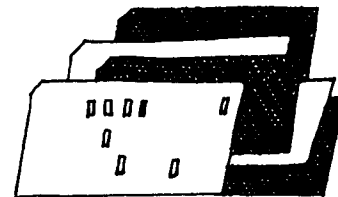


Research Summaries



Pay levels in hosiery manufacturing

HARRY B. WILLIAMS

Average earnings in women's hosiery mills in August 1981 were 57 percent above the level recorded in an earlier study in July 1976¹—a 9.3-percent annual rate of increase. Earnings in mills making other hosiery products rose 50 percent during the same period, or by 8.3 percent a year. In comparison, the Bureau's Employment Cost Index for nondurable goods manufacturing rose at an average annual rate of 8.4 percent between the third quarters of 1976 and 1981.

Straight-time earnings of production workers in hosiery mills averaged \$4.62 an hour in August 1981² according to the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics survey. Workers in mills producing women's full-length and knee-length hosiery averaged \$4.70; those in mills making other hosiery products averaged \$4.56.³ (See table 1.) Workers also commonly received paid holidays, vacations, various health and insurance plans, and retirement pension benefits.

Hosiery manufacturing is concentrated in the Southeastern States, which employed just over 90 percent of the 48,150 workers covered by the survey. Most of the remaining workers were in the Middle Atlantic States. Workers in these two regions averaged \$4.60 and \$4.79 an hour, respectively. Within regions, earnings varied by type of mill (commission or own account), size of community, location, product, and occupation.

Hourly earnings of virtually all workers covered by the survey were between the Federal minimum wage of \$3.35 and \$7 an hour. The middle 50 percent of the workers earned between \$3.91 and \$5.27 an hour in women's hosiery mills and between \$3.78 and \$5.10 in other hosiery mills.

Among the occupational classifications selected for separate study, average earnings in women's hosiery

mills ranged from \$4.21 an hour for boxers of hosiery products to \$6.28 for knitting-machine adjusters and fixers. Job averages above \$5 an hour also were recorded for preboarders (\$5.20), baggers (\$5.26), folders (\$5.32), and sewing-machine repairers (\$5.86). Sewing-machine operators joining parts of panty hose—numerically the most important job studied in women's hosiery mills—averaged \$4.78 an hour. Knitters of seamless hosiery averaged \$4.69.

Occupational averages in other hosiery mills ranged from \$3.65 for hand-finish menders to \$6.15 for knitting-machine adjusters and fixers. Sewing-machine repairers, at \$5.75, was the only other occupation in this industry averaging over \$5 an hour. Averages for the other occupations studied ranged between \$4.06 for preboarders and \$4.68 for dyeing-machine tenders. Automatic knitters and toe seamers accounted for the largest numbers of workers—slightly over 3,100 each; hourly earnings averaged \$4.43 and \$4.47, respectively.

Straight-time hourly earnings of individual workers within the same job and area varied widely, with hourly earnings of the highest paid workers frequently exceeding those of the lowest paid by \$2.50 or more. Thus, there was substantial overlap of individual earnings among jobs with disparate pay levels, a reflection of the widespread use of incentive wage systems in hosiery mills.

Almost three-fifths of the production workers were paid on an incentive basis, nearly always under individual piecework plans. Among the occupations studied, incentive pay plans applied to at least nine-tenths of the boarders, automatic-packaging-machine operators, baggers, folders and boxers, pairers, toe seamers, and sewing-machine operators in women's hosiery mills; and to at least nine-tenths of the boarders, folders, pairers, and toe seamers in other hosiery mills. Within the same occupation, workers paid on an incentive basis typically had higher average earnings than those paid time rates. The earnings advantage for incentive workers, however, was generally less than 15 percent.

Paid holidays were granted to seven-eighths of the workers in women's hosiery mills and to three-fourths of the work force in other hosiery mills. In women's hosiery mills, workers typically received 6 or 7 days annually; in other hosiery mills, provisions for between 3

Harry B. Williams is a labor economist in the Division of Occupational Pay and Employee Benefit Levels, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 1. Average hourly earnings and number of production workers in hosiery mills, by selected characteristics, August 1981

Characteristics	Women's hosiery		Other hosiery	
	Workers	Earnings ¹	Workers	Earnings ¹
United States ²	20,089	\$4.70	28,035	\$4.56
Region and locality				
Middle Atlantic	—	—	1,026	4.81
Southeast ³	18,633	4.68	25,923	4.54
North Carolina	13,126	4.64	19,026	4.57
Winston-Salem-High Point, N.C.	6,459	4.74	9,045	4.56
Hickory-Statesville, N.C.	—	—	4,628	4.70
Tennessee	—	—	3,054	4.40
Size of community				
Metropolitan areas ⁴	9,394	4.69	8,699	4.60
Nonmetropolitan areas	10,695	4.71	19,336	4.54
Size of establishment				
Less than 100 workers ⁵	1,353	4.34	5,755	4.35
100-249 workers	2,174	4.37	11,582	4.49
250 workers or more	16,562	4.77	10,698	4.75
Selected occupations				
Adjusters and fixers, knitting machines	1,101	6.28	2,803	6.15
Automatic-packaging-machine operators	69	4.98	—	—
Baggers	408	5.26	168	4.36
Boarders, automatic	343	4.60	2,474	4.39
Boarders, other than automatic	394	4.34	320	4.23
Boxers	49	4.21	123	4.26
Dyeing-machine tenders	232	4.67	611	4.68
Examiners (hosiery inspectors) ⁶	1,419	4.75	998	4.34
Grey (greige) examiners	1,223	4.74	642	4.40
Finished examiners	635	4.70	308	4.24
Folders	214	5.32	268	4.16
Folders and boxers	2,152	4.28	1,592	4.32
Knitters, automatic	80	4.37	3,147	4.43
Knitters, string	—	—	586	4.59
Knitters, women's seamless hosiery	511	4.69	—	—
Menders, hand, finish	80	4.41	105	3.65
Menders, hand, grey	—	—	70	4.18
Pairers	107	4.77	1,916	4.47
Repairers, sewing machine	129	5.86	66	5.75
Seamers, toe	1,494	4.66	3,134	4.47
Sewing-machine operators, party hose	4,539	4.78	—	—
Transfer-machine operators	39	4.44	191	4.37

¹ Excludes premium pay for overtime and for work on weekends, holidays, and late shifts.
² Includes data for regions in addition to those shown separately.
³ Includes data for States and localities in addition to those shown separately.
⁴ Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget through February 1974.
⁵ Includes data for establishments employing 50 workers or more in women's hosiery and 20 workers or more in other hosiery mills.
⁶ Includes data for workers in classifications in addition to those shown separately.
 Note: Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria.

and 6 days were common. Slightly more than nine-tenths of the workers in women's hosiery and four-fifths of those in other mills were in establishments providing paid vacations after qualifying periods of service. Typical provisions for women's hosiery workers were 1 week after 1 year of service, 2 weeks after 3 years, 3 weeks after 10 years, and 4 weeks after 20 years or more. In other hosiery mills, typical provisions were 1 week's pay after 1 year and 2 weeks after 4 years or more of service. Various health and insurance plans also were available to large proportions of workers, although the incidence of the plans varied by type of hosiery mill and geographic location. Retirement pension plans—other

than Federal social security—applied to two-thirds of the workers in women's hosiery mills and to two-fifths in other hosiery mills.

The study included establishments engaged primarily in knitting, dyeing, or finishing full-fashioned or seamless hosiery. These establishments were classified into two broad categories: (1) those primarily making women's full-length or knee-length hosiery, and (2) those primarily making hosiery, except women's full-length and knee-length. In August 1981, the 313 hosiery mills within the scope of this survey employed 20,107 production workers in women's hosiery mills and 28,032 production workers in other hosiery mills. Less than 5 percent were in mills operating under labor-management agreements.

Separate releases for selected States and areas of hosiery industry concentration (Tennessee; North Carolina; Hickory-Statesville and Winston-Salem-High Point, N.C.) are available from the Bureau or any of its regional offices. A comprehensive bulletin, *Industry Wage Survey: Hosiery, August 1981*, is for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. 20402. □

FOOTNOTES

¹ See "BLS examines pay in hosiery mills," *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1978, pp. 44-45. For full details of the survey, see *Industry Wage Survey: Hosiery, July 1976*, Bulletin 1987 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1977).

² Earnings data in this article exclude premium pay for overtime and for work on weekends, holidays, and late shifts.

³ The survey excluded women's hosiery mills employing fewer than 50 workers and other hosiery mills employing fewer than 20 workers.

Hourly pay of contract cleaners lags but sweeps past weekly gains

NORMA W. CARLSON

Average hourly earnings of service workers in contract cleaning establishments rose more rapidly between 1977 and 1981 than their average weekly earnings because of widespread declines in hours worked. Nevertheless, increases in hourly earnings for cleaning workers generally lagged behind gains in the service worker component of the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Cost Index.

These findings resulted from a comparison of two Bureau of Labor Statistics surveys of occupational wages and employee benefits in contract cleaning services.¹ The

Norma W. Carlson is a labor economist in the Division of Occupational Pay and Employee Benefit Levels, Bureau of Labor Statistics.