



New York State Archives

**New York State Factory Investigating Commission General
Wage Investigation Data Cards A3000**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	The General Wage Investigation data cards provide background information for reports and recommendations on wage legislation. The 70,000 cards compiled by field agents detail information about the wages and personal history of employees in four industries: department stores, shirt and collar factories, paper box factories, and confectionery factories.
Creator:	New York (State). Factory Investigating Commission
Title:	Factory Investigating Commission General Wage Investigation data cards
Quantity:	20 cubic feet
Quantity:	circa 70000 cards
Quantity:	22 35mm microfilm roll(s)
Inclusive Date:	1912-1914
Series:	A3000

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Arrangement

Arranged into seven subseries: 1. Employee background cards; 2. Employee and wage data cards; 3. Individual annual earnings cards; 4. Individual estimated annual earnings cards; 5. Individual employment and financial history cards; 6. Cards distributed to clients by social welfare agencies; 7. Business establishment profile cards.

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Administrative History

The General Wage Investigation was carried out by the Commission to provide background information for reports and recommendations regarding wage legislation. Field agents employed by the Commission used standard-form data cards to collect and compile detailed information about the wages and personal history of employees in four representative

industries: department stores, shirt and collar factories, paper box factories, and confectionery factories. The field agents interviewed employees and employers and consulted company records to compile the information, which was entered on one or more of twelve card forms. According to Commission records, over 200,000 data cards were filled out. Of these, only about 70,000 remain. Most of the cards contain information relating to New York City area factory employees; relatively few data cards remain from outside the City.

Additional information about the General Wage Investigation - including a detailed description of how the cards were used to compile and collate data into statistical reports - is contained in the Fourth Report of the Factory Investigating Commission, Volume II, Appendix IV: Report of the Wage Investigation, pages 1-50.

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Scope and Content Note

The cards are arranged in seven subseries, each of which is briefly described below.

Subseries 1. EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CARDS. 1913-1914. ca. 6,700 cards. These cards (designated form #1 and form #1A) contain information on an individual employee's personal background, work experience, and housing arrangements. Form #1 was used in New York City. Form #1A, revised to provide more specific information on housing arrangements, was used upstate. Although 87,011 cards were originally compiled, only about 6,700 remain. Most of the extant cards relate to New York City employees.

Subseries 2. EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND AND WAGE DATA CARDS. 1913-1914. ca. 50,000 cards. Field agents compiled employee background data or transferred all background information from forms #1 and #1A to these cards (which were designated form #2 and #2A) and then used company payroll records to enter each employee's pay rate, number of hours worked weekly, and total weekly earnings. As in subseries 1, form #2 and #2A differed in the specificity of information about housing arrangements in New York City or upstate areas. Only about 50,000 cards remain from among 104,516 originally compiled. Most of the extant cards relate to New York City employees.

Subseries 3. INDIVIDUAL ANNUAL EARNINGS CARDS. 1912. ca. 2,400 cards. These cards (form #5) contain the following information, which was compiled by agents from company payroll records: employee's occupation, pay rate, days and hours worked weekly, weeks worked per year, total annual earnings, and average weekly earnings. Of 6,172 cards originally compiled for selected employees in all four industries, only 2,400 remain from New York City confectionery factories.

Subseries 4. INDIVIDUAL ESTIMATED ANNUAL EARNINGS CARDS. 1912-1914. ca. 2,900 cards. These cards (form #7) were used to compile employee wage information for companies which lacked adequate payroll records to fill out Individual Annual Earnings Cards. Agents checked off the weeks during a year when a person was employed, and then entered the pay

rate and earnings for the first and last weeks. Of 6,900 cards originally completed, only about 2,900 remain, primarily from New York City confectionery and paper box factories.

Subseries 5. INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL HISTORY CARDS. 1913-1914. ca. 5,100 cards. These cards were filled out by agents who interviewed a sample of employees selected to represent all workers in certain branches in an industry or to represent all workers of a certain age group or wage level in each industry. Two cards were filled out for each selected employee. The first card (form #8, Employment History Card) contains information on work history and on work hours and wages. The second card (form #9, Financial History Card) contains information about job training, personal expenses, and personal and family income sources. Together, the two cards were used to compile a detailed description of the financial circumstances of selected employee groups. All cards in this subseries have survived.

Subseries 6. CARDS DISTRIBUTED TO CLIENTS BY SOCIAL WELFARE AGENCIES. 1913-1914. 87 forms (cards and paper forms). The Commission asked agencies such as settlement houses, church organizations, schools, and consumer league offices, to assist in collecting data. These agencies distributed a distinct card (form #10) to their clients or members who were employed by one of the four industries. The cards contain entries for information about work history, wages, and personal and family income and expenses. Although thousands of forms were distributed, so few were returned that the Commission decided not to use the data.

Subseries 7. BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT PROFILE CARDS. 1912-1914. ca. 3,800 cards. Agents used four card forms to record information about each business establishment that was a subject of the investigation. The cards for each business establishment were kept together to provide a complete profile of the site. The information entered on each card was as follows: a. Wage Classification Cards (Form #3): rates of pay for each occupation in the firm; b. Hours of Work Cards (Form #4): information on working hours for each occupation or department in the firm; c. Wages and Number of Employee Cards (Form #6): weekly averages and totals of wages paid to all employees for one year; d. Supplemental Cards (Form #12): information or comments gathered from interviews with employers concerning: quality of employer's record keeping, products manufactured, rate of employee turnover, number of male and female employees and salary ranges, rates of pay by occupation, bonus and promotion practices, working conditions, employer's cooperation in investigation, and lists of ephemera collected at the establishment: report forms, time cards, application forms, rule books, brochures, and catalogs. Profile cards exist for almost all of the establishments visited. Often there are only two or three of the four card forms for a business establishment but the Supplemental Cards exist for most establishments.

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Related Information

Related Material

A3010Series A3010, Lists of Businesses, Occupations, and Code Numbers Used in the Wage Investigation, contains lists of establishments by number and a key to establishment code numbers.

Related Publications

Additional information about the General Wage Investigation -- including a detailed description of how the cards were used to compile and collate data into statistical reports -- is contained in the Fourth Report of the Factory Investigating Commission, Volume II, Appendix IV: Report of the Wage Investigation, pages 1-50.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Lists of establishments by number and a key to establishment code numbers are in Series A3010, Lists of Businesses, Occupations, and Code Numbers Used in the Wage Investigation.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of this material.

Alternate Formats AvailableAlternate Formats Available

Microfilm is available for use at the New York State Archives or through interlibrary loan.

Scanned images of a small sample of data cards are available at the New York State Archives.

Access Terms

- Factories
- Card files
- Factory inspection
- Wages--Surveys
- Wages
- Cards (information artifacts)
- Labor inspection
- New York (State)
- Investigating
- New York (State). Legislature