicity of the operations of the machines and the constant demand for work by those who have only limited experience in the manipulation of machinery.

TABLE II

NEGRO SKILLED WORKERS EMPLOYED IN HOUSTON AREA FROM 1935-1944

NO.	NAME OF INDUSTRY	YEAR OF EMPLOYMENT												
		1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944			
1	Arms and Ammunitions	--	--	--	--	--	4	115	218	311	418			
2	Aircraft	--	--	--	17	37	43	141	161	218	402			
3	Clothing Manufacture	9	8	11	13	23	94	117	129	143	197			
4	Fruit Line	627	841	913	912	928	918	1409	1521	1541	1625			
5	Iron and Steel	412	416	418	516	619	612	920	1071	1116	1255			
6	Laundry	1072	1076	1071	1416	1519	1813	1808	1901	1907	1916			
7	Lumber Production	106	106	104	98	116	118	121	127	130	130			
8	Machinery	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1217	1501	1603			
9	Oil Production	--	--	--	--	--	3	8	8	11	15			
10	Ordnance Depot	--	--	--	--	--	--	312	418	512	644			
11	Paint Manufacture	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	4	4	4			
12	Products of Petroleum	19	62	71	68	97	112	214	301	309	417			
13	Railroad	1025	1009	1016	1027	1106	1107	1109	1109	1129	1200			
14	Shipbuilding	--	---	--	--	--	--	1416	2519	2640	2800			
15	Synthetic Rubber	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	124			
16	Truck Line	211	268	263	301	297	308	309	317	324	436			
	Total	3481	3786	3867	4368	4842	5132	6003	11021	11890	12886			

*Unclassified prior to year reported for as skilled laborers

The Negro has been a barrier to his own progress because of his failure to prepare for jobs requiring increased efficiency and skill. This is reflected in the fact that 95.7 per cent. of the jobs in the Laundry are held by Negroes, while they have only 1.1 per cent. of the jobs in the Oil Production industry.

Table III shows the number of white skilled workers for the sixteen types of industries used in this study. A comparison of Tables II and III shows that the number of Negro skilled workers was 627, while the number of white skilled workers was 317 or comparatively 34 per. cent. of the total employed in this industry in 1935. In 1944 the number of Negro skilled workers and the number of white skilled workers was about the same. This increase in the number of white workers is due to preference in giving the poor white migrants employment, while the Negro worker seems satisfied in casual employment but seems to stick to the original type of job as far as possible. In the Railroad industry, however, the ratio has remained about one Negro worker to every two white workers for each year of the past ten years.

The working conditions in the Fruit Line industry and the Railroad industry require exposure to weather, long working hours and strenuous physical exertion that tends to induce physical disability earlier than in many other industries. Not only do these workers spend many hours on the job, but they are forced to eat cold lunches because of working conditions; therefore, they are unable to justify the formation of regular habits conducive to long life and normal family relationships.

From Table II it is observed that there are only four Negro skilled

TABLE III

WHITE SKILLED WORKERS EMPLOYED IN HOUSTON AREA FROM 1935-1944

NO.	NAME OF INDUSTRY	YEAR OF EMPLOYMENT												
		1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944			
1	Arms and Ammunition	711	719	813	824	828	913	1007	1131	1239	1412			
2	Aircraft	512	568	571	572	572	572	913	1006	1112	1251			
3	Clothing Manufacture	108	108	131	134	132	143	201	287	311	394			
4	Fruit Line	317	412	438	519	601	603	840	1112	1178	1300			
5	Iron and Steel	811	814	821	917	943	970	1601	1738	1981	2316			
6	Laundry	613	729	741	746	783	901	1119	1460	1621	1814			
7	Lumber Production	81	80	76	73	74	63	75	78	81	96			
8	Machinery	1604	1600	1609	1621	1637	1703	2143	2819	3178	3476			
9	Oil Production	419	521	607	716	729	934	1011	1119	1207	1460			
10	Ordinance Depot	--	--	18	21	27	370	1312	2418	2915	3702			
11	Paint Manufacture	209	209	211	209	213	231	242	300	306	325			
12	Products of Petroleum	1107	1113	1129	1164	1318	1931	2141	2312	2576	2914			
13	Railroad	2112	2124	2131	2148	2149	2151	2216	2281	2349	2481			
14	Shipbuilding	316	612	628	631	614	711	9432	1327	1583	19163			
15	Synthetic Rubber	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1026	1098	1134			
16	Truck Line	181	313	435	527	716	724	918	1371	1419	1600			
	Totals	8801	9922	10259	10822	11333	12920	23711	37585	40739	44838			

Distribution of White Skilled Workers Over a Period of Ten Years

workers in the Paint Manufacturing industry although the expansion of industry and the growth of city units has caused an increase of 116 white workers within the last ten years. However, Negroes have recently been entered as skilled workers in this industry.*

TABLE IV

SHOWING FOUR TYPES OF HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS

Types of Workers	Negro	White
Boiler Makers	9	155
Die Casters	11	158
Engineers	13	181
Precision Tool Makers	16	287

Not only are there a few Negro skilled workers in these types of jobs, but there are limited numbers of these workers prepared to do the type of work required in the crafts.

The special training taken by white workers provide jobs that assure practical independence in industrial operation.

The investigation did not reveal one Negro worker of the above types who sought changes in jobs or any workers with low income.

Methods of Securing Employment

In part, the history of the Negro in industry has pointed to his menial position in the industry choosing his services. He formerly waited for the job for which he was prepared or the one he had to choose in order to make a livelihood.

Industrial services in the Houston area, as is true in other sections

*See Table II.

of the United States, have selected for their use special elements of the Negro population. This fact is indicated in this occupational enterprise by the methods used in entering a given industrial situation.

Workers are usually carefully selected for placement in skilled industry, because of the dangers involving the care of the machine, the standard of the product, and the reputation of the industry for which they work.

This investigation revealed that some workers depended on advertisements in newspapers and "help wanted" signs as a means of getting a job, others went to an agency giving full particulars concerning their qualifications, waiting to be chosen for services, while some joined labor organizations with the understanding that they would be given skilled jobs as soon as vacancies occurred. Others prepared for their jobs and were given employment as soon as they completed the courses required and received recommendation from the management of the training agency.

At the same time industrial service has been sufficiently established to demand the best prepared of any racial group.

Usually there are four methods by which Negro skilled workers are employed:

METHOD	PER CENT
1. Answer to public advertisement for workers	2.3
2. Placements by United States Employment Service	1.8
3. Union Affiliation	67.8
4. Recommendations from Training Agencies. (Trade Schools, Colleges, and Private Operators)	28.0

Table V shows that from the instances of methods of employment from 261 individuals employed as skilled Negro workers in industry, 151 had union affiliation that tended to be responsible for their jobs.

It may be noted that 29 came from training agencies, such as trade schools, colleges, and practice shops.

TABLE V
METHODS OF SECURING EMPLOYMENT

	METHOD	NO.
1	Answer to want ads	48
2	United States Employment Service	33
3	Union Affiliation	151
4	Recommendation from Training Agencies	29
	Total	261

The United States Employment Service supplied 33 of these workers, while want ads (newspapers and call signs) directed 48 to their chosen jobs.

TABLE VI
PER CENT. DISTRIBUTION OF 261 SKILLED NEGRO WORKERS

NO.	METHOD	PER CENT.
1	Answer to want ads	18.3
2	United States Employment Service	12.6
3	Union Affiliation	57.8
4	Recommendation from Training Agencies	11.3
	Total	100.0

Table VI shows the comparative per cent. of job security on the basis of group operations. Only 18.3 per cent. were employed by answering want ads, 12.6 per cent. were placed by the U.S.E.S., 11.3 per cent. secured

jobs through training agencies, and 57.8 per cent. obtained their jobs by union affiliation.

TABLE VII

METHOD OF SECURING EMPLOYMENT

NO.	METHOD	NO.
1	Answer to want ads	1200
2	United States Employment Service	2027
3	Union Affiliation	8610
4	Recommendation from Training Agencies	1049
	Total	12,886

Table VII shows the method used in securing employment by the 12,886 skilled Negro workers included in this study as given by the management of industry and statistical records of industrial agencies. It appears from a comparison of Tables V and VII that the sample is fairly accurate in pointing out specific relationships of methods.

TABLE VIII

PER. CENT. DISTRIBUTION OF 12,886 SKILLED NEGRO WORKERS

	METHOD	PER CENT.
1	Answer to want ads	9.3
2	United States Employment Service	14.7
3	Union Affiliation	69.1
4	Recommendation from Training Agencies	6.9
	Total	100.00

Table VIII shows an increase in employment situations in the industries over the per cent. ratio given in Table VI and a decrease in the proportionate number entering industry as skilled workers from training agencies.

It must be remembered that the union requires certain standards of preparation in order to be placed on a job and further details of its operations may be found in the discussion on union labor.

There are some industries that have recently been opened to Negro skilled workmen because they have been operating in the Houston area for a period of less than five years or they have recently been accepting Negro skilled workers.

These industries include machinery, oil production, paint manufacture, synthetic rubber, and arms and ammunitions. These industries will be discussed in chapter V.

There are other industries that do not employ Negroes as skilled workmen; they are:

1. Continental Can Company
2. American Can Company
3. Railroad Engineers
4. Electric Works
5. Telephone Service.

The can manufacturing and distributing companies came to the Houston area from New Jersey bringing their laborers with them.. They also maintain a reserve list from which additional workers are chosen.

The Negro skilled workmen have been eliminated from the Railroad Engineers, Electric Works, and Telephone Service by the closed shop practice and industrial organization restrictions.

The employment agencies, however, have adjusted their qualifications to the demand of the employers, and there is a lack of standardization of func-

tions in some industries. This lack of standardization is due in part to the lack of organization of these types of workers. They have no organized protection against inadequate wages, long hours, and increased duties; consequently, they often become the victims of individual bargaining.

The industrial organizations, trade unions and agencies that demand standard requirements or working conditions, wages and hours have forged ahead in assisting the Negro skilled worker through collective bargaining and the proper adjustment of labor difficulties.

The Negro laborer prefers protection and adjustments without jeopardizing the rights and privileges of others, yet there is a need for more Negro specialists in the field of skilled industry.

In the Truck Line, Lumber Production, Laundry, and Fruit Line industries the work days are 10 hours and often longer in order to complete a given assignment. The wage rates usually increase after the required day's work is done.

This is particularly true in loading and unloading ships on the water front and in the Steel Industry where the product must be loaded or the raw materials cannot be left over until some future time.

Wages

Lack of standardization of skill, hours and working conditions makes an adequate analysis very difficult. The daily or weekly wage varies according to the type of work done, as well as the type of industry in which the skilled worker is employed.

As was stated by C. W. Rice that "Negroes are overworked and underpaid with no means of retreat".¹

¹Negro Labor News, May 2, 1937, p. 1.

CHAPTER III

FACTORS AFFECTING THE STATUS OF NEGRO INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

The skilled Negro in the Houston area has established himself as being cooperative, progressive, and capable of working side by side with any group and doing a job in a gratifying manner.

It is generally known that white workers receive a little more per hour for similar types of work, yet it is interesting to know that workers have the same work schedule. In 12 types of industries the workers are assigned to a 40-hour work week, with time and a half for extra hours and double time on Sundays and holidays. Workers usually have a two-day rest period during each week and a vacation period during each year.

In the Truck Line, Lumber Production, Laundry, and Fruit Line industries the work days are 10 hours and often longer in order to complete a given assignment. The wage rates usually increase after the required day's work is done.

This is particularly true in loading and unloading ships on the water front and in the Steel industry where the product must be loaded or the raw materials cannot be left over until some future time.

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It was stated by C. W. Rice that "Negroes are overworked and underpaid with no medium of redress".¹

¹"Negro Labor News", May 5, 1937, p. 1.

The amount that a worker receives has a decided effect on his progress, making it practically impossible for low wage earners to meet the demand of organized labor or become self-reliant because of increased efficiency in industry.

Hobart P. Taylor expresses his view by saying: "A man's career is greatly affected by the employment situation and the number employed according to the opportunity for continuing profitably in industry."²

The hourly wages of skilled Negro workers vary according to the type of industry for which they work and the types of jobs which they hold. However, there was great variation within the group. Some wages have increased more rapidly than others during the ten-year period.

Table IX shows that skilled workers of industries requiring more training and technical knowledge received the better wage. The averages given for these respective industries range from 50 cents in 1935 to 135 cents in 1944. However, this does not truly indicate the difference. It should be noted that the Laundry industry, where the largest number of Negro skilled workers are employed has increased its wage from 50 cents to 70 cents during the past ten years. This condition is equally as true in the Fruit Line and Truck Line industries. It should be noted that 33 per cent. of the total employed had jobs in industries where increases were out of proportion with the increase in the cost of living during the corresponding period.

Table X shows the average wage paid white skilled workers for the same type of work during this period. This reflects the double wage standard maintained in every industry but the Truck Line industry. However, the Laundry

²Hobart P. Taylor, "C. W. Rice, Labor Leader", 1939, p. 3.

TABLE IX

AVERAGE WAGE PER HOUR FOR NEGRO SKILLED WORKERS

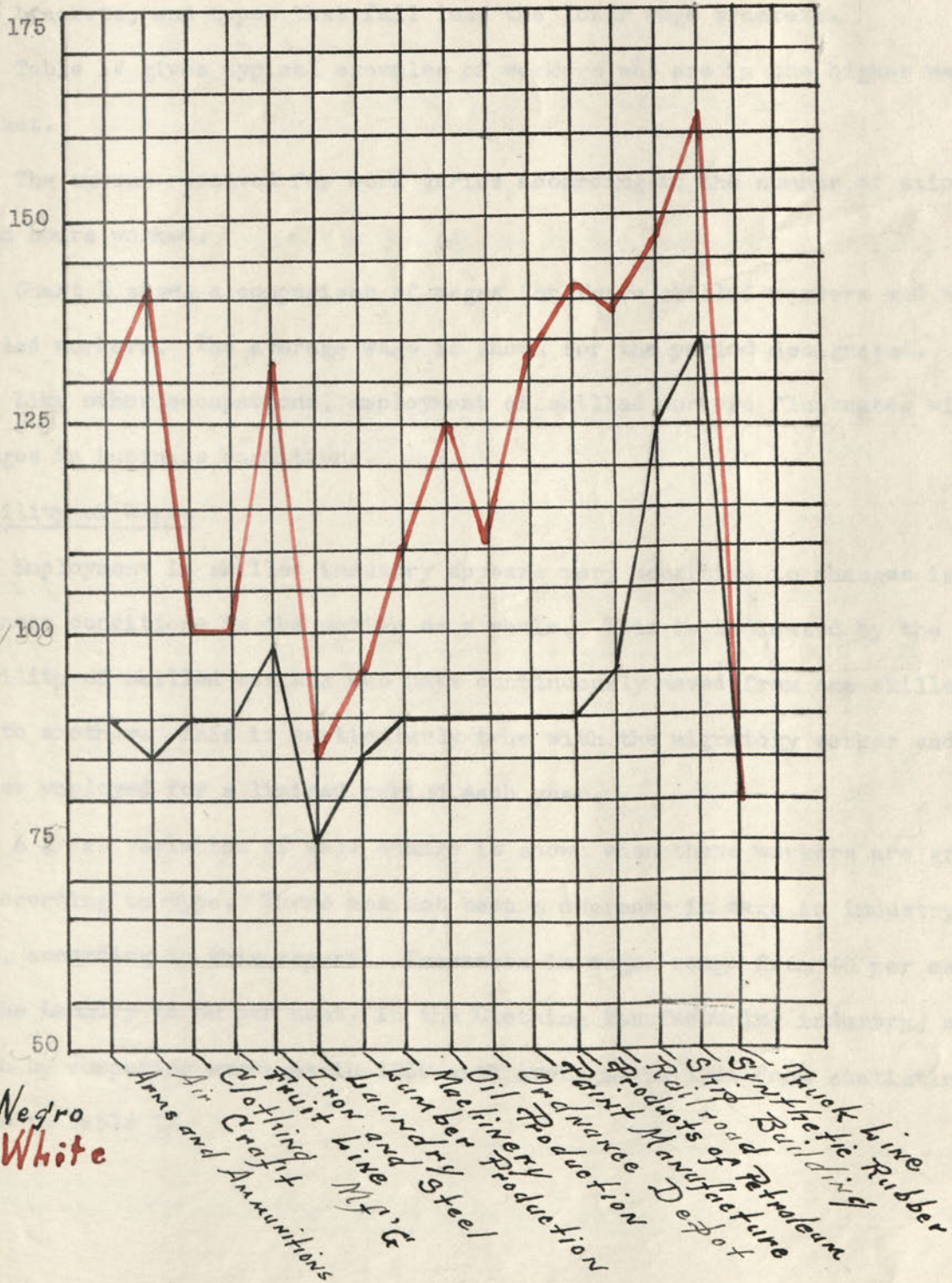
NO.	NAME OF INDUSTRY	AVERAGE WAGE PER HOUR													
		1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944				
1	Arms and Ammunitions	-	-	-	-	-	65	-	70	-	70	-	85	-	90
2	Aircraft	-	-	-	50	-	55	-	65	-	70	-	75	-	85
3	Clothing Manufacture	-	50	-	60	-	65	-	75	-	83	-	83	-	90
4	Fruit Line	-	60	-	70	-	75	-	75	-	90	-	90	-	90
5	Iron and Steel	-	55	-	78	-	82	-	82	-	85	-	85	-	1 00
6	Laundry	-	50	-	55	-	55	-	60	-	60	-	70	-	70
7	Lumber Production	-	55	-	65	-	70	-	75	-	78	-	80	-	80
8	Machinery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	73	-	85	-	85
9	Oil Production	-	-	-	-	-	70	-	70	-	75	-	90	-	90
10	Ordnance Depot	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76	-	80	-	90	-	90
11	Paint Manufacture	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	75	-	82	-	90	-	90
12	Products of Petroleum	-	65	-	70	-	75	-	82	-	85	-	90	-	90
13	Railroad	-	86	-	1 00	-	1 09	-	1 09	-	1 16	-	1 28	-	1 28
14	Shipbuilding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 15	-	1 20	-	1 35	-	1 35
15	Synthetic Rubber	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 00	-	1 00
16	Truck Line	-	65	-	75	-	82	-	82	-	90	-	90	-	90

TABLE X
AVERAGE WAGE PER HOUR FOR WHITE SKILLED WORKERS

NO.	NAME OF INDUSTRY	AVERAGE WAGE PER HOUR												
		1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944			
1	Arms and Ammunitions	75	75	90	90	90	90	1 00	1 00	1 12 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 25			
2	Aircraft	75	75	75	75	82	90	1 12	1 28	1 30	1 37			
3	Clothing Manufacture	50	55	55	65	65	75	85	93	93	1 00			
4	Fruit Line	60	70	75	82	85	85	85	95	1 00	1 00			
5	Iron and Steel	65	75	80	90	92	95	1 00	1 00	1 12	1 27			
6	Laundry	50	55	55	60	60	60	70	70	75	75			
7	Lumber Production	55	60	60	70	75	80	80	85	90	90			
8	Machinery	70	70	80	80	85	90	90	95	95	1 10			
9	Oil Production	90	90	90	90	90	90	1 10	1 10	1 25	1 27			
10	Ordnance Depot	-	-	90	90	90	90	1 00	1 10	1 10	1 10			
11	Paint Manufacture	90	90	90	90	90	90	1 00	1 10	1 25	1 35			
12	Products of Petroleum	75	75	80	80	80	90	90	1 00	1 25	1 38			
13	Railroad	86	94	94	1 09	1 16	1 23	1 28	1 31	1 34	1 43			
14	Shipbuilding	1 00	1 00	1 00	1 10	1 25	1 25	1 37	1 42	1 50	1 62			
15	Synthetic Rubber	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 62	1 62			
16	Truck Line	65	70	75	75	75	82	82	90	90	90			

CHART I

WAGE COMPARISON OF NEGRO AND WHITE SKILLED WORKERS FOR 1944



— Negro
 — White

maintains its identity as a low wage industry, paying the lowest wage of the industries included in this study.

A second condition under which these wages vary is based on the types of jobs held. There are specific types of workers that fall into the higher wage brackets, and types that fall into the lower wage brackets.

Table IV gives typical examples of workers who are in the higher wage bracket.

The amount received for work varies according to the number of stipulated hours worked.

Chart I shows a comparison of wages for Negro skilled workers and white skilled workers. The average wage is shown for the period designated.

Like other occupations, employment of skilled workers fluctuates with changes in business conditions.

Stability of Wages

Employment in skilled industry appears very sensitive to changes in business conditions in the nation as a whole. This is indicated by the stability of skilled workers who have continuously moved from one skilled job to another. This is particularly true with the migratory worker and the worker employed for a limited period each year.

A great variation of wage change is shown when these workers are grouped according to type. There has not been a decrease in wage in industry since 1935, according to this report. Increases in wages range from 40 per cent. in the Laundry to 80 per cent. in the Clothing Manufacturing industry, as shown by comparing averages in 1935 with averages in 1944 from statistics given in Table IX.

Union Labor

The Negro skilled workman has not always been in a position to acquire membership in a labor organization. The first attempt of Negroes to organize as a union was in January, 1839.³ Unionization is considered a powerful factor for good for the worker and it tends to do the following things:

1. Provide a standard wage
2. Provide satisfactory working conditions
3. Provide satisfactory health situations
4. Provide an equal opportunity for the worker to secure profitable employment under any circumstances.⁴

Union membership alone does not solve the problem, but it may be considered an excellent device to assist the Negro in maintaining a better status in industry.

Unions began to operate effectively in the Houston area in 1935. Since that time the membership has increased steadily.

TABLE XI

NUMBER OF UNION WORKERS IN HOUSTON AREA AS OF MAY 1, 1944

NO.	TYPE OF ORGANIZATION	NUMBER	PER CENT.
1	American Federation of Labor	4805	38.0
2	Committee Industrial Organization	2696	20.0
3	Independent Labor Association	1109	8.6
	Total	8610	66.6

Table XI shows that there were 8610 union workers in the industries considered in this study. This sum represented three types of labor organizations; the American Federation of Labor, the Committee for Industrial Organization, and the Independent Labor Association. The distribution is also

³Ibid., p. 6.

⁴Cayton and Mitchell, "Black Workers in New Unions," p. 152.

shown by Table XI. It is significant to note that union enrollment represented 66.6 per cent. of the total Negro skilled workers in these industries.

According to Freeman Everett and U. C. Grovey, local presidents of unions in the Houston area, no other factor has exerted a greater influence on industry than organized labor. It has been the foundation stone for progress and the measuring device of achievement and today all Negro wage earners are available for union membership.

The prevailing labor organizations are governed by local interest; the AFL, however, does not have a clause in its pledge swearing to the maintenance of all of its members without disfranchisement.

There are three preliminary objectives of union organization in a community where Negroes can be employed. These are:

1. To increase and strengthen favorable union sentiment.
2. To break down racial prejudice of white workers and union officials.
3. To provide resources for unionization of Negro workers.⁵

There are some unions that limit their membership to white men. The Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks and Freight Handlers, the Order of Sleeping Car Conductors, Order of Railway Telegraphers, National Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots of North America, the Railway Mail Association, the Wire Weavers Protective Association, the Commercial Telegraph, the Boiler Makers, Iron Shipbuilders and Helpers Union, and the International Association of Machinists exclude the Negro from membership by ritual.

All of these organizations were affiliated with the AFL in 1929. In 1930 nine AFL and ten unaffiliated unions debarred Negroes by constitution.

⁵Ibid.

Of the 252 Negro skilled workers reported in this study, 151 were members

In a commencement address on June 6, 1930, W. E. B. DuBois stated that organized labor was an enemy to the black man in skilled industry.⁶ He also stated that organized labor in the United States was and is the chief obstacle keeping the Negro from earning a living. This, he said, was because of labor's determined policy to exclude Negroes from unions. The result is that in a large number of cases Negroes are compelled to work as scabs in order to make their livings. In spite of these statements there have been constant increases in skilled jobs for Negroes from union affiliations and practices.

The present situation of Negro union operation discards the opinion expressed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in a meeting held in Houston in 1940 in which C. W. Rice was said to be too antagonistic and his spirit of independent union organization was not only detrimental but unsafe. It is further indicated that union organizations control labor in the Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding, Machinery, and Railroad industries representing over 50 per cent. of the skilled workers, as well as the better paying jobs shown in the discussion on wages.

The industrial organizations in the Houston area act as bargaining agencies, with satisfactory relationship to the parent organization. All complaints that cannot be settled by agreement in the local meetings are presented to the Federal Labor Board for action.

Since the organization of Negro unions in the Houston area in 1937 the wage of the Negro worker has steadily increased. It is evident that the membership in Negro unions has steadily increased, and many industries in the Houston area recognize Negro union workers in proportion to their ability and service.

Of the 261 Negro skilled workers reported in this study, 151 were members

⁶T. J. Woolfer, Negro Problems in Cities, p. 253.

of some type of industrial organization.

There has been an increase in organizations among Negro workers and various forms of clubs are in operation in some industries that have not been able to organize into a union, but the growing sentiment favors the expansion of union operation in the Houston area.

Training and Experience

Employment in skilled industry is greatly affected by the training and experience of the worker, and job placement depends upon the ability of the worker to do a job well. Although the Negro was greatly handicapped by conditions over which he had no control, the question of efficiency has been mentioned and it has been found that the majority of employers believed colored laborers as efficient as white workers.⁷

Carter G. Woodson, in the Miseducation of the Negro, 1933, p. 19, states: "Negroes do not need someone to guide them to what persons of other races have developed. They need to be taught to think and develop something for themselves."

"It was generally thought that the Negro needed only the manipulative skill to operate a machine efficiently. This, however, proved too costly to the management of industry and was soon replaced by a requirement demanding special knowledge of the machine."⁸

The number of skilled workers varies according to the number of jobs. Hence, the preparation of the worker consists of his training. Table XII shows the training of 261 workers representing the sample used in this study. In spite of the demand for advanced training and the availability of training

⁷L. V. Kerney, "The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward", p. 107.

⁸Arthur Pound, "Industrial America, Its Way of Work and Thought", p. 6.

facilities, 53.2 per cent. of these workers had very little education and received their training by watching others on the job. For this type of worker, advancement is limited and slow. Only 27.1 per cent. completed some industrial course in high school, and were high school graduates.

TABLE XII

DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS ACCORDING TO TRAINING

NO.	TRAINING AND SCHOOL ATTAINMENT		NUMBER	PER CENT.
1	"Pick-Up Training	Below Eighth Grade	139	53.20
2	Completed Trade Courses	High School Graduates	71	27.10
3	Some College Training	College Students	13	5.00
4	Completed College	College Graduates	9	3.40
5	Completed Courses	Special Trade Schools	7	2.60
6	Special Training	Trained on the Job	22	8.70
	Total		261	100.00

The courses completed in high school were not always those followed in industry but formed a basis for job selection, providing technical knowledge that was utilized in making a success in skilled industry. Eight and seven-tenths per cent. were trained on the job through night school and evening classes, while serving as helpers on the job during the regular work period. The Shipbuilding and Iron and Steel industries maintain evening school and special classes in order to provide skilled workers for the rapidly growing industries.

There were five per cent. who had attended college, securing some training in a trade sufficient to get a job, but three and four-tenths per cent. were college graduates with thorough training as well as two and six-tenths

per cent. who completed special trade schools. This six per cent. represents the best prepared of the group because of the thoroughness and completeness of their preparation.

The workers that are used to do several types of similar jobs are referred to as utility workers, those operating special machines are special operators, those who understand all relative operations are assistant supervisors, and those who have charge of production crews are foremen.

Table XIII shows the distribution of 261 skilled workers according to types of jobs.

It is significant to notice the higher the educational level and training the further the worker advanced in job placement with corresponding advancement in pay.

One must remember, however, that the job situations are greater in favor of the utility and special operator types of workers.

Out of 139 workers with operating skill but little scientific training, 110 were utility workers, and only one became a foreman in industry. Only 2 out of 34 high school graduates held similar jobs, while 12 completing special courses in colleges and trade schools were on the highest type of job, with the better pay.

This sample, although not a complete summation of jobs for skilled workers, offers an index for an industrial pattern in the Houston area with a definite trend for advanced training for Negro skilled workers. Specialization of the worker for the job provides functions and responsibilities that are highly specialized. Where skilled workers are employed in small numbers, functions and responsibilities are highly generalized.

TABLE XIII
DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS ACCORDING TO TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT

TYPES OF TRAINING	TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT OF 261 SKILLED WORKERS					
	UTILITY	SPECIAL OPERATORS	ASSISTANT SUPERVISORS	FOREMEN	TOTAL	TOTAL
1 "Pick-Up Training	110	23	5	1	139	139
2 High School Trade Courses	34	31	4	2	71	71
3 Some College Training	2	9	1	1	13	13
4 Completed College Courses	-	1	2	6	9	9
5 Graduates Trade Schools	-	-	1	6	7	7
6 Special Training on Job	-	2	18	2	22	22
Total	146	66	31	18	261	261

Tenure

The stability of skilled workers is indicated by the number of years they have been engaged in that type of work, the number of years on the present job, and the extent to which skilled work is used as a permanent type of occupation.

Each skilled worker studied had been in the service for an average of 7.67 years. However, there was considerable variation within the group. Some had been in the work less than three years, while others had been in the work for an average of sixteen years. There was also a variation according to type of job. Laundry, Railroad, Lumber Production, and Fruit Line workers had been on the job longer than workers in the other types of industries in the study.

Some of these industries have not been operating in the Houston area long; hence, the tenure of the worker in this type of industry is extended over the period of operation.

Table XIV shows that there is a higher tenure of Negro skilled workers on the types of jobs where risks of injuries and health hazards are the greatest. The Railroad and Laundry led in years of continuous service, with Lumber Production, Fruit Line, and Truck Line following in the order named.

The industries that gave good tenure records, although they have been in operation only a short while, were Arms and Ammunitions, Aircraft, Machinery, Oil Production, Ordnance, Paint Manufacture, Shipbuilding, and Synthetic Rubber.

According to Freeman Everett, president of the local AFL, involving 4805 Negro workers in the Houston area, the average for all workers is 4.7 years, showing that skilled workers remain on the job relatively longer than other

workers. In the iron and steel industry, O. C. Grovey states that there are 2697 skilled workers that are members of the CIO who have remained on the job for an average of 9.7 years.

TABLE XIV

AVERAGE TENURE OF NEGRO SKILLED WORKERS IN THE HOUSTON AREA

NO.	TYPE OF INDUSTRY	YEARS ON JOB
1	Arms and Ammunitions	4
2	Aircraft	5
3	Clothing Manufacture	7
4	Fruit Line	11
5	Iron and Steel	9.6
6	Laundry	15
7	Lumber Production	12
8	Machinery	4.5
9	Oil Production	4
10	Ordinance Depot	4
11	Paint Manufacture	5
12	Products of Petroleum	8
13	Railroad	16
14	Shipbuilding	5
15	Synthetic Rubber	2.8
16	Truck Line	10
	Average	7.67

All reports on the 12,886 skilled workers in the sixteen types of industries reflect the faithfulness of Negro workers, and point toward continuous service.

Table IV shows the distribution of 1480 workers in these industries. These data reveal that 54.2 per cent. of these workers depend upon the oil producing sector for job operations, while 22.3 per cent. depend upon the fruit packing and polishing seasons. Almost one-fourth, or 21.3 per cent., depend upon the fruit packing industries, and 17.3 per cent. depend upon the trucking plants for their income.

CHAPTER IV

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT AND SEASONAL JOBS

There are some industries in the Houston area that operate during certain seasons of the year. Some of these industries are cotton gins, canning plants, cotton seed oil mills, and fruit packing plants.

Many Negroes depend upon this type of industry for livelihoods, and some go from one seasonal job to another. In many instances a skeleton working force is employed until the rush season or until the supply of raw materials is in abundance; the working force is increased to maximum capacity in order to remove the raw materials before they become unfit for use.

TABLE XV

NUMBERS AND PER CENT. OF NEGRO SKILLED WORKERS ON SEASONAL JOBS

NO.	TYPE OF INDUSTRY	NUMBER	PER CENT.
1	Cotton Gins	194	13.2
2	Cotton Seed Oil Mills	365	25.0
3	Canning Plants	261	17.8
4	Fruit Packing Plants	311	21.3
5	Rice Mills	329	22.8
	Total	1460	100.0

Table XV shows the distribution of 1460 workers in these industries. These data reveal that 38.2 per cent. of these workers depend upon the cotton gathering season for job operations, while 22.8 per cent. depend upon the rice storing and polishing seasons. Almost one-fourth, or 21.3 per cent., depend upon the fruit packing industries, and 17.8 per cent. depend upon the canning plants for their income.

The cotton gathering season lasts about five months in the year, with the oil mills operating about eight months during the year on the average. The fruit packing and canning plants operate on the average of six months during the year with a split season.

The machine age has decreased the periods of operation and the number of skilled workers required during these seasons. Usually, the machines used in these industries require simple operations that tend to provide sufficient workmen who work for low wages.

TABLE XVI

DISTRIBUTION AND AVERAGE WAGE OF 160 WORKERS ON SEASONAL JOBS

NO.	TYPE OF INDUSTRY	NUMBER	AV'G WAGE	HOURS PER DAY	TENURE
1	Cotton Gins	21	.55	10	18
2	Cotton Seed Oil Mills	40	.60	8	12
3	Canning Plants	29	.50	9	7
4	Fruit Packing Plants	34	.60	10	4
5	Rice Mills	36	.75	10	10
	Total	160			

The distribution of these workers includes older workers than may be found in the general industrial pattern. Table XVI shows that the wages of these workers range from 50 cents per hour in the canning plants to 75 cents per hour in the rice mills. There is but little labor competition in these industries because of the low wage rate and long work days, which sometimes require a worker to stay on the job for twelve hours before he is relieved.

There is no industrial organization of these workers; hence, no collec-

tive bargaining by the workers. Therefore, their wages are subject to decreases or increases without notice.

When the number seeking employment becomes too large, the management usually gives notice of lower wages or decreases the hours of work so that the worker receives less for the day's work.

These workers have not completed advanced courses in school. The majority have not completed the fifth grade in public school. Their training is limited to the hours of experience on the job. Table XVI shows that many have been on the same type of job or the same job for from four to eighteen years.

This type of worker usually follows more than one type of work and finds employment by answering want ads or by recommendations of friends already employed by an industry.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, a state of emergency existed. There was a demand for many types of workers, including machinists, welders, electricians, metal workers, drillers, spray gun painters, machine tool operators, foundry workers, blacksmiths, and many other industrial specialties.

During the period of our study the Negro worker has entered new fields of employment in the Houston area, although they had been given equal job opportunities in many sections of the United States.

As rapidly as these workers were required the Federal government placed them to jobs through its agencies, in promoting the principal for advanced training of skilled workers, the Federal government maintains many training

CHAPTER V

THE NEGRO IN NEW FIELDS DURING THE INDUSTRIAL EMERGENCY

The period from 1935 to 1939 represented one of tremendous importance to the industries and industrial workers of the Houston area. In 1935 the government set into operation the Works Progress Administration in order to provide more jobs. This program of improvement gave several opportunities to the Negro worker. First was the opportunity to work more extensively, and secondly was the opportunity for adjustment in a simplified labor pattern.

In 1938 there was injected into this program one of youth training known as the National Youth Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps. These agencies provided for youth training in skill and art. It was through these agencies that many Negro workers received the training to enter skilled industry.

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During the period of our study the Negro worker has entered new fields of employment in the Houston area, although they had been given equal job opportunities in some sections of the United States.

As rapidly as these workers were trained the Federal government placed them on jobs through its agencies; in promoting the principal for advanced training of skilled workers, the Federal government maintains many training

schools throughout the nation. One of these centers has been at Prairie View State College.

With the exclusion of certain barriers, the Negroes in the Houston area have been successful as operatives in new fields where special training is given to Negro workmen.

Special Assistance Offered by the Federal Government

The work of the National Youth Administration, providing training for the youth with the assistance of the agencies of public education, gave rise to the possibility of expanded training for young men in many types of skills.

Courses were offered by the National Youth Administration in carpentry, plumbing, welding, electricity, auto mechanics, machine tool operation, sheet metal, radio, and mechanical drawing, all of which were designed to give specific training for vocational success.

Through the National Youth Administration, preparatory job placement was assured with a definite idea of the wage to be received by the worker.

TABLE XVII

PLACEMENTS FROM NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION TRAINING PROGRAM

NO.	TYPE OF TRAINEE	NUMBER
1	Auto Mechanics	12
2	Electricians	8
3	Carpenters	14
4	Sheet Metal Workers	5
5	Machine Tool Operators	7
6	Plumbers	6
7	Radio Technicians	11
8	Telephone and Telegraph	5
	Total	68

Not only did each type of trainee receive vocational assistance, but each type had its occupational hierarchy.

The types of trainees are given in Table XVII, showing eight definite types of occupations to be followed. After the completion of the required training period these workers were assigned to the best available jobs. Because of the inadequacy of the supply of these workers to meet the demand of industry the operation of these training centers was a step toward industrial security. Out of 68 trainees listed in National Youth Administration placements, none were refused jobs and all remained on the job selected as long as he desired.

In each state where education is carried on under the conditions set forth in the Smith-Hughes and George-Deen Acts, a state plan has been established as a guide in the administration of the Federal Aid program.

When day or evening classes meet the standards required in this plan, money may be made available to reimburse the local school authorities for instructors' salaries.

The policy of the War Department is to promote the program supported by Federal Vocational funds through the state agency utilizing the existing channel in each state for administering vocational education.

The Federal government offers two types of services for the industry. First, it prepares the worker for efficient service by providing training, including skill and technical knowledge of the type of job selected. In the second place, it provides a medium of placement of the worker where he may be of greatest value to industry.

In the high schools of Houston, classes are maintained in radio, tailoring, cleaning and pressing, trade cooking, and trade household service.

In Dallas alone 1100 workers that completed courses in aircraft, drilling, riveting, shaping, spray gun painting, and routing have been employed by the

North American Aircraft Industry.

In Houston special trade classes are maintained in electric welding, machine tool operation, auto mechanics, foundry, blacksmithing, and burning.

From these schools, operated by the assistance of the Federal government, 2300 workers have been employed by shipyards from New Orleans to Boston and on the East coast as well as in small plants in Houston. The data given on these workers could not be analyzed further because definite numbers of each type of worker were not available.

There are shortages in many army specialists jobs which are essentially similar to those in civilian life. There are the purely military jobs, such as tank drivers, small arms mechanics, and armorers, which have no civilian counterpart but which utilize many of the skills taught in the trade field.

Some army specialist jobs related to vocational courses operating in schools, the relative need for each job and the supply received in 1942 may be seen from Table XVIII on the following pages. This shows that all agencies are working cooperatively to supply the skilled workers needed for successful prosecuting of the war effort. Private industry, public institutions, and training centers have been aided by the Federal government in every way possible to present a solid fighting front that utilizes all the skill and technical knowledge available today for an early victory.

Fields Recently Opened to Negroes

Although certain fields have been opened to Negro skilled workers for a long time, there has been considerable increase in these fields during the period of this study.

Negroes have worked as auto mechanics, plumbers, blacksmiths, and carpenters in the Houston area, yet they were not fully recognized as skilled

TABLE XVIII
ARMY NEEDS AND SUPPLIES OF SKILLED WORKERS

Vocational Courses Which May Develop Skills Needed In Army Jobs	Army Specialists Jobs Related to Each Vocational Course	Relative Need in Army			Supply Received During 1942 Through Induction	
		Large	Small	Adequate	Inadequate	
Aircraft Mechanics	Airplane Inspector		x			x
	" Sheet Metal Work		x			x
	" Electrical Specialist		x			x
	" Instrument "		x			x
	" Propeller "		x			x
	Army Airplane and Engine Mechanic	x				x
Communication	Telegraph Operators	x				x
	Switchboard	x				x
	Linemen, Telephone and Telegraph	x				x
	Radio Repairmen		x			x
	Radio Operators	x				x
	Army Airforce Radio Mechanic	x				x
	Army Air Forces Operator and Mechanic		x			x
Carpentry	Bridge Builder		x			x
	Carpenter, Construction		x			x
	Packing Case Makers	x				x
Electricity	Electrician	x				x
	Airplane Electrical Specialist		x			x
	Portable Power Generator Operator	x				x

TABLE XVIII (Continued)

		Large	Small	Adequate	Inadequate
Auto Mechanics	Automobile Mechanics	x			x
	Tractor Driver	x		x	
	Combination Welder		x		x
	Chauffeur	x		x	
	Truck Driver	x		x	
	Purlo Clerk, Automobile		x		
	Motorcyclists		x		x
Automobile Equipment Mechanic			x		
Photography	Photographic Technicians	x			x
Sheet Metal	Airplane Sheet Metal Work		x		x
Machine Shop	Machinist		x		
	Welder Combination		x	x	
	Armorer	x			x
	Artillery Mechanic	x			x
	Airplane Armorer	x			x
Combination of Courses	Utility Repairmen	x			x
	Instrument Men		x		x
	Airplane Instrument Specialist		x		x
	Toolroom Keeper		x		x

laborers by white workers.

Before the outbreak of World War II there was one electrician in the Houston area. He was employed by an oil company. There were no plumbers, a few plumbers' helpers, however, and a few workers who did welding but not on a basis of full recognition, and they did not receive full compensation for the type of work being done.

There are some fields that are comparatively new to Negroes as a group. These fields include full recognition of the old job training that permits the experienced worker to be used as an instructor in order to increase the number of skilled workers.

TABLE XIX

FIELDS RECENTLY OPENED TO NEGROES IN THE HOUSTON AREA

NO.	TYPE OF JOB	NUMBER
1	Acetylene Welding	98
2	Electricians	80
3	Electric Welder	140
4	Riveting	68
5	Burning	48
6	Telephone and Telegraph	63
7	Metal Workers	70
8	Foundry	73
9	Drilling	64
10	Machinist	85
11	Radio Technicians	70
12	Machine Tool Operators	51
	Total	910

Table XIX shows twelve types of jobs that represent new fields for Negro skilled workers. It shows that the largest number of workers were welders,

followed closely by machinists and electricians.

Since these workers must have jobs we shall see where they are employed, that is, the type of industry.

TABLE XX

FIELDS RECENTLY OPENED TO THE NEGRO SKILLED WORKER

NO.	TYPE OF INDUSTRY	NUMBER
1	Aircraft	402
2	Arms and Ammunitions	418
3	Machinery	1603
4	Oil Production	15
5	Paint Manufacture	4
6	Shipbuilding	2800
7	Synthetic Rubber	124
	Total	5366

The status of a worker depends on his preparation, as well as the type of industry in which he works. It has been shown in Table 1 that Negroes have been employed in the industries listed above from two to six years or an average of four and six-tenths years. Data further substantiates that these fields were opened because of the urgent need for workers. Table XIX lists specific types of industries as well as the number of Negro skilled workers employed in these industries in May, 1944.

The increases shown in Table 1 are significant since the workers have had to adjust themselves to new situations and new working conditions. We are conscious of the fact that adjustments made during an emergency in industrial life are not very measurable. However, it is believed that certain indexes point to greater opportunities for Negroes in skilled industry.

It was pointed out in the discussion of wages that the higher wages were paid in the new fields of service. These successes in new fields of Negro skilled workers form a pattern for industrial and economic progress. Where efficient workers are needed color is not always a barrier.

As of May 1, 1944, and there has been a constant increase in the number of skilled workers from 1934 to 1944. (a) The causes for these increases are (1) increase in training, (2) activity of labor organizations, (3) growth in industries, (4) more Negro skilled workers are employed in certain types of industries, because of privileges and choice, as well as efficiency in job operations; (5) the average wage of Negro skilled workers is lower than the wage paid to white workers in the Houston area; (6) that skilled workers with the better training received the better wages, the more thorough the training the better the job; (7) that all employees do not receive the same wage for the same type of work because of the double standard of wages set up by the business case; (8) the average tenure of skilled Negro workers was seven and six-tenths years, although many workers had been employed for a longer period, and some have worked in new fields for the entire period of their operation; (9) the Negro workers are affected by the following factors: (a) wages, (b) union labor, (c) training and experience, and (d) tenure.

Negro skilled workers make steady progress where these factors are considered by the management of industry. These factors have been greatly improved during the industrial emergency, since the Federal government has made provisions for the training and placement of skilled workers.

The double standard of wages has been nullified on jobs operated by government projects, although the preference of employing white workers instead of Negroes is still practiced in the Houston area.

SUMMARY

We have now given eight facts concerning the Negro industrial workers in the Houston area: (1) there were 12,886 Negro skilled workers employed in this area as of May 1, 1944, and there has been a constant increase in the number of skilled workers from 3481 in 1935; (2) the causes for these increases are (a) increase in training, (b) activity of labor organizations, (c) growth in industries; (3) these Negro skilled workers are employed in sixteen types of industries, because of privileges and choice, as well as efficiency in job operations; (4) the average wage of Negro skilled workers is lower than the wage paid to white workers in the Houston area; (5) that skilled workers with the better training received the better wage, the more thorough the training the better the job; (6) that all employees do not receive the same wage for the same type of work because of the double standard of wages set up by the dominant race; (7) the average tenure of skilled Negro workers was seven and six-tenths years, although many workers had been employed for a longer period, and some have worked in new fields for the entire period of their operation; (8) the Negro workers are affected by the following factors: (a) wages, (b) union labor, (c) training and experience, and (d) tenure.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
GRADUATE STUDY, PRAIRIE VIEW STATE COLLEGE

General Information

1. Name of Industry _____
2. Number of Negroes employed; Male _____
3. Average Number of Negroes employed last 10 yrs. _____
4. Average Tenure of Negroes employed _____
5. Do you maintain a list of applicants? _____
6. How are workers selected for industry; Union _____;
Experience _____; Special Training _____;
Recommendations _____.
7. Is there opportunity for promotion? _____
8. Maximum wage _____; Minimum Wage _____
9. Basis for wage increase _____
10. Working hours required; Day _____; Week _____.
11. Is training for advancement required? _____
12. Does industry have recreational provisions? _____
13. Are there any special requirements not listed here? _____

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
GRADUATE STUDY, PRAIRIE VIEW STATE COLLEGE

Name _____ Address _____

Where employed _____

Wage per hour _____ Hours per week _____

What type of work do you do? _____

How long have you been on this job? _____

How long have you been doing this type of work? _____

What method is used in hiring workers on your job? _____

Has there been increase in your wage within the past ten years? _____

Why was the increase given? _____

Are you a member of a labor organization? _____

Name of Labor Organization _____

Have you completed grammar grades? _____ High School? _____

Trade School? _____ College? _____

Have you taken any special training for your job? _____

Does your employer maintain a special class for workers? _____

What type of class? _____