

ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE AGED IN URBAN HOUSEHOLDS

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THE ECONOMIC FLIGHT of the aged has been a source of public concern in recent years. Because of this public interest it is instructive to explore the comparative economic status of households with aged persons and of other households. Such an exploration does not afford a precise knowledge of the status of the aged, since in some instances the income of the household in which aged persons live may not be an exact reflection of the income of the aged persons.¹ Nevertheless, a comparison of the economic status of households in which there are one or more persons aged 65 or over and that of other households is significant economically and sociologically. The results, if not conclusive, are at least suggestive of the comparative economic insecurity of aged persons and other groups in the population.

The focusing of public attention on the needs of the aged is likely to give rise to the danger of underemphasis on other segments of the population unless the comparative economic status of these other groups also receives consideration. In prior analyses of data from the study of family composition in the United States, it has become apparent repeatedly that children—rather than the aged—are most frequently found in families with lowest incomes, and that children—and not the aged—constitute the age group which is least favored economically.² Although large numbers of aged persons may be without means, as a group the aged may not be any more insecure, and may even have greater security, than some other groups in our population whose needs have not received as much public attention.

Data from the study of family composition in the United States provide a basis for comparing the relative economic security of various elements of the urban population. The distribution by

income of households³ in which the head of the household is aged 65 and over and those in which he is under 65 is shown in percentage form in table 1 and in chart I.

For all households without respect to size, the proportion of households on relief⁴ is approximately the same whether the head of the household is 65 or over, or whether he is younger. Households headed by aged persons have a relatively higher percentage in the income group of less than \$1,000 and the income group of \$3,000 and over. The relatively greater concentration of the aged in the lowest income group does not reflect the true economic position of households with aged heads, because of the smaller average size of households with aged heads, as indicated in table 1.

In households with one, two, and three members there is a somewhat greater concentration of those with aged heads than others in the income categories of relief and under \$1,000, and lower proportions in households with incomes of \$1,000–2,999; in the income groups of \$3,000 and over, the proportion of households with aged heads is relatively large. In households with four or more members, fewer households with aged heads are found in the group on relief and generally more among those reporting incomes of \$2,000 or more; the differences in the proportions are greater with increasing household size. If household size is considered in relation to income, it is apparent that in the smaller households—one to three members—those headed by aged persons have an economic status more favorable than that of households of four or more with heads under the age of 65. About 78 percent of the households with heads aged 65 or over are small households of one, two, or three persons, where the income is shared by fewer persons. The corre-

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¹ See the *Bulletin*, May 1930, pp. 26-27.

² See particularly, Falk, I. S., and Sanders, Barkov S., "The Economic Status of Urban Families and Children," *Social Security Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (May 1930), pp. 25-34.

³ The household may include one or more "families," as defined in the family composition study (see footnote 9). In single-family households, it may be assumed that in general the income is shared equally by all members, but in multi-family households, such as those consisting of married children and their aged parents, the income may less frequently reflect the income of the aged parent.

⁴ A family was considered on relief when any member reported the receipt of relief at any time during the 12-month period prior to the date of the canvass.

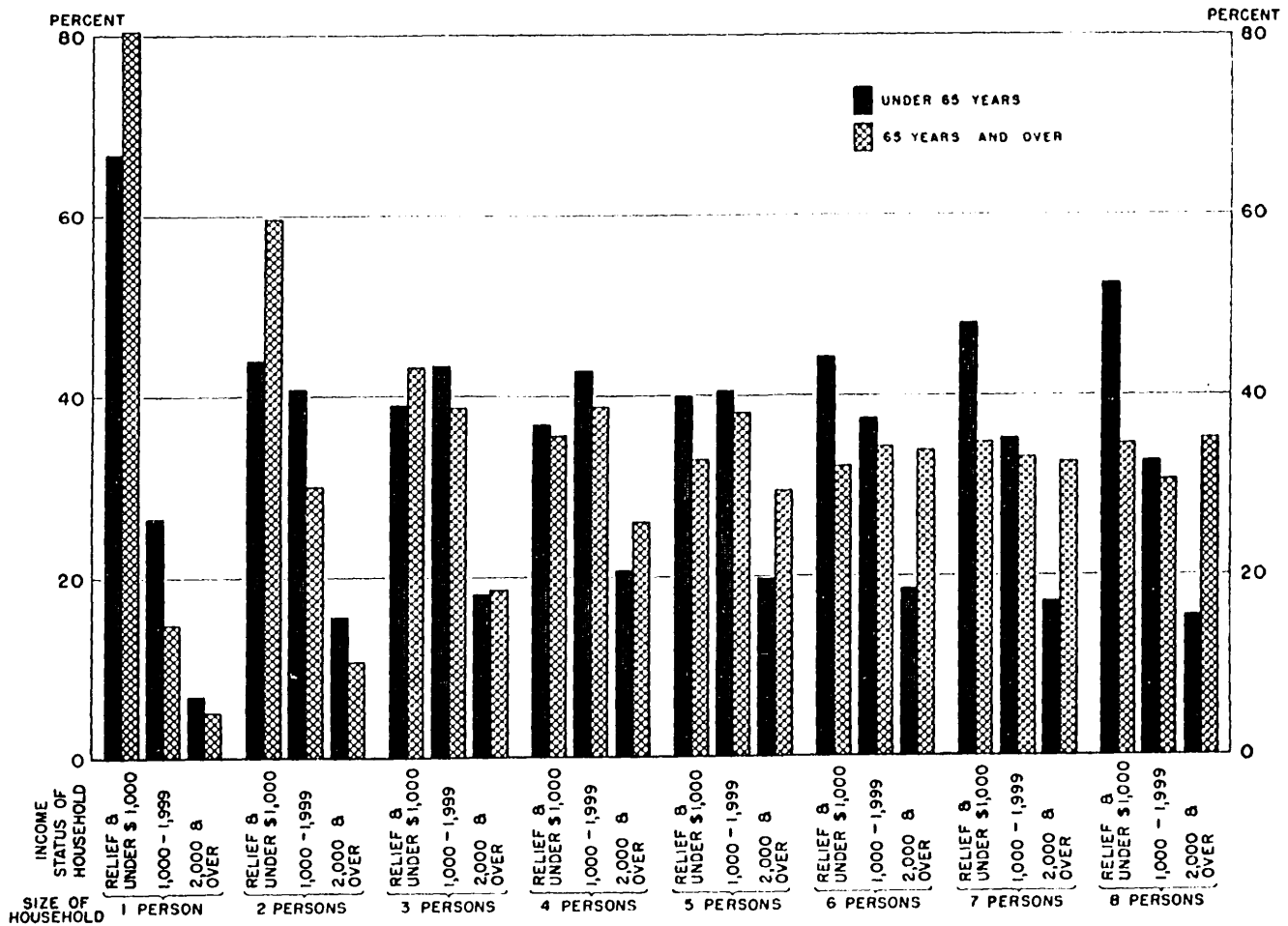
sponding proportion of households with heads aged 16-59 is only 56 percent.

It may be assumed with some measure of accuracy that in the larger households members other than the aged head are more likely to be the income-producers; however, previous analysis has led to the belief that it is in economically secure households that adult children continue to live with the parents, at least until marriage. Nor does the somewhat less favorable status of households with aged heads, as observed in those with one, two, and three members, prove unequivocally the less favorable status of such households, except in those consisting of one person only, which account for 20 percent of the households with aged heads. Even in this group the real differences may be less marked than the statistics would indicate. The higher proportion on relief may not be an

accurate yardstick of relative economic need, since the public attitude is much more favorable toward granting aid to the aged than to young men or to men of intermediate ages, even though objectively they may be equally in need.

In households with two and three members, especially in two-person households in which the head is less than 60, we are dealing in large part with households without children—a group which has a more favorable economic status. The higher proportion of smaller households with aged heads in the highest income category, the decidedly more favorable income distribution of households with aged heads in those with four or more members, the public attitude in granting relief, and the relation between income and the absence of children in households with younger heads would minimize the inference that households with aged heads are

Chart I.—Percentage distribution of urban households by income status, for households of specified size with specified age of head



economically less secure than those with younger heads.

In assessing the relative economic position of households with aged heads as compared with other households, an element to be considered is the fact that the incomes reported in table 1 are limited to cash income, excluding such economic assets as home ownership,⁵ savings, and investments, in which the households with aged heads would make a more favorable showing than those with younger heads. Moreover, estate-tax returns in the

⁵The Study of Consumer Purchases shows the following relationship between the age of household heads and home ownership among native-born white husband-and-wife families in Chicago (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Family Income and Expenditure in Chicago, 1935-36: Vol. I, Family Income*, Bulletin No. 642, April 1938, p. 80.)

Age of head (years)	Proportion of home owners
Under 25	1.1
25-44	13.5
45-59	36.0
60-64	36.2
65 and over	39.1

United States for 1923-25, the latest years for which an age distribution is available, show that the proportion of taxed estates of decedents aged 25 to 59 years was only 40 percent of that for decedents aged 60 and over.⁶ When the element of property ownership and savings is considered, it would be difficult to deduce, from the relationships shown in table 1 and chart I, that households with aged heads are, in general, economically less favored than those with younger heads.

The discussion up to this point has been in terms of the head of the household and has shown that the income distribution for households in which the head is 65 years or older is more favorable than that for households headed by persons under age 65. Shifting the analysis to consider members rather than heads of households broadens the scope of the comparison to take in all aged

⁶ See U. S. Bureau of Internal Revenue, *Statistics of Income, 1922*, pp. 70-72; 1923, pp. 48-50; and 1924, pp. 80-91.

Table 1.—Number of urban households by size of household and age of head of household, and percentage distribution by income status
[Preliminary data, subject to revision]

Size of household and age of head	Number of households with known income	Percent of households with specified income status						
		Relief	Nonrelief					
			All	Under \$1,000	\$1,000-1,499	\$1,500-1,999	\$2,000-2,999	\$3,000 and over
All sizes:								
Under 65 years	600,279	16.5	83.5	26.9	23.1	16.5	11.2	5.8
65 years and over	77,948	16.9	83.1	38.1	18.3	11.8	8.5	6.4
1 person:								
Under 65 years	52,000	14.4	85.6	52.5	17.5	8.8	4.5	2.3
65 years and over	15,078	22.2	77.8	58.2	10.3	4.4	2.3	2.0
2 persons:								
Under 65 years	140,429	11.9	88.1	31.9	24.2	16.4	10.0	5.0
65 years and over	30,400	16.3	83.7	43.2	19.3	10.0	6.2	4.4
3 persons:								
Under 65 years	139,347	13.6	86.4	25.3	25.1	18.0	12.2	6.8
65 years and over	14,978	14.1	85.9	28.9	23.0	15.6	11.1	7.3
4 persons:								
Under 65 years	114,032	15.7	84.3	21.1	24.1	18.6	13.3	7.2
65 years and over	8,169	13.9	86.1	21.5	21.3	17.4	14.9	11.0
5 persons:								
Under 65 years	68,764	20.0	80.0	19.9	22.8	17.6	12.5	7.2
65 years and over	4,303	14.8	85.2	17.9	20.7	17.4	16.7	12.5
6 persons:								
Under 65 years	37,321	25.1	74.9	18.9	21.1	16.3	11.9	6.7
65 years and over	2,217	17.4	82.6	14.6	16.8	17.4	18.3	15.5
7 persons:								
Under 65 years	19,956	29.8	70.2	18.0	20.4	14.6	10.9	6.3
65 years and over	1,123	20.7	79.3	13.9	16.5	16.5	17.1	15.3
8 persons:								
Under 65 years	11,295	31.9	68.1	17.2	18.7	13.8	9.8	5.6
65 years and over	537	21.4	78.6	13.0	14.9	15.6	17.0	18.1
9 persons:								
Under 65 years	5,125	39.6	60.4	15.2	16.7	12.7	9.6	6.2
65 years and over	238	20.4	79.6	12.2	17.2	12.2	12.2	16.8
10 persons:								
Under 65 years	2,700	41.3	58.7	14.7	17.0	11.8	8.9	6.3
65 years and over	106	34.0	66.0	9.4	16.0	10.4	12.3	17.9
11 persons:								
Under 65 years	1,322	43.0	57.0	13.5	16.1	11.0	10.3	5.5
65 years and over	57	35.1	64.9	5.3	21.5	8.8	17.5	8.8
12 persons:								
Under 65 years	635	41.4	58.6	14.5	15.0	11.8	10.4	6.9
65 years and over	28	42.0	57.1	7.1	21.4	-----	17.9	10.7
13 or more persons:								
Under 65 years	435	45.7	54.3	10.1	12.7	14.7	9.4	7.4
65 years and over	15	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)

¹ Not computed, because base is less than 25.

Table 2.—Number of persons in urban households by size of household and age of person, and percentage distribution by income status

[Preliminary data, subject to revision]

Size of household and age of person	Number of persons in households with known income	Percent of persons in households with specified income status							Size of household and age of person	Number of persons in households with known income	Percent of persons in households with specified income status						
		Relief	Nonrelief								Relief	Nonrelief					
			All	Under \$1,000	\$1,000-1,499	\$1,500-1,999	\$2,000-2,999	\$3,000 and over				All	Under \$1,000	\$1,000-1,499	\$1,500-1,999	\$2,000-2,999	\$3,000 and over
All sizes.....	2,324,382	19.1	80.9	23.8	22.5	16.5	11.6	6.5	8 persons.....	94,669	34.3	65.7	17.0	18.6	13.9	10.1	6.1
Under 16 years.....	627,593	26.5	73.5	22.1	22.3	15.0	9.5	4.6	Under 16 years.....	43,422	39.9	60.1	18.9	18.2	12.1	7.4	3.5
16-59 years.....	1,491,614	16.5	83.5	23.4	22.9	17.5	12.6	7.1	16-59 years.....	48,400	29.9	70.1	15.6	19.0	15.3	12.1	8.1
60-64 years.....	75,013	14.7	85.3	28.9	20.5	15.5	11.9	8.5	60-64 years.....	1,133	23.2	76.8	13.6	15.9	17.2	15.7	14.4
65 years and over.....	130,162	16.4	83.6	33.8	19.2	13.3	10.1	7.2	65 years and over.....	1,714	23.6	76.4	12.7	18.4	15.4	16.3	13.6
1 person.....	68,599	16.2	83.8	53.8	15.8	7.8	4.0	2.4	9 persons.....	47,538	39.4	60.6	15.1	16.7	12.6	9.5	6.7
Under 16 years.....	12	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	Under 16 years.....	23,460	45.3	54.7	16.2	16.3	11.1	7.3	3.8
16-59 years.....	46,577	13.8	86.2	52.1	18.1	9.2	4.6	2.2	16-59 years.....	22,905	33.9	66.1	14.1	17.2	14.0	11.6	9.2
60-64 years.....	6,327	19.0	81.0	55.8	12.5	5.7	3.9	3.1	60-64 years.....	423	30.5	69.5	11.1	13.7	13.5	14.0	17.2
65 years and over.....	15,683	22.2	77.8	58.2	10.3	4.4	2.3	2.6	65 years and over.....	750	27.6	72.4	12.1	19.2	14.1	12.8	14.2
2 persons.....	353,941	12.6	87.4	33.9	23.3	15.4	9.9	4.9	10 persons.....	28,167	41.1	58.9	14.5	16.9	11.8	9.0	6.7
Under 16 years.....	6,008	33.9	66.1	46.4	11.9	4.2	2.1	1.5	Under 16 years.....	14,526	46.0	54.0	15.8	16.4	10.7	6.8	4.3
16-59 years.....	277,831	11.4	88.6	31.6	24.5	16.7	10.8	5.0	16-59 years.....	13,021	35.9	64.1	13.3	17.6	12.9	11.3	9.0
60-64 years.....	25,468	13.6	86.4	37.0	21.8	13.4	8.5	5.7	60-64 years.....	247	36.4	63.6	8.9	13.0	12.5	15.0	14.2
65 years and over.....	44,634	16.8	83.2	44.4	18.4	10.1	5.9	4.4	65 years and over.....	373	35.1	64.9	11.3	16.4	11.3	13.4	12.5
3 persons.....	462,977	13.6	86.4	25.6	24.9	17.8	12.1	6.0	11 persons.....	15,177	42.8	57.2	13.0	16.5	11.4	10.7	5.6
Under 16 years.....	88,899	16.6	83.4	27.3	25.4	16.5	10.0	4.2	Under 16 years.....	7,917	47.4	52.6	14.1	15.7	10.4	8.5	3.9
16-59 years.....	329,985	12.9	87.1	25.0	25.0	18.3	12.6	6.2	16-59 years.....	6,991	38.0	62.0	11.9	17.3	12.6	12.8	7.4
60-64 years.....	16,891	12.6	87.4	25.6	23.1	17.5	12.8	8.4	60-64 years.....	88	25.0	75.0	10.2	14.8	12.5	18.2	19.3
65 years and over.....	27,202	13.6	86.4	28.6	23.2	15.9	11.4	7.3	65 years and over.....	181	32.6	67.4	12.2	18.2	11.6	18.2	7.2
4 persons.....	488,901	15.6	84.4	21.1	24.0	18.5	13.4	7.4	12 persons.....	7,956	41.5	58.5	14.2	15.2	11.3	10.7	7.1
Under 16 years.....	148,590	18.5	81.5	22.9	24.8	17.2	11.1	5.5	Under 16 years.....	4,096	44.2	55.8	15.4	15.4	11.2	9.3	4.5
16-59 years.....	311,369	14.5	85.5	20.4	23.8	19.1	14.2	8.0	16-59 years.....	3,722	38.5	61.5	12.8	15.3	11.6	12.1	9.7
60-64 years.....	11,111	13.1	86.9	19.3	21.2	19.1	16.1	11.2	60-64 years.....	57	40.4	59.6	17.5	3.5	8.8	12.3	17.5
65 years and over.....	17,831	12.8	87.2	20.6	21.7	18.5	15.6	10.8	65 years and over.....	81	45.7	54.3	12.4	14.8	4.9	12.3	9.9
5 persons.....	365,842	19.7	80.3	19.8	22.7	17.6	12.7	7.5	13 persons.....	3,393	45.6	54.4	9.6	12.2	15.3	9.2	8.1
Under 16 years.....	130,120	23.7	76.3	21.9	23.3	15.8	10.1	5.2	Under 16 years.....	1,789	50.3	49.7	9.5	12.1	14.8	7.9	5.4
16-59 years.....	216,785	17.8	82.2	18.8	22.4	18.5	13.9	8.6	16-59 years.....	1,547	39.9	60.1	9.9	12.5	16.4	10.4	10.9
60-64 years.....	7,117	15.1	84.9	16.1	19.5	19.2	17.5	12.6	60-64 years.....	25	52.0	48.0	4.0	8.0	-----	20.0	16.0
65 years and over.....	11,820	14.4	85.6	16.2	21.1	19.0	17.2	12.1	65 years and over.....	32	50.0	50.0	-----	15.6	6.3	15.6	12.5
6 persons.....	237,823	24.7	75.3	18.7	20.8	16.3	12.3	7.2	14 persons.....	1,778	44.1	55.9	11.8	13.4	17.3	7.9	5.5
Under 16 years.....	94,118	29.5	70.5	21.0	21.4	14.5	9.2	4.4	Under 16 years.....	925	45.3	54.7	12.4	13.6	16.9	7.2	4.6
16-59 years.....	133,245	21.8	78.2	17.4	20.7	17.4	14.0	8.7	16-59 years.....	824	43.0	57.0	11.3	13.1	17.6	8.5	6.5
60-64 years.....	3,981	18.3	81.7	13.9	19.1	17.8	17.4	13.5	60-64 years.....	29	37.9	62.1	6.9	13.8	24.1	13.8	3.5
65 years and over.....	6,479	16.3	83.7	13.6	19.0	19.2	18.3	13.6	65 years and over.....	0	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
7 persons.....	147,621	29.3	70.7	17.8	20.2	14.7	11.2	6.8									
Under 16 years.....	63,711	34.7	65.3	20.0	20.4	12.6	8.4	3.9									
16-59 years.....	78,412	25.6	74.4	16.3	20.1	16.1	13.1	8.8									
60-64 years.....	2,116	19.9	80.1	13.1	17.3	19.1	15.3	15.3									
65 years and over.....	3,382	21.4	78.6	13.4	18.4	16.9	16.6	13.3									

¹ Not computed, because base is less than 25.

persons in the households studied. In terms of the income distribution of households according to the ages of the members (table 2), the same relative relationships hold between income and age as were found when the analysis was in terms of age of the head of the household.

Children have the greatest concentration in the low-income groups in households of each size. When persons aged 65 and over are compared with those in ages 16-59, a higher proportion of the aged in households with one, two, or three members is found in the income categories of relief or less than \$1,000, and fewer of them are in the income categories of \$1,000-\$1,999 but not in the group \$3,000 and over. In larger households--those with four or more members--the relative proportion of aged in households on relief, and very often in those with incomes of less than \$1,000, is smaller. Conversely, the proportion of aged in households with high incomes is greater. Approximately two-thirds of the aged are in households with one to three members, while less than 45 percent of persons in ages 16-59 are in these small households (table 3).

With increased household size the relative

Table 3.—Number of persons of specified age in urban households and cumulative percentage distribution by size of household

[Preliminary data, subject to revision]

Size of household	Age group (years)			
	Under 16	16-59	60-64	65 and over
Total number of persons	627,593	1,401,014	75,013	130,102
Less than 2 persons	0.0	3.1	8.4	12.0
Less than 3 persons	1.0	21.7	42.4	46.3
Less than 4 persons	15.1	43.0	64.0	67.2
Less than 5 persons	38.8	64.7	70.7	80.9
Less than 6 persons	59.5	76.3	80.2	90.0
Less than 7 persons	74.5	84.2	84.5	95.0
Less than 8 persons	84.7	93.5	97.3	97.6
Less than 9 persons	91.6	96.7	98.8	98.9
Less than 10 persons	95.3	98.2	99.4	99.5
Less than 11 persons	97.7	99.1	99.7	99.8
Less than 12 persons	98.9	99.6	99.9	99.9
Less than 13 persons	99.6	99.8	99.9	100.0
13 or more persons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

economic status of households with adults aged 16-59 becomes less favorable than that of households with aged members; more than half the adults in ages 16-59 are in households with four or more members, with an economic status distinctly less favorable than that of households of aged persons, regardless of household size. This relative disadvantage is emphasized when per capita income of these households is considered.

Table 4.—Number of persons of specified age in urban households of specified size, and percent with specified minimum per capita income

[Preliminary data, subject to revision]

Size of household and age of person	Number of persons with known per capita income	Percent with minimum per capita income of—			Size of household and age of person	Number of persons with known per capita income	Percent with minimum per capita income of—		
		\$250	\$350	\$500			\$250	\$350	\$500
All sizes: ¹									
Under 16 years	624,978	39.0	24.4	11.1	6 persons:				
16-59 years	1,471,988	60.2	45.8	29.0	Under 16 years	93,945	28.1	11.9	4.3
60-64 years	73,830	67.4	51.2	38.0	16-59 years	132,935	40.1	19.8	8.8
65 years and over	129,405	64.4	51.4	31.0	60-64 years	3,810	48.6	27.5	13.1
1 person:					65 years and over	6,388	40.9	20.0	17.1
Under 16 years	0				7 persons:				
16-59 years	49,488	80.0	75.4	65.8	Under 16 years	63,577	17.1	6.7	2.4
60-64 years	6,253	74.2	69.0	60.4	16-59 years	78,000	28.6	13.9	6.5
65 years and over	15,683	70.8	65.8	56.6	60-64 years	1,987	38.3	21.2	11.5
2 persons:					65 years and over	3,343	36.9	16.5	10.1
Under 16 years	5,907	49.1	38.5	18.8	8 persons:				
16-59 years	277,831	76.9	69.5	57.0	Under 16 years	43,370	10.2	4.3	.9
60-64 years	25,404	72.7	63.9	49.4	16-59 years	48,140	19.9	9.7	4.1
65 years and over	44,634	66.8	60.3	38.7	60-64 years	977	30.5	16.2	7.8
3 persons:					65 years and over	1,631	29.3	15.1	8.0
Under 16 years	88,787	66.3	53.5	30.7	9 persons:				
16-59 years	326,985	71.5	59.8	37.2	Under 16 years	22,587	8.1	3.4	1.3
60-64 years	16,801	71.2	60.8	38.7	16-59 years	22,016	16.6	8.5	5.1
65 years and over	27,202	68.4	55.6	34.6	60-64 years	372	27.2	16.4	7.5
4 persons:					65 years and over	650	22.8	13.5	6.2
Under 16 years	148,452	58.6	37.9	15.8	10 persons:				
16-59 years	311,369	65.2	46.2	22.2	Under 16 years	14,014	6.3	2.9	.8
60-64 years	10,898	67.6	50.0	27.1	16-59 years	12,528	13.4	7.0	3.4
65 years and over	17,712	66.0	49.3	26.4	60-64 years	152	21.7	9.9	4.6
5 persons:					65 years and over	307	16.9	8.1	3.6
Under 16 years	129,930	42.8	21.6	8.7					
16-59 years	200,508	51.8	29.9	12.7					
60-64 years	7,016	59.6	38.5	10.3					
65 years and over	11,699	59.3	37.5	18.5					

¹ Includes households with 11 or more persons.

² Persons in relief households were assigned per capita incomes of less than \$250 a year.

The per capita incomes given below for persons in specified age groups were obtained by dividing the household income ⁷ by the number of members in the household sharing the income and by averaging together the income of persons in specified ages from different households with varying per capita incomes. The estimates of per capita income thus obtained are as follows:

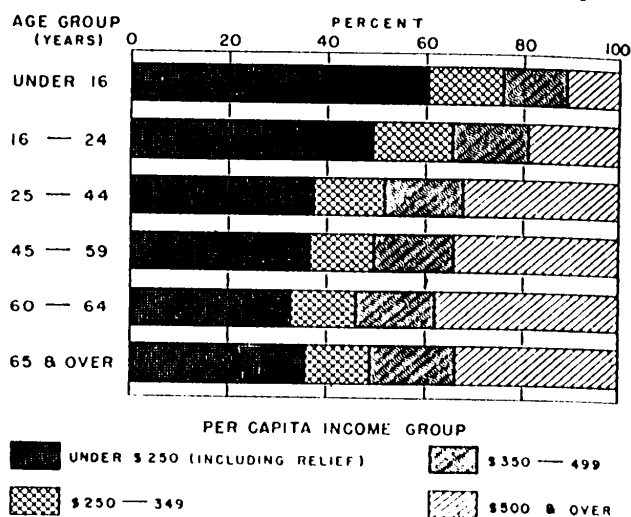
All ages.....	\$439
Under 16 years.....	301
16-24 years.....	371
25-44 years.....	486
45-59 years.....	561
60-64 years.....	608
65 years and over.....	577

For the successive age groups there is a rise in average per capita income to a maximum for the age group 60-64. The per capita income for persons aged 65 and over is almost twice that for persons under 16 years and is higher than the per capita incomes of groups in the ages 16-59.

From this comparison it appears that households with aged members have a higher average per capita income than those with younger per-

⁷ For the method of determining the income of relief households, see the *Bulletin*, September 1939, p. 27.

Chart II.—Percentage distribution of persons in urban households by age and per capita income groups



sons, especially persons under 16 years of age. Since average per capita expenditures for various items in the household budget may be lower in large households, because of such obvious economies as can be achieved in shelter, fuel, and light, the average per capita income of \$577 for persons in ages 65 and over may not be much more favorable than the average of \$486 for persons in ages

Table 5.—Number of persons of specified age in urban households of specified size, headed by a widowed, divorced, or separated woman, and percent with specified minimum per capita income

[Preliminary data, subject to revision]

Size of household and age of person	Number of persons with known per capita income	Percent with minimum per capita income of—			Size of household and age of person	Number of persons with known per capita income	Percent with minimum per capita income of—		
		\$250	\$350	\$500			\$250	\$350	\$500
All sizes.....	281,104	49.6	37.6	23.6	5 persons.....	34,982	35.4	21.4	9.5
Under 16 years.....	54,398	22.9	12.7	5.1	Under 16 years.....	10,142	17.3	8.5	2.6
16-59 years.....	181,315	53.4	40.5	25.1	16-59 years.....	22,331	41.7	25.7	11.6
60-64 years.....	13,215	67.8	55.7	40.5	60-64 years.....	836	55.7	39.5	20.1
65 years and over.....	32,170	66.1	55.8	39.9	65 years and over.....	1,073	51.9	31.7	17.9
1 person.....	28,107	74.0	69.3	59.7	6 persons.....	23,225	27.3	14.4	6.4
Under 16 years.....	0				Under 16 years.....	7,792	13.7	6.8	2.0
16-59 years.....	15,540	75.6	69.9	60.4	16-59 years.....	14,133	33.8	17.9	8.2
60-64 years.....	3,406	76.7	70.8	61.5	60-64 years.....	435	47.8	29.2	13.6
65 years and over.....	9,161	73.0	67.7	57.8	65 years and over.....	865	34.0	26.7	13.4
2 persons.....	60,103	64.5	54.4	37.2	7 persons.....	13,396	19.7	10.7	5.3
Under 16 years.....	5,313	48.0	37.1	17.4	Under 16 years.....	4,967	11.0	4.0	2.0
16-59 years.....	40,139	65.0	54.9	37.8	16-59 years.....	7,869	24.3	13.7	7.0
60-64 years.....	4,080	70.1	60.0	43.6	60-64 years.....	190	31.2	19.5	10.0
65 years and over.....	10,661	68.8	58.8	41.9	65 years and over.....	373	32.2	20.1	11.5
3 persons.....	63,103	54.9	41.2	23.3	8 persons.....	7,936	14.4	8.2	4.1
Under 16 years.....	10,964	33.8	17.6	7.6	Under 16 years.....	3,193	8.0	4.4	1.9
16-59 years.....	43,393	58.0	44.8	25.5	16-59 years.....	4,566	18.5	10.5	5.4
60-64 years.....	2,720	66.2	54.1	33.4	60-64 years.....	0			
65 years and over.....	6,017	65.6	52.6	31.3	65 years and over.....	177	26.0	16.9	8.5
4 persons.....	50,162	44.9	29.1	13.3					
Under 16 years.....	12,027	21.7	10.9	3.5					
16-59 years.....	33,347	51.0	34.0	15.7					
60-64 years.....	1,539	61.7	36.3	20.9					
65 years and over.....	3,249	60.6	43.3	22.2					

¹ Persons in relief households were assigned per capita incomes of less than \$250 a year.

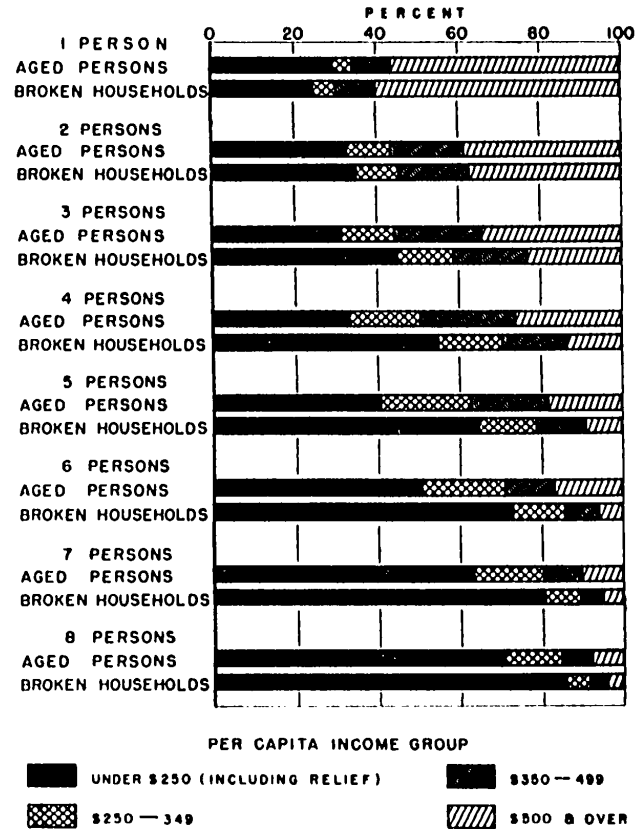
25-44, who are more often members of larger families. Another offsetting factor is the fact that persons in ages 16-59 are more often in households with children, for whom per capita expenditures may be lower.

In terms of dollar amounts, however, households with aged members have more than their proportionate share of income, even when allowance is made for the relatively higher concentration of aged persons in the higher income categories. This fact is demonstrated in table 4, which shows the proportion of persons of specified ages living in households with per capita incomes of at least \$250, \$350, or \$500. In all households, irrespective of size, the income distribution of aged persons is more favorable than that of persons in ages below 60, and especially of persons under the age of 16. For instance, more than 64 percent of persons aged 65 and over are in households with per capita incomes of \$250 or more; the corresponding percentage for children under 16 is 40 and for those in ages 16-59 it is 60 (chart II). No offsetting allowance is made here for the fact that a larger proportion of persons in younger ages are in larger households, with resulting economies in the cost of living.

When variations in per capita income are related to household size, the relationships in tables 1 and 2 are confirmed. In one and two-person households, and to a slight extent in those with three members, the proportion of persons aged 65 and over, for each per capita income group, is less than the proportion of persons in ages 16-59. In households of four or more persons, the proportions of aged are higher than the proportions for persons in ages 16-59. In each size of household, children have the lowest average incomes, and the relative disparity in favor of aged persons becomes greater for larger households. For instance, in three-person households 66 percent of the children and 68 percent of the aged are in households with minimum per capita incomes of \$250. The corresponding percentages for households of seven persons are 17 and 37 percent. The per capita income of the aged in households of one, two, and three, though less favorable than that of persons aged 16-59 in households of these sizes, is much more favorable than that of persons aged 16-59 in households with four or more members.

Despite their limitations, these analyses of households in terms of per capita income of dif-

Chart III.—Percent of persons with specified per capita income in urban households of specified size, for persons aged 65 and over and for all persons in broken households headed by a widowed, divorced, or separated woman



ferent age groups do not support the view that aged persons as a group are economically the least secure in our population. If anything, available data would suggest that the aged have perhaps a larger relative proportion who are economically most favored than do persons in other age groups.

As a group, the aged may spend as much from their own resources for the support of younger persons as is spent, in the aggregate, by younger persons toward the support of the aged. The plausibility of this inference may be tested by an analysis of the employment status of aged persons and others in households with one or more members aged 65 and over and by an examination of home ownership for households with aged members as compared with other households. Such an analysis will be presented in a subsequent paper.

From the tabulations examined thus far, it appears that on the average the income available

Table 6.—Comparison of percentages of persons in urban single-family households with specified minimum per capita income, for heads of households who are under age 65 and disabled and for aged persons, in households of specified size

[Preliminary data, subject to revision]

Size of household	Number ¹		Percent with minimum per capita income of—					
			\$250		\$350		\$500	
	Disabled household heads ²	Aged persons ³	Disabled household heads ²	Aged persons ³	Disabled household heads ²	Aged persons ³	Disabled household heads ²	Aged persons ³
All sizes.....	6,220	67,062	30.5	67.0	21.1	56.2	10.9	39.1
1 person.....	766	12,094	38.5	68.6	35.5	63.3	29.0	63.7
2 persons.....	1,689	34,074	44.8	66.3	34.5	55.7	17.4	37.9
3 persons.....	1,096	11,485	39.1	69.8	23.0	56.7	10.3	34.9
4 persons.....	610	4,650	24.9	68.2	12.8	51.5	2.6	29.2
5 persons.....	661	1,808	17.4	60.2	0.0	40.3	3.3	20.0
6 persons.....	495	676	0.3	58.3	3.0	38.0	.4	21.7
7 persons.....	280	273	6.5	42.6	2.4	24.2	.8	14.3
8 persons.....	179	133	.6	36.8	.1	28.6	.1	17.3
9 persons.....	102	69	1.5	30.4	1.0	17.4	.1	14.5

¹ Excludes disabled household heads and aged persons with unknown per capita income status.

² Includes household heads in institutions at time of survey.

³ Persons aged 65 and over.

⁴ Persons in relief households were assigned per capita incomes of less than \$250.

from wages or from other cash-income-producing sources, in households which include persons who are 65 years or over, is probably as high as or higher than that for households with other adults. The proportion of aged among the needy and among those who have little or no resources of their own may be, in general, somewhat higher than among other adults, in the light of economies related to family size, the lesser cost of living for children, and the probability that more often than for other age groups the income of the household may not reflect the economic status of the aged person.⁸ Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the aged as a group are as needy as certain other segments in the population such as children; broken families, especially those with a widowed mother; families with disabled heads; and, in

⁸ On the other hand, households with younger members more often have greater expenditures for household furnishings.

general, families which are deprived of the earnings of the principal wage earner through death, disability, or chronic unemployment. The less favorable economic status of these groups is illustrated in tables 5, 6, and 7.

Variations in per capita income in relation to household size are presented in table 5 for households headed by a woman who is widowed, divorced, or separated from her husband. Comparison with the corresponding data for all households (table 4) indicates that, except in households of one person, these broken households are less favored economically than are households with aged members. These relationships are shown graphically in chart III.

Table 6 provides a comparison of the relative income status of households headed by disabled persons under 65 years of age and households with one or more members aged 65 and over. The

Table 7.—Number of persons aged 65 and over in urban single-family households and number of such households with no gainful worker, with unemployed head, and with no employed gainful worker, and percentage distribution by income status

[Preliminary data, subject to revision]

Type of group	Number in group	Percent of households with specified income status							
		All	Relief	Nonrelief					
				All	Under \$1,000	\$1,000-1,999	\$1,500-1,999	\$2,000-2,999	\$3,000 and over
Persons aged 65 and over.....	67,273	100.0	17.3	82.7	41.7	17.9	10.8	7.4	4.9
Households with:									
No gainful worker.....	36,488	100.0	26.5	73.5	50.7	12.2	5.3	2.9	2.4
Unemployed head.....	63,725	100.0	63.3	36.7	26.7	6.1	2.5	1.1	.3
No employed gainful worker.....	80,578	100.0	66.7	33.3	27.2	4.2	1.3	.5	.1

comparison has been limited to households consisting of only one family, since data for households consisting of more than one family are not available at this time.⁹ A striking contrast is found, in all household sizes, in favor of households of aged persons as compared with those headed by disabled persons, and the contrast becomes sharpened with increasing household size.

The comparative income distribution, among households consisting of only one family,¹⁰ for households with one or more members aged 65 and over and for households without gainful workers,¹¹ with unemployed heads, and with no employed gainful workers, is shown in table 7. The economic status of households with aged members is by far the best, especially as compared with those with unemployed heads or without employed workers. The contrast would become even more striking if household size were taken into consideration, since the average number of members is almost twice as great for households with unemployed heads and with no employed workers as for households with aged members.

Tables 5, 6, and 7 substantiate the statement that, on the basis of available information on the relative economic status of households with aged members and certain other groups, households with aged members are economically far more secure as a group than are certain other segments in the population, such as households with children,

⁹ A family, as defined in the family composition study, includes (a) one or both spouses and their unmarried children, if any, including adopted or foster children, living together as a family unit; or (b) unmarried sisters and/or brothers, including adopted or foster brothers and sisters, living together as a family unit; or (c) persons living in extra-familial groups, or by themselves, who are considered as separate one-person families.

¹⁰ Data are not available for households consisting of more than one family.

¹¹ "Gainful workers" include persons in regular employment, on work relief, or seeking work.

those in which the head is a widowed, divorced, or separated woman; those in which the head is disabled or unemployed; those without gainful workers; and those without employed workers.

The income data used in this article relate to the latter part of 1934, 1935, and the early months of 1936. Among the total aged population of some 8.4 million¹² persons aged 65 or more, some 2 million aged persons are now receiving public assistance under the Federal-State old-age assistance program, and during January-June 1940 some 76,300 aged persons were allowed benefits under the old-age and survivors insurance provisions of the Social Security Act.¹³ Only 800,000 of the estimated 36 million¹⁴ children under 16 years of age are benefiting under the program for aid to dependent children, and during January-June 1940, claims for children's benefits under old-age and survivors insurance were allowed for 18,400 children under 16. A weekly average of more than a million unemployed workers are receiving unemployment benefits over restricted periods of time. Therefore, the relative economic security of the aged as contrasted with other elements in the population would seem greater now than at the time when the data for the family composition study were obtained. For other segments of the population, particularly for children and even more so for families in which the head of the family is disabled, there has been no significant improvement in relative economic security since these data were obtained.

¹² Estimate of National Resources Committee for 1940 (*Population Statistics, National Data, 1937*, p. 9).

¹³ In addition, on June 30, 1940, about 90,000 persons aged 65 or over were receiving annuities under the Railroad Retirement Act.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*