Selected Documents Pertaining to Black Workers Among the Records of the Department of Labor and Its Component Bureaus. 1902-1969
Cover: Negro women weighing wire coils and recording weights to establish wage rate. (RG 86)
Selected Documents Pertaining to Black Workers Among the Records of the Department of Labor and Its Component Bureaus. 1902-1969

Compiled by Debra L. Newman

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Foreword

The General Services Administration, through the National Archives and Records Service, is responsible for administering the permanent noncurrent records of the Federal Government. These archival holdings, now amounting to more than 1 million cubic feet, date from the days of the First Continental Congress and consist of the basic records of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of our Government. The Presidential libraries of Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson contain the papers of those Presidents and many of their associates in office. While many of the archival holdings document events of great moment in our Nation's history, most of them are preserved because of their continuing practical use in the ordinary processes of government, for the protection of private rights, and for the research use of scholars and students.

To facilitate the use of the records and to describe their nature and content, archivists prepare various kinds of finding aids. The present work is one such publication. We believe that it will prove valuable to anyone who wishes to use the records it describes.
Preface

Special lists are published by the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) as part of its records description program. The special list describes in detail the contents of certain important records series; that is, units of records of the same form or that deal with the same subject or activity or that are arranged serially. Its form and style are not fixed but vary according to the nature of the records to which it relates. Its distinguishing characteristic is that it goes beyond the general description contained in a record group registration statement, a preliminary inventory, or an inventory and describes records in terms of individual record items.

In addition to lists and other finding aids that relate to particular record groups, NARS issues publications that give an overall picture of materials in its custody. A new, comprehensive Guide to the National Archives of the United States and a guide devoted to one geographical area — Guide to Materials on Latin America in the National Archives of the United States were published in 1974. Reference information papers analyze records in the National Archives of the United States (hereafter called the Archives) on such subjects as transportation, small business, and the Middle East. Records of the Civil War are described in Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War (1962), Guide to the Archives of the Government of the Confederate States of America (1968), and Civil War Maps in the National Archives (1964); those of World War I in Handbook of Federal World War Agencies and Their Records, 1917-1921 (1943); and those of World War II in the two-volume guide, Federal Records of World War II (1950-51). Genealogical records are described in Guide to Genealogical Records in the National Archives (1964). In the Archives are large quantities of audiovisual materials received from all sources: Government, private, and commercial. The Guide to the Ford Film Collection in the National Archives (1970) describes one of the largest private gift collections. The extensive body of maps and charts is described in Guide to Cartographic Records in the National Archives (1971).

Many bodies of records of high research value have been microfilmed by NARS as a form of publication. Positive prints of these microfilm publications, many of which are described in the current Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications, are available for purchase. For other publications, see the most recent Select List of Publications of the National Archives and Records Service, General Information Leaflet No. 3.

JAMES B. RHOADS
Archivist of the United States
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Introduction

The documents relating to black workers listed here were selected from those records in the National Archives of the United States that were created by the Department of Labor and some of its component bureaus. The present Department of Labor was created by an act of March 4, 1913 (37 Stat. 736), as one of the successor agencies of the Department of Commerce and Labor. Although a Department of Labor had previously existed, it was without Cabinet rank and was the predecessor of the Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics. The act stated that "the purpose of the Department of Labor shall be to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners of the United States, to improve their working conditions, and to advance their opportunities for profitable employment." The Secretaries of Labor in carrying out this mission established several offices that were specifically concerned with matters relating to the welfare of black workers. These were the Division of Negro Economics, 1918-21; the Negro Division of the United States Employment Service (USES), 1918; the Division of Negro Labor, 1934-37; and, more recently, various fair employment practice and equal employment opportunity offices that are concerned with the problems of black and other minority workers and with women wage earners. Other bureaus and offices in the Department were also concerned with the welfare of black workers. Consequently, this list refers to documents from several National Archives record groups (RG's): General Records of the Department of Labor (RG 174); Records of the Bureau of Employment Security (RG 183), which contains records of USES; Records of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (RG 257); Records of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (RG 100), which contains records of the Bureau of Labor Standards; and Records of the Women's Bureau (RG 86).

On May 1, 1918, Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson established the Division of Negro Economics under the Department's War Labor Administration Office and appointed as its director George E. Haynes, formerly a professor of sociology and economics at Fisk University and one of the secretaries of the National Urban League. Haynes' functions were to advise the Secretary of Labor on matters affecting black wage earners and to outline and direct plans for greater production by black workers for the war effort, particularly in agriculture and industry. The staff of the Division included State Supervisors of Negro Economics who closely cooperated with Federal directors of USES in the states. The staff of the Division established interracial relations committees consisting of white and black citizens from localities where problems of discrimination against black workers were uncovered; it also developed informational and educational campaigns for harmony between the races and for helping white and black citizens to understand and foster the Department's programs to increase production for the war effort.

Two major reports were published by the Division: The Negro Migration, 1916-1917 in 1919, a study directed by James H. Dillard, president of the Jeans and Slater Funds, and completed before the Division of Negro Economics was established, and a report by Haynes in 1920 entitled The Negro at Work During the World War and During Reconstruction.
INTRODUCTION

The Division lingered until 1921 but was finally discontinued because, it was argued, it was meant to be a temporary war emergency office. From 1921 to 1934, however, Karl F. Phillips, who had served as Assistant Director of Negro Economics, remained with the Department as a Commissioner of Conciliation and as a liaison with the black community. With the Conciliation Service, Phillip's duty was to find bases of negotiation acceptable to both labor and management in industrial disputes. He also participated in labor meetings of black unions and organizations, monitored black labor activists, and acted as a mediator.

Only fragments of Haynes' and Phillips' records are extant—Haynes' among the records of the Department of Labor and Phillips' among those of the Bureau of Employment Security. All are related to office operations or to black workers.

On February 22, 1918, the Secretary of Labor created the Negro Division of USES. The Chief of this Division, Giles B. Jackson, formerly an attorney from Richmond, Va., had the duty of preparing plans for the most efficient use of the black labor force in the war. Some of Jackson's functions were supervised by the Director of Negro Economics, and the two offices generally acted together. The Negro Division existed less than a year, and only a few of its records remain. They are interspersed among those of the Division of Negro Economics and the files of the Chief Clerk of the Department of Labor in RG 174.

The Division of Negro Labor was created by Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins in April 1934 "to advise the Secretary of Labor and chiefs of the divisions in the Department of Labor on all matters relating to the Negro wage-earner." A month earlier, Lawrence A. Oxley, formerly North Carolina State Director of Negro Relief for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, had been appointed a Commissioner of Conciliation. When the Division of Negro Labor was created, he was made its chief while retaining his position as a Commissioner. The Division was placed in the Bureau of Labor Statistics but maintained liaison with the Children's Bureau to deal with problems of black child labor, with the Women's Bureau on problems of wage inequities and other conditions of employment affecting black women workers, and with the Conciliation Service in the adjustment of labor disputes involving black workers. As chief of the Division, Oxley also represented the Secretary on the Labor Advisory Board of the National Recovery Administration and on the National Mediation Board.

On July 1, 1937, Oxley was transferred to the administrative staff of USES and given the title of Field Representative. His primary duty was to visit State Employment Service offices to advise State and local office staffs about facilitating the placement of black workers. As part of this work, Oxley organized State conferences on the employment problems of black workers to focus attention on the difficulties encountered in their search for adequate, productive, and continuing employment. USES employed a number of black civil servants at this time, and Oxley also handled employment questions that arose from this group.

In 1939, when USES was transferred to the Social Security Board, Oxley was appointed chief of the Negro Placement Service, Division of Special Services. In spite of the fact that Oxley had various titles from 1934 to 1942, his detailed and numerous files for this period are among the records of the Bureau of Employment Security.

The Women-In-Industry Service, a war emergency agency, was authorized in 1918. The function of the Service was to ensure effective employment of women while
conserving their health and welfare. The Women's Bureau, established in the Department by an act of June 5, 1920, succeeded the Women-In-Industry Service. The Women's Bureau is responsible for developing standards, policies, and programs to promote the welfare of working women; for increasing their efficiency; for improving their working conditions; and for advancing their opportunities for profitable employment. This Bureau conducted studies and prepared articles, speeches, and reports, a few of which were concerned solely with the black woman worker and many of which, while relating to American women in general, contained information about black women.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics originated as the Bureau of Labor, which was established in the Department of the Interior by an act of June 27, 1884. In 1888 the Bureau became an independent Department of Labor without Cabinet status. It was incorporated into the Department of Commerce and Labor in 1903 as a bureau, and when the present Department of Labor was organized in 1913 the Bureau was transferred to it as the Bureau of Labor Statistics. As the Federal Government's principal factfinding agency in the field of labor economics, the Bureau gathers and analyzes data and publishes reports about the labor force, employment, unemployment, and other work-related subjects. The Bureau, as the principal Government agency concerned with price statistics outside the field of agriculture, publishes periodical indexes of consumer and wholesale prices and conducts studies of consumer expenditures and incomes. This list includes samples of surveys of individual consumer expenditures and incomes of black wage earners.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration succeeded the Bureau of Labor Standards in May 1971. Established as the Division of Labor Standards in November 1934 and renamed in 1948, the Bureau promoted industrial safety and health and gave technical advice to State labor departments, labor unions, and trade associations. It developed national standards for labor legislation and labor administration and assisted the Bureau of International Labor Affairs in implementing international labor standards. Through agreements negotiated between Federal and State agencies, it coordinated the enforcement of laws concerning wage rates, hours of work, industrial homework, child labor, and safety and health. The Bureau served as an adviser on conditions and programs in the areas of child labor and youth employment standards and prepared publications and exhibits for public information. Its records include correspondence with black individuals, labor and political organizations, and civic associations.

This list does not refer to all of the documents relating to black workers that are among the records of the Department of Labor and its component bureaus. Items were selected for the list because of their importance for understanding the history of the relationship between the black wage earner and the Department of Labor. Some documents are unique; others are representative of a larger group of similar records. The items in the list are arranged alphabetically by major subject headings, thereunder by minor subject headings, and thereunder chronologically. About one-fourth of the subjects are cross-referenced. The inclusive dates extend from 1902 to 1969, but most items are dated between 1918 and 1940. A typical entry in the list shows, for the item to which it refers, the date, names of correspondents or author, title if any, number of pages, and number of the National Archives record group. The list includes various types of textual records: letters, memorandums, published and unpublished reports, minutes, agenda, transcripts, speeches, legislation, telegrams, scripts, press releases, press clippings, bulletins, tables, and articles. The entry specifies the type of record only if the document is not a letter or if the type is not evident from the title. Some audiovisual records are listed: photographs, motion pictures, and sound recordings.
INTRODUCTION

A number of other National Archives record groups also contain textual and audiovisual materials relating to black workers: Records of the National Recovery Administration (RG 9), Records of the Veterans Administration (RG 15), Records of the Federal Extension Service (RG 33), Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps (RG 35), General Records of the Department of Justice (RG 60), Records of the Work Projects Administration (RG 69), Records of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics (RG 83), Records of the Adjutant General’s Office 1780's-1917 (RG 94), Records of the Farmers Home Administration (RG 96), Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (RG 105), Records of the National Youth Administration (RG 119), Records of the Public Works Administration (RG 135), Records of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (RG 145), Records of the Committee for Congested Production Areas (RG 212), Records of the Committee on Fair Employment Practice (RG 228), and Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920 (RG 393).


The titles of the following Labor Department officials are not given in the entries of the list.

Burr, Walter F.
Associate Director, National Reemployment Service

Haynes, George E.
Director of Negro Economics

Hinrichs, A. F.
Chief Economist, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Kerwin, Hugh L.
Private Secretary to the Secretary of Labor
Commissioner of Conciliation
Director of Conciliation

Lubin, Isador
Commissioner of Labor Statistics

Oxley, Lawrence A.
Commissioner of Conciliation
Chief, Division of Negro Labor
Field Representative, USES
Chief, Negro Placement Service, USES

Persons, W. Frank
Director, USES

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Preliminary Draft prepared for the 56th Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, October 1971, revised July 1972.
INTRODUCTION

Phillips, Karl F.
Assistant Director of Negro Economics
Commissioner of Conciliation

The following abbreviations are used in the list.

NAACP  National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NRA    National Recovery Administration
PWA    Public Works Administration
WPA    Work Projects (Works Progress) Administration
YMCA   Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA   Young Women's Christian Association
Agriculture

Agriculture—General

N.d., Women’s Bureau, “A Program for the Development of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Coverage of Agricultural Workers and Household Employees,” 21 p., RG 86
May 7, 1918, George E. Haynes to Secretary of Labor, memorandum, 9 p., RG 174
July 16, 1920, C. Van Leuen, Hugh MacRae & Co., Inc., to John E. Taylor, Wilmington, N.C., 1 p., RG 174
July 29, 1920, Taylor to Haynes, 11 p., RG 174
Sept. 7, 1920, G. D. Jones, Wassau, Wis., to Haynes, 1 p., RG 174
Sept. 9, 1920, Paul P. Arenson, Arenson Realty Development Corp., to Haynes, 1 p., RG 174
Sept. 20, 1920, Haynes to Louis F. Post, Assistant Secretary of Labor, memorandum, 1 p., RG 174
Sept. 25, 1920, Post to Edwin F. Sweet, Assistant Secretary, Department of Commerce, 1 p., RG 174
Dec. 30, 1924, C. A. Campbell, Michigan Department of Labor and Industry, to Emmett J. Scott, Howard University, 1 p., RG 183
Jan. 12, 1925, Karl F. Phillips to Campbell, 2 p., RG 183
Aug. 1926, Kelly Miller, “The Farm, the Negro’s Best Chance,” reprint from Manufacturers Record, Aug. 1926, 2 p., attached to Sept. 27, 1926, Miller to Department of Labor, 1 p., RG 183
June 6, 1928, “Group of Negroes Picking Cotton,” photo, RG 86
June 6, 1928, “Group of Negroes Picking Cotton” with white overseer on horse, photo, RG 86
June 12, 1928, “Group of Male and Female Negro Workers in Cotton Field,” photo, RG 86
1930, Women’s Bureau, “Within the Gates,” motion picture, 33 minutes, black and white, RG 86
Nov. 28, 1931, “Cotton Picker To Do Work of 20 Men,” clipping from Baltimore Afro-American, 1 p., RG 183
Dec. 7, 1931, S. H. McCrory, Department of Agriculture, to Samuel J. Gompers, Chief Clerk, Department of Labor, 2 p., RG 183
May 1934, “Report of the Agricultural Committee of the Inter-Departmental Group Concerned with the Special Problems of Negroes,” 17 p., RG 174
Apr. 11, 1936, James P. Davis, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, “The Negro Farmer and the Conservation Program of the Southern Division [of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration],” speech to the Conference of Negro Extension Workers and Farmers, 4 p., RG 183
Oct. 26, 1936, Lawrence A. Oxley to Secretary of Labor, “An Appeal for Social Justice, Made by the Conference of Episcopal Church Workers Among Colored People in Session at Baltimore, Maryland, October 15, 1934,” memorandum, 2 p., RG 183
May 26, 1950, Secretary of Labor to Clarence Mitchell, NAACP, 3 p., RG 183

Migrant Workers

Jan. 16, 1925, Carl Young, Michigan Department of Labor and Industry, to Secretary of Labor, 3 p., RG 183
Feb. 19, 1925, Young to Secretary of Labor, 2 p., RG 183
Aug. 11, 1934, Oxley to Valentine, 1 p., RG 183
Aug. 17, 1934, Walter F. Burr to Oxley, 1 p., RG 183
Building Trades

N.d., Division of Negro Labor, “Nationals and Internationals in the Building Construction Trade Affiliated With the American Federation of Labor Which Bar Negroes by Constitution or Ritual,” list, 1 p., RG 183
N.d., Division of Negro Labor, “Chicago Population and Building Trades Statistics by Race,” 3 p., RG 183
N.d., Division of Negro Labor, “The Building Trades and the Negro,” 1 p., RG 183
May 4, 1925, Karl F. Phillips to Morris Lewis, Commissioner of Conciliation, Chicago, Ill., 1 p., RG 183
Apr. 9, 1927, Lewis to Phillips, 2 p., RG 174
July 29, [1928?], “Bricklayers Working at Howard University Receive Only $.50 Per Hour,” press clipping, 1 p., RG 183
July 29, 1930, Phillips to T. Arnold Hill, Urban League, 1 p., RG 183
Feb. 20, 1931, Phillips, “Prevailing Wage (Brick Layers) at Hampton Institute, Va., and the Importation of Workers From Without the Locality and State,” 3 p., RG 183

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N.d., R. Mayne Albright, North Carolina State Employment Service, to the black employees of the Service, 1 p., RG 183
N.d., Albright to black employees, 1 p., RG 183
Feb. 10, 1919, William H. Wilson et al., NAACP, to Samuel J. Gompers, Chief Clerk, Department of Labor, 1 p., RG 174
May 4, 1934, Fritz Cansley, YMCA, Denver, Colo., to Lawrence A. Oxley, 1 p., RG 183
Aug. 1, 1936, Mary M. Bethune, Division of Negro Affairs, National Youth Administration, to Oxley, 2 p., RG 183
Aug. 5, 1936, Edgar B. Young, USES, to Oxley, 3 p., RG 183
Aug. 19, 1936, Young to Oxley, memorandum, 5 p., RG 183

1960, Columbia Broadcasting System, “Harvest of Shame,” motion picture, approximately 56 minutes, black and white, RG 174

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Aug. 19, 1936, Young to Oxley, memorandum, 5 p., RG 183

1960, Columbia Broadcasting System, “Harvest of Shame,” motion picture, approximately 56 minutes, black and white, RG 174
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N.d., Sidney Hillman, Office of Production Management, to "All Holders of Defense Contracts," 1 p., RG 183
N.d., News Bureau, Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, press release, 1 p., RG 183
N.d., War Labor Policies Board, "Illustrations of Living Conditions in War Industry Centers," 4 p., RG 174
Sept. 17, 1918, John R. Shillady, NAACP, to George E. Haynes, 2 p., RG 174
Sept. 25, 1919, Shillady to Woodrow Wilson, 1 p., RG 174
Apr. 18, 1941, Hillman; speech to the First Annual Conference of the Negro in Business, 9 p., RG 100
June 14, 1941, V. A. Zimmer, Bureau of Labor Standards, to Stanley Meyer, Buffalo Council Number 2, Pullman Car Employees Association, 1 p., RG 100
Dec. 16, 1941, Furman L. Templeton, Baltimore Urban League, to Lawrence A. Oxley, memorandum, 1 p., RG 183
1942, New York State War Council, How Management Can Integrate Negroes in War Industries, 50 p., RG 174
Jan. 27, 1942, Lawrence W. Cramer, President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice, to Secretary of Labor, 4 p., RG 174
Jan. 31, 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Executive Order 8802, "Reaffirming Policy of Full Participa-
tion in the Defense Program by All Persons Regardless of Race, Creed, Color, or National Origin, and Directing Certain Action in Further-
ance of Said Policy," 2 p., RG 183
Feb. 1942, Little Rock, Ark., Field Service Unit, USES, "Racial Relations," 4 p., RG 183
Feb. 2, 1942, D. N. Unthank, Emergency Advisory Council for Negroes, Portland, Ore., to Secretary of Labor, 2 p., RG 174
Feb. 5, 1942, Walter White et al., NAACP, to Roosevelt, 4 p., attached to Feb. 27, 1942, Secretary of Labor to White, 1 p., RG 174
Mar. 14, 1942, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Raleigh, N.C., to Secretary of Labor, 1 p., RG 174
Apr. 3, 1942, John J. Corson, USES, to Franklin O. Nichols, Urban League, draft of letter, 2 p., RG 183
May 20, 1942, Mary V. Robinson, Women's Bureau, "Household Employment in the War Emergency," article sent to W. Scharfmann, Washington, D.C., 4 p., RG 86
Aug. 31, 1942, John B. Blandford, Jr., National Housing Agency, to Secretary of Labor, 9 p., RG 174
Nov. 15, 1943, Paul V. McNutt, War Manpower Commission, to Secretary of Labor, memorandum, 6 p., RG 174
Dec. 13, 1950, White to Secretary of Labor, 3 p., RG 183
Dec. 29, 1950, Secretary of Labor to W. Stuart Symington, National Security Resources Board, 1 p., RG 174

Department of Labor

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Mar. 31, 1913, Thomas W. Swann, Springfield, Ill., to President of United States, 1 p., RG 174
July 29, 1918, Secretary of Labor to Chamber of Commerce, Richmond, Va., to the attention of F. D. Dunlop, 1 p., RG 174
Feb. 1919, Office of the Secretary, Department of Labor, “Preliminary Program of an Informal Conference on Problems of Negro Labor To Be Held at Washington, D.C., February 17 and 18, 1919,” 4 p., RG 174
Apr. 12, 1919, George L. Boyle, Washington, D.C., to Secretary of Labor, 2 p., RG 174
Dec. 17, 1919, “The Division of Negro Economics in the Department of Labor,” clipping from Baltimore Daily Herald, 1 p., RG 174
May 22, 1920, Louis F. Post, Assistant Secretary of Labor, to John R. Shillady, NAACP, telegram, 1 p., RG 174
Sept. 15, 1924, Karl F. Phillips to Secretary of Labor, memorandum, 4 p., RG 174
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1948 - 1953  Maurice J. Tobin
1953        Martin P. Durkin
1953 - 1960  James P. Mitchell
1961 - 1962  Arthur J. Goldberg
1962 - 1969  W. Willard Wirtz
1969 - 1970  George P. Shultz
1970 - 1973  James D. Hodgson
1973 - 1975  Peter J. Brennan
1975 - 1976  John T. Dunlop
1976 - 1977  W. J. Usery
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