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### LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: MARCH 1959

The educational level of the people in the United States has continued to advance, according to statistics from the March 1959 Current Population Survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census. The ability to read and write is now shared by nearly all persons 14 years old or older; the relatively small number of illiterates is concentrated mostly in the older age groups. At the same time, the average educational attainment of the population is rising, and increasing proportions are completing high school and college.

Some of the highlights of the survey findings are as follows:

1. The illiteracy rate for the civilian noninstitutional population 14 years old and over in 1959 was 2.2 percent. This is the smallest percentage of illiterates ever recorded in this country and represents a continuation of the historic decline in the inability to read and write (tables A and 6).

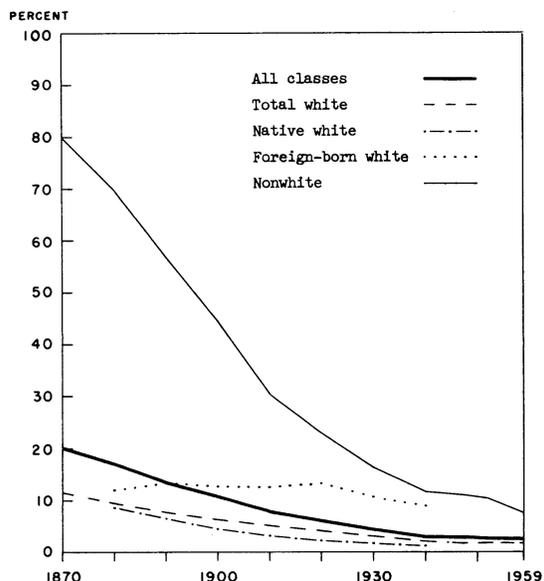
2. For both white and nonwhite persons, illiteracy rates have been diminishing ever since statistics on the subject were first collected by the Census Bureau, but the decline has been more dramatic for the nonwhites. In the 89-year period, 1870 to 1959, the percentage of the population which was illiterate dropped steadily from 12 to 2 percent for whites and from 80 to 8 percent for nonwhites. Among persons 14 to 24 years old in 1959, the illiteracy rate was only 0.5 percent for whites and 1.2 percent for nonwhites.

3. As in past years, illiteracy rates were higher in 1959 for men than women, for older than younger persons, in the South than in other parts of the country, in the farm than in the nonfarm population, among the unemployed and those not in the labor force than the employed, and among farm laborers and nonagricultural laborers than workers in other occupational fields.

4. The persistent uptrend in the Nation's educational attainment is being maintained. The average (median) years of school completed by the adult population, defined here as those 25 years old and over, was 11.0 years in 1959. This compares with 9.3 years in 1950 and 8.4 years in 1940. The average was 10.7 years for adult males and 11.2 years for adult females in the 1959 survey.

Figure 1.--PERCENT ILLITERATE IN THE POPULATION, BY COLOR AND NATIVITY, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1870 TO 1959

(See table A and section on "Definitions and explanations"; data refer to ages 10 and over in 1870 to 1940, and to ages 14 and over in 1947 to 1959)



5. About 43 percent of the adult population in 1959 had finished high school (including those who had attended college). This proportion was one-third greater than in the years just following World War II and about double that of 1940. These great strides in education are reflected most clearly in the youngest adult ages, covering those 25 to 29 years old, who received their schooling in the recent past. About 63 percent of this group are now high school graduates as compared with 38 percent of the comparable group in 1940.

6. College graduates still constitute a relatively small percentage of the adult population (8 percent), but this proportion has been growing moderately over the years. Among men 25 to 29 years old, the proportion who had completed four or more years of college went up especially sharply in the early 1950's and that proportion was maintained through 1959, at which time it was 15 percent.

7. Gains in the educational attainment of the nonwhite population have been especially marked. Roughly 20 percent of all nonwhite adults have completed high school, whereas only 8 percent were counted in that category in 1940. Among nonwhites 25 to 29 years old, 39 percent are now high school graduates, although in 1940 the corresponding percentage was 12 percent. The extensive progress in the education of nonwhites is revealed also through the diminishing percentage who have had less than five years of schooling, which by 1959 was down to 24 percent for all nonwhite adults and 8 percent for nonwhites 25 to 29 years old.

8. The educational attainment of the population in the West in 1959 was somewhat higher, on the average, than in the North and considerably higher than in the South. In the latter region, however, the attainment of the white population was almost equal to that of the population of all races in the North. The educational attainment of the farm population lags significantly behind that of nonfarm areas, whereas there are only moderate differences among urban areas of various sizes.

9. The educational level is particularly high among professional workers, as might be expected, and low among farmers and farm and nonfarm laborers.

Illiteracy rate at lowest point.--In 1870, when reliable statistics on illiteracy were first collected, 1 out of 5 persons 10 years old and over was illiterate; by the turn of the century, 1 in 10 was illiterate. The rate has dropped further to the point where by 1959 only 1 out of every 45 persons 14 years old and over was reported as unable to read and write in some language (figure 1).

At all dates for which census data or estimates on illiteracy by nativity are available, the native white population has consistently had smaller rates of illiteracy than either the foreign-born white or the nonwhite population. In 1880, the rates were 8.7 percent for native whites, 12.0 percent for foreign-born whites, and 70.0 percent for nonwhites.

By 1910, the rates for native whites, foreign-born whites, and nonwhites were 3.0, 12.7, and 30.5. Corresponding figures for 1940 were 1.1, 9.0, and 11.5, respectively, for the subgroups.

By now, the rate for native whites probably has almost reached its minimum point; most of the illiterate native whites today are probably physically or mentally incapable of learning to read and write. The percentage illiterate among nonwhites declined during the 1950's and that of foreign-born whites is no doubt also decreasing. Most of the foreign born who have died during the last few decades were part of the large-scale immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which was characterized by high proportions of illiterates, whereas the surviving foreign born are largely the immigrants of the later period when the occupational structure of the immigrant population had changed, the foreign populations from which these people came had higher average educational levels, and literacy tests were administered to immigrants to America.

Table A.--PERCENT ILLITERATE IN THE POPULATION, BY COLOR AND NATIVITY, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1870 TO 1959

(Data for 1870 to 1940 are for the population 10 years old and over; data for 1947, 1952, and 1959 are for the population 14 years old and over. See text for statement on other factors affecting comparability of figures for different years)

Year	Total	White			Non-white
		Total	Native	Foreign born	
1959.....	2.2	1.6	( <sup>1</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )	7.5
1952.....	2.5	1.8	( <sup>1</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )	10.2
1947.....	2.7	1.8	( <sup>1</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )	11.0
1940.....	22.9	22.0	21.1	29.0	211.5
1930.....	4.3	3.0	1.6	10.8	16.4
1920.....	6.0	4.0	2.0	13.1	23.0
1910.....	7.7	5.0	3.0	12.7	30.5
1900.....	10.7	6.2	4.6	12.9	44.5
1890.....	13.3	7.7	6.2	13.1	56.8
1880.....	17.0	9.4	8.7	12.0	70.0
1870.....	20.0	11.5	( <sup>1</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )	79.9

<sup>1</sup> Not available.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated.

Today's illiterates concentrated in certain segments of the population.--There were 2,619,000 persons among the noninstitutional population in 1959 classified as unable to read and write. An estimated additional one-quarter of a million inmates of institutions were illiterate. Illiterate persons were more likely to be in certain subgroups of the population than in others.

Illiteracy rates were lower for each younger age group down to age 14. About 6.5 percent of those 65 years old and over could not read and write; the rate was only half as large for persons 55 to 64 years old, and for those 14 to 24 years of age the percentage was only 0.6. For each age group, the rate for males was higher than that for females (table B).

Table B.--SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF ILLITERATES, FOR THE UNITED STATES: CIVILIAN NONINSTITUTIONAL POPULATION, MARCH 1959

(Data by age, color, residence, region, and income are for the population 14 years old and over; data by employment status and occupation are for the population 18 years old and over. Percent not shown where less than 0.1 or where base is less than 150,000)

Subject	Total number illiterate	Percent illiterate			Subject	Total number illiterate	Percent illiterate		
		Both sexes	Male	Female			Both sexes	Male	Female
<b>AGE</b>				<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>					
Total, 14 years and over.....	2,619,000	2.2	2.5	1.8	Employed.....	818,000	1.7	2.2	0.8
14 to 24 years.....	144,000	0.6	0.8	0.3	Unemployed.....	113,000	3.6	4.5	1.6
25 to 34 years.....	252,000	1.1	1.3	0.9	Not in labor force.....	1,393,000	3.9	6.9	3.1
35 to 44 years.....	323,000	1.4	1.9	0.9	<b>MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP</b>				
45 to 54 years.....	442,000	2.2	2.9	1.5	Profess'l, techn'l, & kindred wkrs...	8,000	0.2	0.2	...
55 to 64 years.....	487,000	3.2	3.7	2.8	Farmers and farm managers.....	132,000	5.0	5.2	...
65 years and over.....	971,000	6.5	6.9	6.2	Mrgs., offs., & propr's, exc. farm...	26,000	0.4	0.5	0.3
<b>COLOR</b>				<b>LABORERS AND KINDRED WORKERS</b>					
White.....	1,709,000	1.6	1.7	1.4	Clerical and kindred workers.....	2,000	...	0.1	...
Nonwhite.....	910,000	7.5	9.8	5.4	Sales workers.....	...	...	...	...
<b>RESIDENCE</b>				<b>OPERATIVES AND KINDRED WORKERS</b>					
Urban.....	1,295,000	1.7	1.8	1.7	Craftsmen, foremen, & kindred wkrs...	50,000	0.8	0.8	0.6
Rural nonfarm.....	697,000	2.2	2.8	1.7	Operatives and kindred workers.....	128,000	1.5	1.7	1.1
Rural farm.....	627,000	4.3	5.6	2.9	Private household workers.....	59,000	3.6	...	3.4
<b>REGION</b>				<b>SERVICE WORKERS, EXC. PRIVATE HSHLD.</b>					
Northeast.....	( <sup>1</sup> )	1.5	1.3	1.6	Service workers, exc. private hshld...	57,000	1.2	1.8	0.8
North Central.....	( <sup>1</sup> )	1.0	1.2	0.8	Farm laborers and foremen.....	155,000	11.7	15.1	4.9
South.....	( <sup>1</sup> )	4.3	5.5	3.3	Laborers, exc. farm and mine.....	201,000	8.0	8.2	...
West.....	( <sup>1</sup> )	1.3	1.5	1.2	<b>INCOME</b>				
				Persons with income of:					
				Under \$1,000.....					
				(\$1,000 to \$1,999.....)					
				(\$2,000 to \$2,999.....)					
				(\$3,000 to \$3,999.....)					
				(\$4,000 and over.....)					
				Persons without income.....					

<sup>1</sup> Not available.

Illiteracy was much more prevalent among nonwhites than whites, especially among nonwhite males. The population in rural-farm areas had a higher illiteracy rate (4.3 percent) than that in rural-nonfarm areas (2.2 percent) or urban areas (1.7 percent). The ability to read and write was lacking for relatively more persons in the South (4.3 percent illiterate) than in the North Central, West, and Northeast (1.0, 1.3, and 1.5 percent, respectively), reflecting the higher illiteracy rate of nonwhites who form a large proportion of the population in the South. Illiteracy was more pronounced among those not in the labor force; and, within the labor force, the unemployed were more likely to lack the ability to read and write than the employed. Among workers, illiteracy was more common to low-status occupation groups and particularly to male farm and nonfarm laborers. These differences in illiteracy rates for subgroups are due, in part, to differences in age composition and in the distribution of other characteristics.

Not all persons without schooling are illiterate, for some persons are self-taught or have had informal educational training; not all illiterate persons are without formal schooling, because some with a few years of school never acquired reading and writing skills, and others, through disuse, lost the skills that they once had. There is, however, a clear relationship between illiteracy and years of schooling. About 74 percent of the population with no school years completed cannot read and write in

any language, and the comparable percentages are 59 percent of those with only one year of school, 33 percent of those with two years of school, and 17 percent of those with three years. The rate drops off sharply to 5 percent among those having had four years of school and 2 percent of the group with five years. It was assumed in the survey that all persons with six or more years of formal education were literate. The inverse relationship between the illiteracy rate and years of school completed was generally found in all age, color, sex, and residence groups (tables 7 and 8).

Gains in educational attainment are continuing.--The reduction in illiteracy obviously reflects the improvement in the formal education of the population. In 1940, 4 percent of the adult population had no schooling and 14 percent had less than five years of school; by 1959, the corresponding percentages had decreased to 2 and 8 percent, respectively (tables C, 1, and 3).

Advances in educational attainment may be shown in a number of different ways. The percentage of the adult population who had completed high school has climbed steadily upward, from 24 percent in 1940 to 43 percent in 1959. Increasing student retention through high school is illustrated by the fact that today 63 percent of the 25- to 29-year-olds and 65 percent of the 20- to 24-year-olds are high school graduates. Though less striking, the trend toward college graduation is up, from 5 percent in 1940 to

8 percent in 1959 among all adults, and from 6 to 11 percent for those in the 25-to-29 age bracket. The rise in the percentage who had become college graduates was most notable for men 25 to 29 years old; the proportion rose from 7 percent in 1940 and 9 percent in 1950 to 15 percent in 1959. This trend reflects the effects of both the high rate of college attendance by war veterans, who had the advantages of the GI Bills, and the tendency for a higher proportion of nonveterans to finish college. Thus, the 7 percent of all men aged 25 to 29 in 1940 who had completed college may be compared with the 15 percent of World War II veterans and the 11 percent of nonveterans in the same age group in 1952 who had four or more years of college. Increased emphasis on advanced college degrees is reflected in the fact that roughly one out of three persons who completed four years of college reported having completed at least one year of graduate or professional work.

Table C.—LEVEL OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY PERSONS 25 YEARS OLD AND OVER AND 25 TO 29 YEARS OLD, BY COLOR, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1940 TO 1959

(The small number of persons not reporting on years of school completed were included in base of percentages but were not distributed)

Date, age, and color	Percent by level of school completed			Median school years completed
	Less than 5 years of elementary school	4 years of high school or more	4 or more years of college	
<b>TOTAL</b>				
25 Years and Over				
March 1959.....	8.0	42.9	7.9	11.0
March 1957.....	9.0	40.8	7.5	10.6
October 1952.....	9.1	38.4	6.9	10.1
April 1950.....	10.8	33.4	6.0	9.3
April 1947.....	10.4	32.6	5.4	9.0
April 1940.....	13.5	24.1	4.6	8.4
25 to 29 Years				
March 1959.....	3.0	63.3	11.0	12.3
October 1952.....	3.8	56.7	10.0	12.2
April 1950.....	4.6	51.7	7.7	12.1
April 1940.....	5.9	37.8	5.8	10.4
<b>NONWHITE</b>				
25 Years and Over				
March 1959.....	23.5	20.0	3.2	8.1
March 1957.....	26.9	17.8	2.8	7.7
October 1952.....	30.3	14.7	2.4	7.1
April 1950.....	31.5	13.2	2.2	6.8
April 1947.....	31.4	13.2	2.4	6.9
April 1940.....	41.1	7.5	1.8	5.8
25 to 29 Years				
March 1959.....	7.8	39.1	4.6	10.9
October 1952.....	15.2	27.8	4.6	9.3
April 1950.....	15.6	22.9	2.8	8.7
April 1940.....	26.7	12.1	1.3	7.1

As a result of the marked tendency for more persons to attain higher levels of schooling, the average (median) educational level has gone up over the years. The average for the population 25 years old and over stood at 8.4 years in 1940, rose by about one year to 9.3 in 1950, and jumped another year and one-half to 11.0 years in 1959. Time trends in educational attainment can also be viewed by

comparing the patterns for successively younger age groups. The average number of school years completed in 1959 was 8.3 years for those 65 and over, 8.8 years for those 55 to 64, 10.5 years for those 45 to 54, and about 12 years for those 25 to 44. The tendency for the median educational attainment level to stabilize at about 12 years or slightly higher masks the fact that the proportion graduating from high school is moving upward sharply at the same time that the proportion of high school graduates going on to college is rising very gradually. Projections of the educational attainment of the population recently published by the Bureau of the Census<sup>1</sup> imply that the median for each successively younger age group which has probably completed its schooling will remain in the 12.0 to 12.5 year range through 1980, whereas the percentage of all persons 25 years old and over with a high school education may reach 60 percent by 1980 and the percentage with four years of college may go up to 11 percent. For the 25-to-29 age group, the comparable percentages for 1980 are projected to be 74 and 15 percent, respectively.

Advances in education of nonwhites keep pace with those of total population.--Significant improvement in the educational attainment of the nonwhite population has taken place since information on this subject was first collected in 1940. The average level of schooling of nonwhite adults, like that of all adults, increased by about 2½ years between 1940 and 1959. At the 25-to-29-year age level, where current patterns of change are most apparent, the educational average for nonwhites, although still lagging behind that of the general population, rose by more than 3½ years as compared with 2 years for the total population. For this same age group, the increase in the proportion of high school graduates has been relatively, though not absolutely, greater for nonwhites than for all persons. Similarly, the percentage of college graduates among young nonwhite adults more than tripled between 1940 and 1959 but remained only half as great as for the total population in the same age group by the later date (tables C, 2, and 3).

Although the educational level of nonwhite women exceeds that of nonwhite men, recent gains in educational achievement have been as great or greater for the men as for the women. While the percentage of nonwhite women 25 to 29 years old with less than five years of school was declining from 13 to 7 percent between 1950 and 1959, the corresponding figure for nonwhite men dropped from 19 to 8 percent. The percentage with four years of high school jumped from 20 to 40 percent for the males and 25 to 38 percent for the females. As a result of the educational advances for nonwhites of both sexes, the average educational level of these young adults is now equal to that which was attained by their age group in the general population nearly one generation earlier.

<sup>1</sup> Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 91, "Projections of Educational Attainment in the United States: 1960 to 1980," January 12, 1959.

Patterns of education vary by farm-nonfarm residence and region.--The rural-farm population in the United States was characterized by significantly higher percentages with less than five years of school and much lower percentages who had finished high school and college than were found among the urban and rural-nonfarm populations. By contrast, differences in these measures between urban populations in various size-of-place groupings were small (tables D and 4).

Regional differences in education were more pronounced. Attainment was highest in the West and lowest in the South. The educational level in the South as a whole is affected considerably by that of nonwhite persons, whose educational level is still relatively low. The average attainment of the white population in the South compares favorably with that for persons in other regions.

In general, the average number of school years completed was higher for women than for men in all areas, but there was one notable exception. In the largest urbanized areas, those with 3,000,000 or more population, the median educational level was no higher for women than for men. This exception to the typical pattern was accounted for by the indication that a greater percentage of men than women finished high school in these large places, a situation not found in other areas.

Table D.--LEVEL OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY PERSONS 25 YEARS OLD AND OVER, FOR THE UNITED STATES, URBAN (BY SIZE OF PLACE) AND RURAL, AND BY REGIONS: CIVILIAN POPULATION, MARCH 1959

(The small number of persons not reporting on years of school completed were included in base of percentages but were not distributed)

Area	Percent by level of school completed			Median school years completed
	Less than 5 years of elementary school	4 years of high school or more	4 or more years of college	
United States.....	8.0	42.9	7.9	11.0
Urban.....	7.0	45.3	8.8	11.4
In urbanized areas.....	6.9	45.5	8.9	11.5
Areas of 3,000,000 or more.....	7.1	46.3	10.3	11.6
Areas of 1,000,000 to 3,000,000..	6.0	46.3	8.9	11.6
Areas of 250,000 to 1,000,000....	6.7	45.1	8.7	11.5
Areas of less than 250,000.....	7.8	43.7	7.0	11.2
Not in urbanized areas.....	7.2	44.8	8.5	11.3
Places of 25,000 or more.....	5.7	47.3	9.9	11.7
Places of 10,000 to 25,000.....	7.7	44.3	8.7	11.2
Places of 2,500 to 10,000.....	7.9	43.6	7.5	11.1
Rural nonfarm.....	8.2	44.2	7.9	11.1
Rural farm.....	13.5	26.5	3.1	8.7
Northeast.....	6.4	43.6	8.3	11.2
North Central.....	5.3	43.4	7.1	11.0
South, total.....	13.6	36.7	7.6	9.9
White.....	9.5	41.9	8.6	10.8
Nonwhite.....	32.5	13.3	3.1	6.7
West.....	5.4	52.8	9.4	12.1

Different occupational groups show wide variations in educational attainment.--Disparities in the educational level of occupational groups largely reflect differing minimal educational requirements for

various jobs. Among professional and technical men, most of whose positions call for considerable educational preparation, 92 percent were high school graduates and 60 percent had completed college. Virtually all teachers had high school diplomas and the vast majority were college graduates. Among men in clerical and sales jobs, which usually require moderate amounts of education, from two-thirds to three-fourths had finished four years of high school but only a relatively small fraction had completed college. In comparison, 31 percent of male operatives were high school graduates and only 1 percent had finished college. A greater contrast was observed for laborers, only 1 out of 5 of whom had completed high school and a similar proportion of whom had less than five years of elementary schooling (table E).

Table E.--LEVEL OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY EMPLOYED MALES 18 YEARS OLD AND OVER, BY OCCUPATION GROUP: CIVILIAN NONINSTITUTIONAL POPULATION, MARCH 1959

(The small number of persons not reporting on years of school completed were included in base of percentages but were not distributed)

Occupation group	Percent by level of school completed			Median school years completed
	Less than 5 years of elementary school	4 years of high school or more	4 or more years of college	
Employed males 18 years old and over.....	5.8	47.1	10.8	11.7
Profess'l, techn'l, and kindred wkrs..	0.4	91.9	60.2	16.4
Medical and other health workers...	0.4	95.9	81.6	17+
Teachers, except college.....	...	99.1	93.5	17+
Other professional, technical, and kindred workers.....	0.4	90.5	53.4	16.1
Farmers and farm managers.....	12.1	27.0	1.9	8.7
Managers, officials, and proprietors, except farm.....	2.5	61.7	14.5	12.4
Salaried workers.....	0.6	73.5	21.0	12.7
Self-employed workers.....	4.4	50.1	8.1	12.0
Clerical and kindred workers.....	0.9	69.5	8.4	12.5
Sales workers.....	0.9	72.2	14.6	12.6
Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred wkrs.	3.5	40.3	2.1	11.0
Operatives and kindred workers.....	5.8	30.5	0.9	10.0
Service workers.....	7.7	34.0	2.1	10.1
Protective service workers.....	2.5	48.8	2.4	12.0
Waiters, cooks, and other service workers.....	9.9	27.7	1.9	9.3
Farm laborers and foremen.....	29.0	15.7	0.5	7.7
Laborers, except farm and mine.....	17.6	19.4	0.6	8.5

Persons at a given educational level tend to be concentrated in certain occupation groups.--The amount of formal schooling a person has received influences the broad occupational group in which he will be found. Among men 18 years old and over in 1959, 6 out of 10 college graduates were in professional and technical fields and about 2 out of 10 were managers, officials, or proprietors. The proportion of college graduates who were in professional or technical occupations was three times as large as for those with 1 to 3 years of college. Of the men 18 years old and over who have attended but have not completed college, one-fourth were in the category of managers, officials, and proprietors,

and one-eighth were in each of the categories for clerical workers, sales workers, and craftsmen. It should be noted that some young men in this group are still attending college and that their current jobs are mostly not in the occupations that they will pursue after graduation.

Among men who completed high school but did not go beyond, a majority were reported in three occupation groups--craftsmen; operatives; and managers, officials, or proprietors (23, 18, and 16 percent, respectively). Those with some high school but lacking four complete years and men who finished elementary school but did not go on to high school were most likely to have become operatives or craftsmen. Those with lesser amounts of education were overrepresented in farm, service, and laboring jobs (table 5).

The tendency for an employed female college graduate to be engaged in a professional occupation

was even greater than that for a male college graduate. Those who were not in one of the professions were most likely to have clerical jobs. Employed women were found mostly in clerical positions if they were high school graduates but mostly as operatives or service workers if they had lesser amounts of formal schooling.

Education, occupation, and income for March 1957.--In Series P-20, No. 77, text tables E, F, and G showed statistics for March 1957 on education, occupation, and income for men 35 to 54 years old who were year-round full-time workers. A basic error in those tables, resulting from an incorrect computer procedure, has been discovered. A corrected tabulation has been run and the revised figures are shown in tables F, G, and H of the present report. For most of the cells in these tables, the revised figures differ little from the ones published earlier, but for a number of cells in the table the differences are more substantial.

Table F.--PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP OF MEN 35 TO 54 YEARS OLD WHO WERE YEAR-ROUND FULL-TIME WORKERS, BY YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED, FOR THE UNITED STATES: MARCH 1957

(Based on about three-fourths of all sample households; see "Definitions and explanations")

Major occupation group	Total	Years of school completed						Median school years completed
		Elementary school		High school		College		
		Less than 8 years	8 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	1 to 3 years	4 years or more	
All occupations.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	11.3
Professional, technical, and kindred workers..	9.4	0.3	1.1	2.1	6.4	17.6	54.4	16+
Farmers and farm managers.....	8.0	15.3	13.6	5.4	5.5	4.6	0.6	8.6
Managers, officials, and proprietors, except farm.....	16.3	5.5	10.3	13.0	22.6	26.1	26.7	12.5
Self-employed.....	7.8	4.1	6.6	7.8	9.3	10.1	9.6	12.2
Salaried.....	8.5	1.4	3.7	5.1	13.3	15.9	17.2	12.7
Clerical, sales, and kindred workers.....	12.0	3.3	6.2	9.6	19.7	24.0	11.5	12.5
Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers.....	22.0	18.2	25.6	32.5	23.0	15.3	3.9	10.5
Operatives and kindred workers.....	20.2	28.6	28.3	27.4	15.2	7.3	0.9	9.1
All other.....	12.1	28.7	14.8	10.0	7.6	5.1	1.9	8.5

Table G.--PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY TOTAL MONEY INCOME OF MEN 35 TO 54 YEARS OLD WHO WERE YEAR-ROUND FULL-TIME WORKERS, BY YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED, FOR THE UNITED STATES: MARCH 1957

(Based on about three-fourths of all sample households; see "Definitions and explanations")

Total money income	Total	Years of school completed						Median school years completed
		Elementary school		High school		College		
		Less than 8 years	8 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	1 to 3 years	4 years or more	
All income groups.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	11.3
Under \$2,000.....	9.3	24.8	11.6	6.1	4.4	5.4	2.8	8.3
\$2,000 to \$3,999.....	23.4	41.1	31.8	23.6	16.5	11.4	7.3	8.8
\$4,000 to \$5,999.....	38.1	27.0	40.4	49.0	44.0	33.5	19.1	11.2
\$6,000 to \$7,999.....	16.9	5.0	12.7	15.1	22.9	28.2	23.1	12.4
\$8,000 and over.....	12.2	2.2	3.6	6.2	12.2	21.4	47.6	13.0

Table H.--PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY TOTAL MONEY INCOME IN 1956 OF MEN 35 TO 54 YEARS OLD WHO WERE YEAR-ROUND FULL-TIME WORKERS, BY MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION, FOR THE UNITED STATES: MARCH 1957

(Based on about three-fourths of all sample households; see "Definitions and explanations," Percent not shown where base is less than 200,000)

Level of education completed and amount of money income	All occupations	Major occupation group							All other
		Profes- sional, techn'1, and kindred workers	Farmers and farm managers	Managers, officials, and proprietors, except farm		Clerical, sales, and kindred workers	Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers	Operatives and kindred workers	
				Self- employed	Salaried				
Less than 4 years of high school...	100.0	...	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under \$4,000.....	45.1	...	87.6	46.8	22.8	38.1	25.0	37.7	69.0
\$4,000 to \$5,999.....	39.5	...	6.7	30.7	26.1	52.0	52.1	49.1	27.0
\$6,000 and over.....	15.4	...	5.7	22.5	51.1	9.9	22.9	13.1	4.0
4 years of high school or more.....	100.0	100.0	...	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under \$4,000.....	17.7	10.9	...	25.8	7.8	16.3	11.1	18.7	38.2
\$4,000 to \$5,999.....	36.4	24.5	...	19.7	25.8	45.7	44.7	58.9	48.6
\$6,000 and over.....	45.9	64.6	...	54.5	66.4	37.9	44.2	22.4	13.3

RELATED REPORTS

Additional statistics on educational attainment for March 1959 are presented in other Series P-20 reports on marital status and family characteristics, in a Series P-60 report on income, and in an article in a forthcoming issue of the Monthly Labor Review, which is published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data on educational attainment for persons 14 years old and over were collected in March 1957 and were published in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 77. Additional data on this subject for cities, counties, standard metropolitan areas, States, regions, and the United States in April 1950 appear in Volume II of the decennial census reports. Detailed statistics on educational attainment by age and socio-economic characteristics for regions and the United States are presented in a special report of the 1950 Census (Vol. IV, Special Reports, Part 5, Chapter B, Education).

Survey data on illiteracy in the United States for 1947 and 1952 were published in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, Nos. 20 and 45, respectively. Series P-20, No. 45, also contains estimates of illiteracy for the United States for 1950, and No. 20 shows estimates for 1940. A recent Series P-23 report contains estimates of illiteracy by States for 1950. Figures on illiteracy by States and smaller areas for 1930 and earlier censuses are shown in the census reports for those years.

Statistics on fall school enrollment, as of October of each year, are published in Series P-20 reports and were last shown in Series P-20, No. 97, for October 1959.

Comparability.--The data presented in this report for different years are not strictly comparable for several reasons. In the first place, the small group of Current Population Survey enumerators were more experienced and had more intensive training and supervision than the large number of temporary decennial census enumerators and may have more

often obtained more accurate answers from respondents. Second, the survey data exclude members of the Armed Forces living in barracks on post in the United States, whereas these persons are included in the census data and estimates based on census data. Survey figures on illiteracy and occupation, shown in the tables of this report, also exclude inmates of institutions, but census figures include inmates. Third, data on illiteracy for 1870 to 1940 relate to the population 10 years old and over, whereas illiteracy data for 1947 to 1959 relate to the population 14 years old and over. Fourth, figures on educational attainment for 1940, 1947, and 1950 are presented as of April, whereas the figures for 1952 are for October, and those for 1957 and 1959 are as of March. Many younger persons who had not completed a grade by March had completed it by October of that year.

Data on years of school completed for 1947 and 1940 were based on responses to a single question, rather than the two questions used in subsequent years. (See section on "Definitions and explanations.") There may have been a greater tendency toward overstatement of years of school completed in 1947 and 1940 when only the single question was asked.

Despite these several types of differences, however, the conclusions that are drawn from comparisons of the data for different years should not be seriously affected.

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Population coverage.--All figures for decennial census years (years ending in zero) relate to the total population of the United States, that is, to all persons (including Armed Forces and inmates) residing within the United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii).

The figures in this report for March 1959 and other survey years (1957, 1952, 1947) are sample

survey data and relate to the civilian population. Members of the Armed Forces living off post or with their families on post are included, but all other members of the Armed Forces are excluded. For convenience, this population is referred to as the civilian population. The data on education by occupation or income, and the survey figures on illiteracy shown in the tables, also exclude the relatively small number of persons being cared for in institutions.

The figures in tables F to H of this report are derived from a subsample of the Current Population Survey sample, which amounts to about three-fourths of the Current Population Survey sample. The population base for tables F to H excludes not only persons not in the income subsample but also persons who did not report on income or on educational attainment and others not employed or not year-round full-time workers.

Urban and rural residence.--The territory classified as urban in this report is the same as that in the 1950 Census. At that time the urban population comprised all persons living in (a) places of 2,500 inhabitants or more incorporated as cities, boroughs, and villages, (b) incorporated towns of 2,500 inhabitants or more except in New England, New York, and Wisconsin, where the term "town" is used to designate minor civil divisions of counties, (c) the densely settled urban fringe, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas, around cities of 50,000 or more, and (d) unincorporated places of 2,500 inhabitants or more outside any urban fringe. The remaining population is classified as rural.

Farm and nonfarm residence.--The rural population is subdivided into the rural-farm population, which comprises all rural residents living on farms, and the rural-nonfarm population, which comprises the remaining rural population. The method of determining farm and nonfarm residence in the present survey is the same as in the 1950 Census. Persons on "farms" who pay cash rent for their house and yard only are classified as nonfarm; furthermore, all persons in institutions, summer camps, motels, and tourist camps are classified as nonfarm.

Size of place.--The urban population is classified as living in urbanized areas or in urban places outside urbanized areas. The areas classified as urbanized in the present survey are the same as those in the 1950 Census. According to the definition used in the 1950 Census, the population in urbanized areas comprises all persons living in (a) cities of 50,000 or more inhabitants and (b) the densely settled urban fringe, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas, surrounding these cities. Residents of urbanized areas were classified according to the size of the entire area in 1950 rather than by the size of the place in which they lived. The urban population outside urbanized areas is classified according to the size of the urban place in 1950.

Geographic regions.--The four major regions of the United States, for which data are presented in this report, represent groups of States, as follows:

Northeast: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont.

North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin.

South: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia.

West: Arizona, Colorado, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Utah.

Age.--The age classification is based on the age of the person at his latest birthday.

Color.--The term "color" refers to the division of the population into two groups, white and nonwhite. The nonwhite group includes Negroes, Indians, Japanese, Chinese, and other nonwhite races.

Nativity.--In table A of this report, the population is classified according to place of birth into two basic groups, native and foreign born. A person born in the United States or any of its Territories or possessions is counted as native. Also included as native is the small group of persons who, although born in a foreign country or at sea, were American citizens by birth because their parents were American citizens.

Years of school completed.--Data on years of school completed in this report for 1950 and later years were derived from the combination of answers to two questions (a) "What is the highest grade of school that he has attended?" and (b) "Did he finish this grade?"

The questions on educational attainment apply only to progress in "regular" schools. Such schools include graded public, private, and parochial elementary and high schools (both junior and senior high), colleges, universities, and professional schools, whether day schools or night schools. Thus, regular schooling is that which may advance a person toward an elementary or high school diploma, or a college, university, or professional school degree. Schooling in other than regular schools was counted only if the credits obtained were regarded as transferable to a school in the regular school system.

The median years of school completed is defined as the value which divides the population group into two equal parts--one-half having completed more schooling and one-half having completed less schooling than the median. These medians are expressed in terms of a continuous series of numbers representing years of school completed. For example, the completion of the first year of high school is indicated by 9 and the first year of college by 13.

The 1947 and 1940 figures on educational attainment shown in this report were derived from a single question on highest grade of school completed. There is some evidence that in answer to the single question respondents frequently reported the year or grade in which they had last been enrolled, instead of the one completed. The questions used in 1950 and later years tend to reduce this kind of error. It is possible, therefore, that the apparent amount of increase in educational attainment between 1940 and 1947 and later years would have been greater than that shown in this report if the questions had been the same in the several censuses and surveys.

Illiteracy.--In 1959, as in past censuses and surveys, persons who could not both read and write a simple message either in English or any other language were classified as illiterate. Thus, illiterates include persons who are able to read but not write. Persons who formerly knew how to read and write but who were unable to do so at the time of the survey because of mental or physical impairment, such as blindness, are classified as literate.

Information on illiteracy of the population was obtained from direct questions in the censuses of 1870 through 1930. The data for 1947, 1952, and 1959 were obtained from sample surveys; and the statistics for the census year 1940 were derived by estimating procedures. Figures for 1870 through 1940 refer to the total population 10 years old and over, whereas figures for 1947, 1952, and 1959 refer to the noninstitutional population 14 years old and over. In 1947, the literacy question was asked only of persons who had completed less than 5 years of school; in 1952 and 1959, the same general procedure was used but the question was asked of those who had completed less than 6 years of school.

Employed.--Employed persons comprise those who, during the survey week, were either (a) "at work"--those who did any work for pay or profit, or worked without pay for 15 hours or more on a family farm or business; or (b) "with a job but not at work"--those who did not work and were not looking for work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent because of vacation, illness, industrial dispute, or bad weather, or because they were taking time off for various other reasons.

Unemployed.--Unemployed persons include those who did not work at all during the survey week and were looking for work. Also included as unemployed are those who did not work at all during the survey week and--

- a. Were waiting to be called back to a job from which they had been laid off; or
- b. Were waiting to report to a new wage, or salary job scheduled to start within the following 30 days (and were not in school during the survey week); or
- c. Would have been looking for work except that they were temporarily ill or believed no work was available in their line of work or in the community.

Labor force.--The civilian labor force comprises the total of all civilians classified as employed or unemployed in accordance with the criteria described above.

Not in labor force.--All civilians 14 years of age and over who are not classified as employed or unemployed are defined as "not in labor force." These persons are further classified as "engaged in own home housework," "in school," "unable to work" because of long-term physical or mental illness, and "other." The "other" group includes for the most part retired persons, those reported as too old to work, the voluntarily idle, and seasonal workers for whom the survey week fell in an "off" season and who were not reported as unemployed. Persons doing only incidental unpaid family work (less than 15 hours) are also classified as not in labor force.

Year-round full-time worker.--A year-round full-time worker is one who worked primarily at full-time jobs for 50 weeks or more during the previous year. He is classified as having worked at full-time jobs if he worked 35 hours or more per week during a majority of the weeks in which he worked during the previous year.

Major occupation group.--The data on occupation relate to the job held during the survey week. Persons employed in two jobs or more were reported in the job at which they worked the greatest number of hours during the week. The occupational categories shown are largely the major occupation groups used in the 1950 Census of Population. The composition of these major groups in terms of detailed occupations is shown in Volume II of the reports of the 1950 Census. One major occupation group--managers, officials, and proprietors, except farm--is subdivided into salaried workers and self-employed workers. The category "All other" represents a combination of the categories "Private household workers," "Service workers, except private household," "Farm laborers and foremen," and "Laborers, except farm and mine."

Income.--Income as defined in this report represents total money income, or the sum of money wages and salaries, net income from self-employment, and income from other sources. Income data in this report refer to money income only, prior to deductions for taxes. Inasmuch as farmers typically receive an important part of their livelihood in the form of goods produced and consumed on the farm rather than in money, this factor should be taken into consideration in comparing the income of persons in farm and nonfarm occupations.

Rounding of estimates.--The individual figures in this report are rounded to the nearest thousand and adjusted to group totals.

#### SOURCE AND RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

Source of data.--The estimates for March 1959 presented in this report are based on data obtained in connection with the monthly population sample

survey of the Bureau of the Census. This sample is spread over 330 sample areas comprising 638 counties and independent cities, with coverage in each of the 48 States and the District of Columbia. A total of about 42,000 dwelling units and other living quarters are designated for the sample at any one time; and, of these, approximately 35,000 households are interviewed each month. There are another 1,500 occupied units, on the average, for which information should be obtained but is not, generally because the enumerator could not contact any household member during the time specified for interviewing. The remaining 5,500 are vacant households or those otherwise not to be enumerated for the survey.

The estimating procedure used in the survey involves, as a final step, the inflation of the weighted sample results to independent estimates of the civilian population of the United States by age, sex, and color. These independent estimates are based on statistics from the 1950 Census of Population; statistics of births, deaths, immigration, emigration; and statistics on the strength of the Armed Forces and separation records.

Reliability of estimates.--Since the estimates are based on a sample, they may differ somewhat from the figures that would have been obtained if a complete census had been taken using the same schedules, instructions, and enumerators.

As in any survey work, the results are subject to errors of response and of reporting as well as being subject to sampling variability.

The standard error is primarily a measure of sampling variability, that is, of the variations that occur by chance because a sample rather than the whole of the population is surveyed. As calculated for this report, the standard error also partially measures the effect of response and enumeration errors but does not measure as such any systematic biases in the data. The chances are about 68 out of 100 that an estimate from the sample would differ from a complete census figure by less than the standard error. The chances are about 95 out of 100 that the difference would be less than twice the standard error.

Table J.--STANDARD ERROR OF LEVEL OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate	Both sexes		Male		Female	
	Total or white	Non-white	Total or white	Non-white	Total or white	Non-white
10,000.....	5,000	5,000	7,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
50,000.....	11,000	10,000	14,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
100,000.....	15,000	14,000	20,000	14,000	14,000	14,000
250,000.....	24,000	21,000	31,000	21,000	22,000	21,000
500,000.....	34,000	20,000	43,000	30,000	31,000	30,000
1,000,000.....	48,000	40,000	60,000	40,000	45,000	40,000
2,500,000.....	75,000	50,000	90,000	50,000	70,000	50,000
5,000,000.....	100,000	50,000	110,000	...	100,000	...
10,000,000.....	140,000	...	140,000	...	130,000	...
20,000,000.....	180,000	...	150,000	...	170,000	...
30,000,000.....	210,000	...	...	...	...	...
40,000,000.....	...	...	...	...	...	...

The figures presented in tables J and K are approximations to the standard errors of various characteristics shown in tables A to E and I to 8. In order to derive standard errors that would be applicable to a wide variety of items and could be prepared at a moderate cost, a number of approximations were required. As a result, the tables should be interpreted as providing an indication of the order of magnitude of the standard errors rather than as the precise standard error for any specific item.

The reliability of an estimated percentage, computed by using sample data for both numerator and denominator, depends upon both the size of the percentage and the size of the total upon which the percentage is based. Estimated percentages are relatively more reliable than the corresponding absolute estimates of the numerators of the percentages, particularly if the numerators are large.

Table K.--STANDARD ERROR OF PERCENTAGES

Estimated percentage	Base of percentage (in thousands)					
	500	1,000	5,000	10,000	50,000	100,000
2 or 98.....	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1
5 or 95.....	1.4	1.1	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.1
10 or 90.....	2.1	1.4	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.1
25 or 75.....	2.8	2.1	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.2
50.....	3.4	2.4	1.1	0.7	0.3	0.2

The data in tables F, G, and H are based on a subsample of approximately three-fourths of the households in the Current Population Survey and are thus subject to somewhat greater sampling variability than the data in other tables, which are based on the full sample.

Illustration: An estimated 2,480,000 persons between the ages of 25 and 34 years had completed 4 or more years of college. The chances are 68 out of 100 that the difference between the estimate and the figure which would have been obtained from a complete census is less than 70,000. Of the 552,000 nonwhite females 65 years of age and over in the United States, 26.5 percent had completed at least 8 years of elementary school. The chances are 68 out of 100 that the differences between the estimate and the figure which would have been obtained from a complete census is less than 2.3 percent.

Some of the tables present estimates of averages (medians), as well as the corresponding distributions. The sampling variability of estimates of medians depends on the distributions upon which the medians are based.

Confidence limits of the median based on sample data may be estimated as follows: (1) From table K, using the appropriate base, determine the standard error for a 50-percent characteristic, (2) add to and subtract from 50 percent the standard error determined in step 1. Values corresponding to the resulting percents from step 2 are then determined

from inspection of the distribution of the characteristic, in this report, years of school completed. (Where a category is shown for persons not reporting on the characteristic, allowance must be made for this fact.) A two-standard-error confidence limit may be determined by adding and subtracting twice the standard error in step 2. The method is best described by an illustration.

**Illustration:** The average (median) years of school completed by the adult population was 11.0 years in 1959. The two-standard-error confidence limits for the median are determined as follows: (1) The standard error of a 50-percent characteristic of the adult population (97 million) is about 0.2 percent; (2) twice the standard error added to and subtracted from 50 percent yields the percentage

limits, 49.6 and 50.4. The values of the characteristic corresponding to the percentage limits, in this case 10.9 and 11.1 years, were obtained from the appropriate distribution of the characteristic in table 1 and are the two-standard-error confidence limits. To obtain these values, it was necessary first to prorate those not reporting on education to the several categories of education according to the detail of those who had reported. Secondly, it was necessary to interpolate within the three-year class interval (9.0 to 11.9 years of school completed). Thus, the lower confidence limit, 10.9 years of school completed, was obtained by adding to 9.0 years the interpolated value  $\frac{49.6 - 38.0}{18.3}$  times 3 years, or approximately 1.9 years.

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