

A SURVEY OF SELECTED BUSINESS FIRMS IN MONROE, LOUISIANA
TO DETERMINE EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS
FOR BEGINNING SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS

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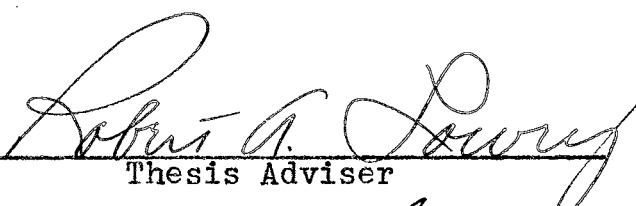
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The city of Monroe is located in the northeast section of Louisiana and is the parish (county) seat of Ouachita Parish. It is situated on the banks of the Ouachita River, a year-round navigable stream from New Orleans to Camden, Arkansas. The city is served by the Missouri Pacific, Illinois Central, and A & L M Railway and numerous trucking lines. It is a rich agricultural region, and large industrial enterprises use Monroe as the center of their operations; the returns from farms and the payrolls of the industries find their way to Monroe and make it an ideal center for mercantile business and industry.

The combined population of Monroe and West Monroe is approximately 60,000. No large cities are located nearer than one hundred miles in any direction; therefore Monroe and West Monroe are the operating center of industry, the market center for agriculture, and the financial center of this area. The twin cities of Monroe and West Monroe are located in the heart of the South's great lumber and kraft paper producing areas, and they are the center of the world's largest gas fields.

The educational needs of the white children of Ouachita Parish are being served by two public school systems, several parochial schools, a vocational school, and a four-year state college.

The Ouachita Parish High School, one of the three accredited high schools in the parish, has been a member of the Southern Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges since 1914 and is the second largest high school in the State, with 61 teachers and an enrollment of 1546 pupils during the 1951-1952 session. In addition to the regular academic courses, this school offers courses in agriculture, art, business education, home economics, distributive education, journalism, and music. The business curriculum consists of first-year shorthand, second-year shorthand, typewriting, clerical practice, and bookkeeping.

Purpose of the Study. This study seeks to determine the occupational opportunities and requirements for beginning secretaries and stenographers in selected business firms in Monroe. More specifically, the purpose of the study is as follows:

(1) To determine the approximate number of part-time and full-time secretaries and stenographers that are employed in these business firms.

(2) To determine the minimum age limit for beginning secretaries and stenographers.

(3) To determine preference by sex as expressed by employers of secretaries and stenographers.

(4) To determine the preferred marital status expressed by employers for beginning employees in their firms.

(5) To determine the number of new secretaries and stenographers employed within the past twelve months, and the number separated from their positions.

(6) To determine the methods used in obtaining new secretaries and stenographers.

(7) To determine whether working experience is required for beginning employees in positions included in this study.

(8) To determine the extent of training that should be given students in the operation of various office machines.

(9) To determine the minimum typing, dictation, and transcription rates required of the prospective employee.

(10) To determine the extent to which employers give qualifying tests in shorthand, typing, and transcription to prospective employees in these positions.

(11) To determine the educational level required for beginning secretaries and stenographers.

(12) To determine, to some extent, the duties secretaries and stenographers are expected to perform.

(13) To determine the number of Ouachita Parish High School graduates now employed in the positions included in the study.

Need for the Study. It is believed that a relatively small percentage of local high school graduates continue their formal education. Many of those with training in the

business subjects seek employment in the offices of local firms. Therefore, it is important to the guidance counselor and business teachers that they know of the requirements and opportunities for business office workers. Forrester recognizes the need for occupational surveys when she states:

A local survey is one of the best methods of revealing the picture of current occupational opportunities in a community. . . . Given this information (the results of a survey), the school staff not only can strengthen the available placement service and improve the related school vocational guidance and instructional programs, but also can furnish youth with facts concerning occupations in the community. . . . Since the business educator gives training for business occupations, he should know the requirements of the occupations for which he gives preparation. He should assist in making these requirements known to prospective and present business pupils.¹

Enterline² says that stenographic training will continue to be one of the principal fields of vocational business education in the secondary school primarily because trainees, upon the completion of their high school work, are securing stenographic positions. There needs to be, however, a better adjustment between the number of persons so trained and employment possibilities.

In order that he may be adequately informed concerning the market in which many of his students will seek

¹ Gertrude Forrester, Methods of Vocational Guidance, pp. 407-410.

² H. G. Enterline, Trends of Thought in Business Education, Monograph Number 72, South-Western Publishing Company, p. 5.

employment, it is desirable that the business teacher have information concerning the number of jobs existing, turn-over in employment, education and experience requirements, and many other factors that pertain to employment conditions and opportunities for beginning secretaries and stenographers.

As the town surveyed is the largest within a hundred mile radius, many of the office workers come from the smaller towns to obtain employment. It is believed that many of these workers secure positions after having attended one of the business schools or the local college, and that others begin work immediately upon completing their high school training. It is important to learn how many of the positions included in the study are filled by graduates of the local parish high school.

Scope and Delimitation. This study does not include all the offices in Monroe. In a community of this size, it would be almost impossible to reach all the business firms by means of the personal interview. The investigator found it necessary to "sample" business firms. Care was taken to include in the survey representatives of all kinds of businesses. This is essential if the findings are to be valid. Offices included are for the following kinds of businesses:

Accounting Firms	Insurance Companies
Appliance Stores	Lumber Companies
Architect	Machine Works
Attorney Offices	Mimeographing Service
Auto Agencies	Oil Companies
Auto Supply Store	Paper Industries
Banks	Parish Office
Bottling Company	Plumbing Supply Company
Carbon Companies	Postoffice
Churches	Printing Companies
Clinics	Public Utilities
Construction Companies	Real Estate Office
Credit and Loan Associations	Schools
Department Stores	State Offices
Gas Companies	Tractor Equipment Company
Hardware Stores	Wholesale Firms

The investigator made no attempt to learn the salaries of the various secretaries and stenographers. Names of the individual business firms do not appear in this study.

Source of Data. The main source of data used in this study was the information blanks completed during the personal interviews with the businessmen of selected firms in Monroe.

Definition of Terms. The terms used in this study will be interpreted as follows:

Secretary--performs general office work in relieving executives and other company officials of minor executive and clerical duties. Takes dictation using shorthand or uses a Steno-type machine. Transcribes dictation. Makes appointments for executive and reminds him of them. Interviews people coming into office, directing to other workers those who do not warrant seeing the executive. Answers and makes phone calls. Handles personal and important mail, writing routine correspondence on own initiative. May supervise other clerical workers. May keep personal records.³

³ Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Volume I, Definition of Titles, March, 1949, p. 804.

Stenographer--takes dictation in shorthand of correspondence, reports and other material. Transcribes dictated material, writing it out in longhand or using a typewriter. May perform a variety of related clerical duties. May be required to be versed in the technical language and terms in a particular profession.⁴

According to Charters,⁵ the secretary needs perhaps less technical skill--i.e., skill in typing, taking shorthand, and so on--than does the stenographer, because the secretary's success depends far more upon personality than upon professional technique with regard to the mechanical operations.

Turnover--the number of persons hired within a given period to replace those leaving or dropped.⁶

Full-time employee--one who works in the service of an employer thirty hours or more a week for which he receives pay.

Part-time employee--one who works in the service of an employer less than thirty hours a week for which he receives pay.

Firm--the name, title or style under which a company transacts business.⁷

Personnel Manager--one who is charged with the employment of office workers.

Procedure. The specific purpose of this study was to find the employment standards required of beginning secretaries and stenographers by the businessmen in this locality.

⁴ Ibid., p. 886.

⁵ W. W. Charters and Isadore B. Whitley, Analysis of Secretarial Duties and Traits, p. 178.

⁶ Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition, p. 1080.

⁷ Ibid., p. 456.

Literature pertaining to occupational standards was read and questionnaires used in similar surveys made in other communities were studied. A survey made by Gordon Culver⁸ of the employment standards required of beginning secretaries and stenographers was found to be representative of the occupational survey type of research using the interview technique. This interview schedule assembled by Culver contained numerous parts which were adapted for use in the present study. A tentative questionnaire was then prepared and presented during the summer of 1951 to a seminar class in business education at the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College for comments and criticism. After the revisions were made, other suggestions were indicated by the Chairman of the Thesis Committee. The questionnaire was revised further and copies were mimeographed to be used in making the interviews. A copy of this questionnaire appears in the Appendixes.

Many employers disregard questionnaires sent by mail, probably because (1) they may not care to give out confidential information to unidentified persons, (2) they are too busy to mark a long questionnaire, or (3) they may not be convinced of the significance of the information sought. The personal interview method was chosen by the investigator as the best method of collecting the desired data.

⁸ Gordon F. Culver, A Survey of Selected Oil Companies in Oklahoma to Determine Minimum Employment Standards Required of Beginning Secretaries and Stenographers. Unpublished Master's thesis, Oklahoma A. and M. College, Stillwater, 1949.

Plans for conducting this survey were explained at a meeting attended by the Louisiana State Supervisor of Business Education, the Ouachita Parish Superintendent of Schools, and six local business education teachers. Comments and suggestions from this group were noted.

A list of firms to be used in the survey was compiled from the classified section of the Monroe-West Monroe Telephone Directory and from bulletins furnished by the local Chamber of Commerce. The name of each firm was written on a 3" by 5" card, giving the street address, telephone number, kind of business, and if possible, the name of the owner, personnel manager, or official to be interviewed. The official interviewed in each instance was the one responsible for employing the office workers. The cards were then grouped according to street address.

Permission to conduct this survey was given by the parish school officials and the local Chamber of Commerce. The latter gave permission to the writer in the form of a letter of introduction to the businessmen. A copy of this letter appears in the Appendixes.

Before making a survey of this kind, it is recommended that there should be well-planned publicity which would take the form of local newspaper articles and Chamber of Commerce approval.⁹ During the week preceding the beginning of the

⁹ R. G. Walters, The Community Survey, Monograph Number 58. South-Western Publishing Company, p. 24.

survey, newspaper articles containing the plan and purpose of the study were published in two of the local newspapers.

A trial interview was held with a local business college director, who offered constructive criticism. He also furnished the writer with names of personnel managers of the firms to be surveyed.

A letter was composed to the personnel managers stating briefly the purpose of the study and asking for a definite interview date. Individually typed copies of this letter were mailed to 132 business firms, the first twenty letters being mailed during the second week in April. Each letter was followed up by a telephone call, in order that the investigator might receive an appointment for an interview.

After the first twenty firms had been visited or eliminated from the study, the writer mailed another group of letters and continued the same process of interviewing. Enclosed with each letter was a statement of the purpose of the study, as stated in the Introduction. Copies of the letter and the enclosure are included in the Appendixes.

A firm's name was eliminated when it was learned that this business, although it had clerical workers, had no one holding a position of secretary or stenographer, as was the case with some of the "Five-and-Ten-Cent" stores.

The employer was interviewed if one or more employees in his firm took dictation either in shorthand or from

voice writing equipment and transcribed the message on the typewriter. After reading the definitions of a secretary and a stenographer, the employer determined how many of each he employed.

Answers to questions in the information blank were filled in by the investigator at the time of the interview.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Firms Surveyed. There were 132 business firms on the original list, which was compiled from the classified section of the telephone directory. Of the 132 firms, 12 did not employ secretaries or stenographers, and were not visited. Seven employers were too busy to see the investigator; five, were not in when the investigator called; two employers stated they did not receive a letter giving the purpose of the survey. There remained 106, which were visited.

Classification of Firms by Number of Full-Time Secretaries and Stenographers Employed. In order to give an idea of the number of secretaries and the number of stenographers employed in the various individual firms included in this study, the firms have been classified in Table I according to the number of full-time secretaries employed and in Table II according to the number of full-time stenographers employed.

Table I shows that 57, or 59.4 per cent, of the 96 firms employing secretaries employ one secretary each. Twenty-one, or 21.9 per cent, employ two secretaries. Eleven, or 11.5 per cent, employ three secretaries; four, or 4.2 per cent, employ 4 secretaries; and the remaining three, or 3.0 per cent

TABLE I

FIRMS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER
OF FULL-TIME SECRETARIES EMPLOYED

Number of Secretaries Employed	Number of Firms	Per Cent of Firms
1	57	59.4
2	21	21.9
3	11	11.5
4	4	4.2
7	1	1.0
9	1	1.0
10	1	1.0
Total	96	100.0

This table should be read as follows: Of 96 firms that employ workers classified as "secretaries," 57, or 59.4 per cent, employ only one worker in this classification.

of the firms employ 7, 9, and 10 secretaries respectively. It should be kept in mind that Table I refers only to employees that the firms classified as "secretaries." Table III will show the various combinations of secretaries and stenographers that were found in the offices of the 106 firms included in the study.

Table II indicates that 13, or 38.24 per cent, of the 34 firms employing stenographers employ one stenographer each. Nine, or 26.47 per cent, employ 2 stenographers; 5, or 14.71 per cent, employ 3 stenographers; 3, or 8.82 per cent, employ 4 stenographers. Four firms employ 5, 8, 12, and 13 stenographers respectively.

Table III gives the combinations of secretarial and stenographic employees in the 106 individual firms surveyed. Forty-five, or 42.45 per cent, of the firms employ one secretary and no stenographers. Sixteen, or 15.1 per cent, employ two secretaries and no stenographers. Six, or 5.7 per cent, of the firms employ one secretary and one stenographer; six employ 3 secretaries and no stenographers.

From the data presented in Table III, it is apparent that nearly one half--46.2 per cent--of the 106 firms employ only one worker who is classified as either secretary or stenographer. All the rest of the firms employ two or more secretaries, two or more stenographers, or a combination of secretaries and stenographers.

Seventy-two, or nearly 70 per cent, of the 106 firms employ secretaries only. Twenty-four firms employ both

TABLE II
FIRMS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF
FULL-TIME STENOGRAPHERS EMPLOYED

Number of Stenographers Employed	Number of Firms	Per Cent of Firms
1	13	38.24
2	9	26.47
3	5	14.71
4	3	8.82
5	1	2.94
8	1	2.94
12	1	2.94
13	1	2.94
Total	34	100.00

This table should be read as follows: Of 34 firms that employ workers classified as "stenographers," 13, or 38.24 per cent, employ only one worker in this classification.

TABLE III
COMBINATIONS OF SECRETARIAL AND STENOGRAPHIC EMPLOYEES
IN INDIVIDUAL FIRMS

Combinations of Employees	Employing Firms	
	Number	Per Cent
1 Secretary, no Stenographers	45	42.45
2 Secretaries, no Stenographers	16	15.10
3 Secretaries, no Stenographers	6	5.67
4 Secretaries, no Stenographers	3	2.83
7 Secretaries, no Stenographers	1	.94
10 Secretaries, no Stenographers	1	.94
1 Secretary, 1 Stenographer	6	5.67
1 Secretary, 2 Stenographers	2	1.89
1 Secretary, 3 Stenographers	1	.94
1 Secretary, 4 Stenographers	1	.94
1 Secretary, 5 Stenographers	1	.94
1 Secretary, 8 Stenographers	1	.94
2 Secretaries, 1 Stenographer	2	1.89
2 Secretaries, 2 Stenographers	1	.94
2 Secretaries, 3 Stenographers	2	1.89
3 Secretaries, 2 Stenographers	1	.94
3 Secretaries, 3 Stenographers	2	1.89
3 Secretaries, 4 Stenographers	1	.94
3 Secretaries, 13 Stenographers	1	.94
4 Secretaries, 1 Stenographer	1	.94
9 Secretaries, 12 Stenographers	1	.94
1 Stenographer, no Secretaries	4	3.78
2 Stenographers, no Secretaries	5	4.72
4 Stenographers, no Secretaries	1	.94
Total	106	100.00

This table should be read as follows: Forty-five, or 42.45 per cent, of the 106 firms employ 1 secretary and no stenographers.

secretaries and stenographers. Ten firms employ stenographers only.

Classification of Employees as to Nature of Business of Employer. The data collected were tabulated to determine the number of secretaries and stenographers employed in each type of business surveyed. The results of this tabulation are shown in Table IV. The 106 firms surveyed represented 32 different classifications, with the paper industries employing the largest number of secretaries and stenographers, 29. The attorney firms ranked second as to the number of employees, with 26 secretaries and stenographers. The construction companies employed the largest number per firm; the three companies employed a total of 23 secretaries and stenographers.

Part-time Employees. The 106 firms surveyed employed 4 part-time secretaries and 2 part-time stenographers.

In this survey the investigator did not try to determine the employment requirements for beginning part-time secretaries and stenographers. The study deals with employment requirements for the 174 full-time secretaries and 96 full-time stenographers.

Minimum Age Requirements for Secretaries. Table V shows the distribution of 174 full-time secretarial positions according to minimum age requirements specified in the 96 firms employing secretaries. Only 4 employers gave a

TABLE IV
NUMBER OF FULL-TIME SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS
EMPLOYED IN SELECTED FIRMS OF VARIOUS TYPES

Type of Firm	Number of Firms	Number of Secretaries	Number of Stenographers
Accounting Firms	3	4	0
Appliance Stores	2	1	1
Architect	1	2	0
Attorney Offices	10	25	1
Auto Agencies	9	11	6
Auto Supply Store	1	2	0
Banks	4	5	3
Bottling Company	1	1	0
Carbon Companies	2	6	6
Churches	2	3	0
Clinics	2	5	0
Construction Companies	3	11	12
Credit and Loan Associations	12	14	10
Department Stores	4	3	4
Gas Companies	4	6	13
Hardware Stores	2	4	3
Insurance Companies	13	16	4
Lumber Companies	4	4	2
Machine Works	2	2	0
Mimeographing Service	1	1	0
Oil Companies	2	3	0
Paper Industries	5	16	13
Parish Office	1	1	0
Plumbing Supply Company	2	3	7
Postoffice	1	1	0
Printing Companies	2	3	0
Public Utilities	2	12	2
Real Estate Office	1	2	3
Schools	3	3	1
State Offices	2	0	2
Tractor Equipment Company	1	0	2
Wholesale Firms	2	4	1
Total	106	174	96

This table should be read as follows: Three accounting firms employed a total of four full-time secretaries and no stenographers.

TABLE V
MINIMUM EMPLOYMENT AGE REQUIRED OF SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS
AS REPORTED BY EMPLOYERS IN 106 SELECTED FIRMS

Position	Number of Firms	Minimum Age Specified by Employers										Average Age
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	30	
Secretaries	96	4	45	8	20	6	3	1	1	6	2	19.6
Stenographers	34	1	28	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	18.4

This table should be read as follows: Four employers specified a minimum employment age of 17 years for secretaries.

minimum age 17 years, which was the lowest age mentioned. Forty-five, or 46.9 per cent, will employ secretaries at a minimum age of 18. Eight, or 8.3 per cent, gave a minimum age requirement of 19 years. Twenty, or 20.8 per cent, will employ secretaries at the minimum age of 20 years.

In a few firms it is necessary for the secretary to be older than the average beginning office worker. This was shown when two employers stated that they require their beginning secretaries to be at least 30 years old.

The remaining 17 employers gave a minimum age requirement between 21 and 25 for their beginning employees. The average of age requirements for secretaries was found to be 19.6 years.

Minimum Age Requirements for Stenographers. The data presented in Table V show that 28, or 82.4 per cent, of the 34 firms employing stenographers require that these workers be at least 18 years of age. Only one employer named 17 years as a minimum age requirement, while only one gave more than 21 years as a minimum age requirement, namely 25 years. The remaining 4 specified 19, 20, or 21 years as their minimum age requirement for the position of stenographer in their respective firms. The average of age requirements for stenographers was found to be 18.4 years.

Preference by Sex as Expressed by Employers. In the 106 firms surveyed only 2 employers stated they preferred men stenographers to women stenographers. No employer

indicated he preferred men to women secretaries. No men stenographers nor men secretaries were employed in the firms surveyed.

Marital Status Preferred. Seventeen, or 17.7 per cent, of the 96 employers indicated that they prefer single beginning secretaries. Sixty-four, or 66.7 per cent, stated that marital status is immaterial. This information is given in Table VI. Five firms, employing a total of 39 secretaries and stenographers, require newly employed workers to be single.

Twenty-three, or 67.7 per cent, of the 34 employers employing stenographers stated that a beginning worker's marital status is immaterial when she is being considered for the position of stenographer. Three employers said that they prefer married stenographers because they are more dependable and stable.

Gain in Employment. During the last twelve months, 62 women were hired for the position of full-time secretary, and 56 secretaries were dropped from the payroll, resulting in a gain of 6 employees.

As Table VII indicates, 24 stenographers were hired during the last twelve months and 17 stenographers were dropped from the payroll. This resulted in a gain of 7 employees. A total of 86 employees, secretaries and stenographers, were hired during the past year.

TABLE VI
MARITAL STATUS PREFERENCE FOR BEGINNING
SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS

Position	No. of Firms Reporting	Single	Married	Immaterial
Secretaries	96	17	15	64
Stenographers	34	8	3	23

This table should be read as follows: Of the 96 firms employing secretaries, 17 prefer that these employees be single.

TABLE VII
GAIN IN EMPLOYMENT OF SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS
DURING THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS

Position	Number Employed	Number Separated	Gain in Employment
Secretaries	62	56	6
Stenographers	24	17	7
Total	86	73	13

This table should be read as follows: Sixty-two secretaries were hired during the past twelve months; 56 were separated from their positions, resulting in a gain of 6.

Estimated Job Turnover. After a study of the reports of similar surveys was made, it was concluded that the best method of determining job turnover was the formula used in an occupational survey by Barton.¹ This formula is: (1) Present number of employees plus separations minus newly employed equals number of employees at the beginning of the 12-month period. (2) Present number of employees plus number at beginning of 12-month period, divided by 2 equals average number of employees during last 12 months. Percentage of net turnover is based on average number of employees during the last 12 months. The actual number of replacements during the last 12 months is represented by total newly employed or total separated, whichever is smaller. Replacements divided by average number of employees gives percentage of turnover.

A study of Table VIII shows that there was a 32.7 per cent turnover in the secretarial positions during the last 12-month period, and there was an 18.2 per cent turnover in the stenographic positions during the same time.

From these data it is possible to form some estimate as to the number of positions that will be available to new employees annually. It is not known, however, what part of the turnover results from the shifting about of employees

¹ Jessie Lee Barton, An Occupational Opportunity Survey of Blackwell, Oklahoma. Unpublished Master's thesis, Oklahoma A. and M. College, Stillwater, 1949.

TABLE VIII

ESTIMATED NET RATE OF TURNOVER
IN SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS DURING 12-MONTH PERIOD

Position	Present Number	Separations	Newly Employed	No. Employed at Beginning *	Avg. No. for Past 12 Mo.**	Per Cent *** of Turnover
Secretaries	174	56	62	168	171	32.7
Stenographers	96	17	24	90	93	18.2

* Present Number + Separations - Newly Employed.

** (Present Number employed + number employed at beginning) ÷ 2

*** Number separated or newly employed (whichever is smaller) divided by average number of employees during past 12 months.

This table should be read as follows: During a 12-month period 56 secretaries were separated and 62 were newly employed, resulting in a 32.7 per cent estimated turnover.

from one employer to another. Also, it is understood that uncontrollable factors, such as war or depression, could cause business conditions to change, thus causing these percentages to vary.

Methods Used in Obtaining New Employees. Table IX gives the methods these 106 employers have found most effective in obtaining new secretaries and stenographers. The questionnaire used in interviewing the employers listed nine methods through which prospective secretaries and stenographers might be obtained. The employers were asked to indicate their first, second, and third most effective ways of obtaining employees.

Twenty-five stated they asked their present workers to suggest persons interested in obtaining secretarial work; 18 stated their secretaries received their jobs by being promoted within the firm from other positions. Thirteen employers stated the use of their firm's personal application file was found to be the best method of obtaining beginning secretaries. As shown in Table IX, the employers apparently believe that in obtaining stenographers they can best rely on suggestions from present workers and the firm's personal application file.

No employer stated he used the high school records as a first means of obtaining secretaries, but five said they used this as a second method. Twelve employers use the employment service bureau as a second method of obtaining

TABLE IX

NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS NAMING EACH OF VARIOUS METHODS AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE
METHOD USED IN OBTAINING NEW EMPLOYEES

Position	Number of Firms	Employment Service	Personal Application	Want Ads	Present Workers	Business Associates	Friends, Acquaintances	Business School	High School	College	Promoted from Other Workers	Civil Service
Secretaries	96	4	13	7	25	5	11	10	0	2	18	1
Stenographers	34	1	10	0	12	2	2	3	1	0	1	2

Note: Employers who gave information on both secretaries and stenographers are included in the tabulation for each of these classifications.

This table should be read as follows: Four employers stated that they found the employment service the most effective means of employing beginning secretaries.

TABLE X

NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS NAMING EACH OF VARIOUS METHODS AS THE SECOND MOST EFFECTIVE
METHOD USED IN OBTAINING NEW EMPLOYEES

Position	Number of Firms	Employment Service	Personal Application	Want Ads	Present Workers	Friends, Acquaintances	Business Schools	High School	College
Secretaries	96	12	6	16	17	19	17	5	4
Stenographers	34	3	3	5	7	6	5	3	2

Note: Employers who gave information on both secretaries and stenographers are included in the tabulation for each of these classifications.

This table should be read as follows: Twelve employers stated that they found the Employment Service the second most effective means of obtaining beginning secretaries.

these employees; 11 firms indicated they consulted friends and acquaintances when they needed a secretary.

It seems that secretarial and stenographic workers seeking employment would be best served if they told present office workers or made application at the places they wish to work.

Previous Working Experience Requirements. Table XI gives the experience requirements for new employees as specified by the employers. Of the 96 business firms employing secretaries, 35, or 36.5 per cent, stated that they required their beginning secretaries to have previous working experience; 61, or 63.5 per cent, stated that they did not require working experience of these workers. Of the 61 employers who do not require working experience of beginning secretaries, 13, or 21.3 per cent, stated that they prefer secretaries with working experience.

As shown in Table XI, 27, or 79.4 per cent, of the 34 firms employing stenographers do not require their newly employed stenographers to have working experience. These 27 businessmen employ 71 stenographers, or 73.9 per cent of the stenographers included in this study.

Six employers stated that they prefer their stenographers to have working experience, but do not require it.

From these findings, it appears that the high school graduate should meet with little difficulty in obtaining a job in so far as the experience requirements for beginning secretaries and stenographers are concerned.

TABLE XI
PREVIOUS WORKING EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT
FOR BEGINNING SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS

Position	Number of Firms Reporting	Experience Required	Experience Not Required
Secretaries	96	35	61 ^a
Stenographers	34	7	27 ^b

^a Includes 13 who said experienced workers are preferred.

^b Includes 6 who said experienced workers are preferred.

This table should be read as follows: Of the 96 firms employing secretaries, 35 require that the beginning secretaries have previous working experience.

Requirements in the Use of Office Machines. Other than the typewriter, which all the firms in this survey require their secretaries and/or stenographers to be able to use, the adding machine is used most frequently. Secretaries are expected to be able to use the adding machine in 75, or 78.1 per cent, of the firms included in this study; the calculator in 31, or 32.3 per cent.

Next machines in frequency of mention by these employers were the mimeograph, liquid process duplicator, bookkeeping machine, and different kinds of voice writing equipment. These data are given in Table XII.

Some employers who indicated that they expect their beginning secretaries and stenographers to be able to operate certain office machines did not have their offices equipped with the machines mentioned.

Typewriting Rates Required of Beginning Employees. As shown in Table XIII, 36 of the 106 employers specified a minimum typing speed requirement for their beginning secretaries and stenographers. The minimum typing rates specified by the employers varied from 30 words a minute to 60 words a minute. Two employers stated they required 30 and 35 words a minute respectively for these beginning employees; 12 specified 40 words a minute; 19 specified 50 words a minute; and 3 specified 60 words a minute.

Seventy, or approximately two thirds, of these employers require no specific typing rate for their beginning secretaries and stenographers.

TABLE XII

NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS NAMING CERTAIN MACHINES
THEY EXPECT BEGINNING EMPLOYEES TO BE ABLE TO OPERATE

Position	Number of Firms	Typewriter	Adding Machine	Calculator	Mimeograph	Mimeoscope	Check Writer	Cash Register	Voice Writing Equipment	Liquid Duplicator	Addressograph	Bookkeeping Machine	PBX	Multilith
Secretaries	96	96	75	31	15	6	9	6	11	13	9	11	7	2
Stenographers	34	34	30	7	7	2	5	2	3	2	1	2	3	2

Note: Employers who gave information on both secretaries and stenographers are included in the tabulation for each of these classifications.

This table should be read as follows: All 96 of the firms employing secretaries expect these employees to be able to operate a typewriter.

TABLE XIII
TYPING RATES REQUIRED OF BEGINNING
SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS

	Number of Firms	Words a Minute				
		30	35	40	50	60
Required Rate	36	1	1	12	19	3
No Rate Specified	70					
Total	106					

This table should be read as follows: One employer requires his beginning secretaries and stenographers to have a minimum typing speed of 30 words a minute.

Use of Tests to Determine Typewriting Rates. As shown in Table XIV, of the 106 firms surveyed, 21 indicated that their firms give a typing test to those applying for the position of secretary or stenographer; 85 firms give no formal typing test.

Of the 21 firms giving typing tests, 6 give commercially prepared tests, 12 give company tests, 1 gives a civil service test, and 2 give the merit system test. The minimum typing rates these 21 firms require the applicants to perform on these tests are given in Table XV.

At least 11 other employers, who do not give formal typing tests, indicated that they simply ask the applicant to type some material typical of that frequently dictated in that firm and then check the page for accuracy. Even though the method may not be completely reliable in determining one's proficiency, it does provide the employers with a criterion for evaluating the typing skill of the applicants for these positions.

Fifteen employers stated they require certain typing rates for beginning secretaries and stenographers, but they do not give a formal typing test.

Shorthand Dictation Rates Required of Beginning Employees. As shown in Table XVI, 27, or 25.5 per cent of the firms included in this study indicated that they require their beginning secretaries and stenographers to be able to take shorthand dictation at specified minimum rates. The

TABLE XIV
USE OF TESTS TO DETERMINE TYPING ABILITY
OF APPLICANTS FOR SECRETARIAL AND STENOGRAPHIC POSITIONS

	Number of Firms
Applicant Given Typewriting Test	21
No Typewriting Test Given	85
Total	106

This table should be read as follows: Of the 106 firms surveyed, 21 give typewriting tests to applicants for positions as beginning secretaries and stenographers.

TABLE XV
KINDS OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT TYPING TESTS GIVEN
BY 21 FIRMS AND MINIMUM WORDS-A-MINUTE REQUIRED

Kind of Tests	No. of Firms Using	Words-a-Minute Required			
		30	35	40	50
Company-Prepared Tests	12	1		6	5
Commercially-Prepared Tests	6			2	4
Civil Service Tests	1		1		
Merit System Tests	2			1	1
Total	21				

This table should be read as follows: One firm requiring a minimum typing rate of 30 w.a.m. of beginning secretaries and stenographers gives applicants a company-prepared test.

TABLE XVI
 SHORTHAND RATES REQUIRED OF BEGINNING
 SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS

	Number of Firms	Words-a-Minute				
		70	80	90	100	120
Required Rate	27	2	15	6	2	2
No Rate Specified	79					
Total	106					

This table should be read as follows: Two of the employers require a minimum shorthand dictation rate of 70 words a minute.

rates stated by the employers vary from 70 to 120 words a minute. Two specified 70 words a minute; 15 specified 80 words a minute; 6 specified 90 words a minute; 2 each specified 100 and 120 words a minute respectively.

Seventy nine employers indicated that they require no particular shorthand dictation rate for beginning secretaries and stenographers. Eleven of these firms are equipped with soundwriting equipment and do not require these employees to take shorthand dictation.

Use of Tests to Determine Shorthand Dictation Rate.

As Table XVII indicates, 15, or 14.1 per cent, of the 106 firms actually give formal pre-employment shorthand dictation tests.

Company-prepared tests are given by 7 firms; commercially-prepared tests by 5; civil service tests by 1; and the merit system test by 2. The minimum shorthand dictation rates at which these 15 firms require the applicants to perform on these tests are given in Table XVIII.

Approximately 60 per cent of those firms that indicate that they require specific shorthand dictation rates give tests to prospective secretarial and stenographic employees.

Ninety-one employers do not give any kind of dictation test to prospective secretaries and stenographers.

Transcription Rates Required of Beginning Employees.

Only one employer specified a transcription rate from

TABLE XVII

USE OF TESTS TO DETERMINE SHORTHAND ABILITY
OF APPLICANTS FOR SECRETARIAL AND STENOGRAPHIC POSITIONS

Number of Firms	
Applicant Given Shorthand Test	15
No Shorthand Test Given	91
Total	106

This table should be read as follows: Of the 106 firms surveyed, 15 give shorthand tests to applicants for positions as beginning secretaries and stenographers.

TABLE XVIII

KINDS OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT SHORTHAND DICTATION TESTS
GIVEN BY 15 FIRMS AND MINIMUM WORDS-A-MINUTE REQUIRED

Kind of Tests	No. of Firms Using	Words-a-Minute Required			
		70	80	90	100
Company-Prepared Tests	7	2	4	1	
Commercially-Prepared Tests	5		3		2
Civil Service Tests	1		1		
Merit System Tests	2			2	
Total	15				

This table should be read as follows: Two firms requiring a minimum shorthand dictation rate of 70 w.a.m. of beginning secretaries and stenographers give applicants company-prepared tests.

dictated material. This firm requires a pre-employment transcription rate of 20 words a minute for both secretaries and stenographers. It is interesting to note that this business firm requires 50 words a minute in typing, 100 words a minute in shorthand dictation, and 20 words a minute for transcription. This firm employs seven full-time secretaries and stenographers and one part-time stenographer, all of whom are required to be single.

The other employers indicated that their employees were given sufficient time on the job for transcribing shorthand notes or messages from the voice-writing equipment.

Use of Tests to Determine Transcription Rate. The only firm specifying a definite rate in shorthand transcription for beginning secretaries and stenographers gives a pre-employment dictation test, in which the applicant is required to attain a minimum rate of 20 words a minute when transcribing. This is a company test administered by the personnel manager.

Educational Requirements. Table XIX reveals the number of employers indicating various minimum educational requirements for newly employed secretaries and stenographers. Seventy-seven, or 80.2 per cent, of those employing secretaries stated that they are willing to employ a secretary who has completed high school only, provided she meets the other requirements for that position. Eighteen, or 18.8 per cent, of the 96 employers require newly employed

TABLE XIX
MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BEGINNING EMPLOYEES

Position	Number of Firms	Less than High School Graduate	High School Graduate	Business School Graduate	2-Yr. College Graduate	College Graduate
Secretaries	96	0	77	18	1	0
Stenographers	34	0	32	2	0	0

This table should be read as follows: Of the 96 firms employing secretaries, 77 require that beginning secretaries have at least a high school education.

secretaries to be graduates of business college, while one stated he required his secretary to have completed at least two years of college work. No employer indicated he would consider employing a secretary who was not a graduate of a high school.

Thirty-two, or 94.1 per cent, of the 36 firms employing stenographers stated that they require these employees to have at least a high school education, and two, or 5.9 per cent, indicated that they require their stenographers to be business college graduates. This information is given in Table XIX.

Each businessman was counted as a separate employer each time he supplied data concerning the requirements for a type of position included in this study.

Duties Performed by Secretaries. Each employee was classified as a secretary or a stenographer by the employer interviewed. Before the writer interviewed an employer, it was determined that at least one employee in that business firm took dictation in shorthand or from a soundscriber, and transcribed the message.

Based on the findings as shown in Table XX, the secretary is required to perform many duties. The duties performed by secretaries are determined to a great extent by the job itself, rather than by the previous training of the secretary. Graduates of four-year colleges are called upon to perform duties similar to those performed by secretaries who did not continue their formal education beyond high school graduation.

Eighty-five, or 88.5 per cent, of the employers expect their beginning secretaries to be able to take shorthand dictation. The remaining eleven firms, or 11.5 per cent, use the dictaphone, ediphone, or tape recorder. All 96 employers require their secretaries to transcribe the dictated material on the typewriter in acceptable form.

Eighty-five employers expect their secretaries to apply knowledge of bookkeeping principles and practices, and 93, or 96.9 per cent, require these employees to do some filing.

Duties Performed by Stenographers. Thirty-one of the 34 firms employing stenographers expect these beginning workers to take shorthand dictation, and all 34 expect their stenographers to transcribe on the typewriter. The three firms that do not require stenographers to take shorthand dictation were equipped with dictaphones.

As shown in Table XX, ability to file and to apply knowledge of bookkeeping principles and practices ranked third and fourth respectively in frequency of mention by the employers, as duties they expect beginning stenographers to perform.

It is assumed that more emphasis by the counselor and business teachers should be placed on bookkeeping for business majors who plan to do secretarial and stenographic work.

TABLE XX

NUMBER OF FIRMS THAT EXPECT SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS TO BE ABLE
TO PERFORM CERTAIN DUTIES

Position	Number of Firms	Take Dictation	Transcribe	File	Type Stencils	Compose Business Letters	Apply Knowledge of Bookkeeping Princi- ples and Practices	Handle Mail	Answer Telephone and Place Calls	Meet and Direct Office Callers
Secretaries	96	85	96	93	15	55	85	83	74	63
Stenographers	34	31	34	25	10	9	20	14	16	17

Note: Employers who gave information on both secretaries and stenographers are included in the tabulation for each of these classifications.

This table should be read as follows: Of the 96 firms represented in this study, 85 stated that they expect their beginning secretaries to be able to take shorthand dictation.

Number of Ouachita Parish High School Graduates Employed by Firms Surveyed. Seventy-one, or 40.8 per cent, of the 174 secretaries included in this study are graduates of the Ouachita Parish High School; 30, or 31.2 per cent, of the 96 stenographers are graduates of this school. These data are given in Table XXI. The investigator, being a business education teacher in this high school, was particularly interested in determining the number of these positions held by graduates of this school.

TABLE XXI

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS
THAT ARE GRADUATES OF THE OUACHITA PARISH HIGH SCHOOL

Position	Total Employees in Study		Graduates of Ouachita Parish High School	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Secretaries	174	100.0	71	40.8
Stenographers	96	100.0	30	31.2

This table should be read as follows: Of the 174 secretaries included in this study, 71, or 40.8 per cent, were graduated from the Ouachita Parish High School.

CHAPTER III
EVALUATION OF ABILITIES OF BEGINNING
SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS

Related literature dealing with personality traits and secretarial duties was studied, and particular attention was paid to the interview method used by Charters and Whitley,¹ in which the employers were encouraged to talk about the qualities in secretaries that they would like to improve in their present secretaries. From the results of the Charters and Whitley study and similar studies by others, the investigator selected traits and abilities to be included in a brief check list to be used in determining the deficiencies that, in the opinion of the employers included in this study, were most likely to be found in beginning secretaries and stenographers.

The employers were asked if they believed the beginning secretaries and stenographers in their offices had been adequately prepared to perform the duties they expect these employees to perform. Then they were asked to relate any skill deficiencies they found in these employees, both past and present workers. On the check list items are classified

¹ W. W. Charters and Isadore B. Whitley, Analysis of Secretarial Duties and Traits, p. 186.

according to subject matter, office duties, and personal skills; and the employer, in each instance, had an opportunity to mention additional deficiencies that he had noted.

The check list was used in the interview as an aid in classifying and interpreting the data concerning deficiencies.

Evaluation of Knowledge of Subject Matter. Table XXII summarizes the opinions of the employers with reference to subject matter deficiencies of beginning secretaries and stenographers. This information was gained through interviews with these employers in 106 selected firms in Monroe, Louisiana.

Fourteen employers indicated that they frequently found these beginning employees do not understand the principles of bookkeeping. Thirteen stated that they found beginning secretaries and stenographers were frequently deficient in their ability to spell. The ability to use correct grammar was a weakness noted in beginning employees by nine employers interviewed. Six of the ten attorney offices surveyed reported beginning secretaries and stenographers were frequently deficient in the knowledge and use of legal terminology.

The inability of some beginning secretaries to get the shorthand dictation was indicated by six employers, while three stated some employees were incapable of transcribing satisfactorily from shorthand notes. Two employers expressed the belief that beginning secretaries and stenographers

TABLE XXII

SUBJECT MATTER IN WHICH EMPLOYERS OF 106 FIRMS
INDICATE THAT BEGINNING SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS
ARE FREQUENTLY DEFICIENT

Subject Matter	Deficient Ability
Bookkeeping	14
Spelling	13
Grammar	9
Mathematics	8
Legal Terminology	6
Shorthand	6
Filing	5
Transcription	3
Use of Machines	2
Punctuation	2
Vocabulary	2

This table should be read as follows: Of the employers reporting subject matter deficiencies among beginning secretaries and/or stenographers, 14 stated they frequently found these employees to be deficient in the knowledge of bookkeeping.

frequently could not punctuate correctly, and five believed the beginning employees to possess an insufficient knowledge of filing.

The frequency with which these employers find beginning secretaries and stenographers deficient in the subject matter, office duties, and personal traits has nothing to do with the number of times an individual may be found deficient; it is concerned altogether with how often the employer finds workers in these classifications to be deficient in various abilities and traits.

Evaluation of Ability in Performance of Office Duties.

Employers of 106 firms were asked in a personal interview if they found the beginning secretaries and stenographers they had employed or were now employing in their offices deficient in performing the duties they expect beginners to be able to perform. Fifty-eight, or 54.7 per cent, stated that they did not frequently find these employees to be deficient in the performance of the duties mentioned.

As shown in Table XXIII, the remaining employers reported that they often found beginning secretaries and stenographers lacked the ability to perform various types of office duties. The duties in which deficiencies were mentioned as being prevalent among beginning employees are listed in the table according to frequency of mention by the employers.

TABLE XXIII

OFFICE DUTIES IN WHICH EMPLOYERS OF 106 FIRMS
INDICATE THAT BEGINNING SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS
ARE FREQUENTLY DEFICIENT

Office Duties	Deficient Ability
Typing Invoices and Forms	9
Meeting and Directing Office Callers	8
Proofreading Typewritten Copy	6
Composing Business Letters	6
Taking Dictation	4
Using the Telephone	4
Typing Stencils	2
Transcribing	2
Straight-copy Typing	1

This table should be read as follows: Nine employers reported that they found beginning secretaries and stenographers deficient in the ability to type invoices and forms.

Nine employers indicated that they often found that beginning secretaries and stenographers lacked the ability to type properly the different invoices and forms. The ability to meet and direct office callers is a duty that eight employers found beginning employees frequently lack. Six employers reported that often the beginning secretaries and stenographers neglect to proofread the typewritten copy; six reported that their employees had difficulty composing business letters. Using the telephone properly and taking dictation were mentioned four times each as duties beginning secretaries and stenographers were found to be deficient in performing.

Some of the employers interviewed voiced direct criticism of the training and instruction the public schools are offering, but many of them offered praise of the job that is being done. Many of the complaints of the employers interviewed were based upon social or personal traits rather than subject matter abilities.

Evaluation of Personal Trait Development. Table XXIV summarizes the opinions of employers of the firms surveyed in regard to the deficiencies in desired personal traits of secretaries and stenographers. Fifteen of the employers stated that they had found these beginning employees frequently lacked the ability to follow instructions. The use of good judgment in office details was a personal trait that 14 employers mentioned as being deficient in beginning

TABLE XXIV

PERSONAL TRAITS IN WHICH EMPLOYERS OF 106 FIRMS
INDICATE THAT BEGINNING SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS
ARE FREQUENTLY DEFICIENT

Personal Traits	Deficient Ability
Ability to Follow Instructions	15
Judgment	14
Responsibility	9
Ability to Get Along with Others	9
Accuracy	8
Initiative	6
Attitude	5
Neatness	5
Courtesy	5
Loyalty	3
Dependability	2
Confidence	2

This table should be read as follows: Fifteen employers indicated that they found beginning secretaries and stenographers lacking in the ability to follow instructions.

secretaries and stenographers. Nine employers indicated that beginning secretaries and stenographers frequently do not accept responsibility to the extent that the employers believed that they should. Nine also indicated that beginning workers in these classifications often lacked the ability to get along with other employees.

A few employers of office workers stated they frequently found their beginning secretaries and stenographers lacking in accuracy, initiative, good attitude and neatness.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the purpose of this study to determine the requirements for employment in secretarial and stenographic positions in selected firms in Monroe, Louisiana, with special interest in the positions available to graduates of the Ouachita Parish High School. This study seeks findings that may be used as a measure of guidance for the business education teacher and counselor.

The study records the approximate number of part-time and full-time secretaries and stenographers that are employed; the minimum age requirements for these employees; the preference by sex expressed by employers of secretaries and stenographers; the preferred marital status of employees as expressed by the employers; the approximate turnover and net gain in employment during the past twelve months; the methods used in obtaining new employees; the working experience requirement for beginning secretaries and stenographers; the extent of training necessary in the operation of the various office machines; the minimum typing, dictation and transcription rates required of the prospective employee; the extent to which beginning workers are tested in shorthand, typing, and transcription; the educational level required for beginning secretaries and stenographers;

the duties secretaries and stenographers are expected to perform; and the number of Ouachita Parish High School graduates now employed in the positions included in this study.

Summary of Findings

The data summarized in this section are the findings that pertain to the specific purposes of the study as stated in Chapter I.

1. How many full-time and part-time workers are employed in the positions included in this study? In the 106 firms surveyed, there are employed 174 full-time secretaries and 96 full-time stenographers; there are 4 part-time secretaries and 2 part-time stenographers.

2. What are the classifications of firms by number of full-time secretaries and stenographers employed? Seventy-two firms employ secretaries only, 10 employ stenographers only, and the remaining 24 employ workers in both classifications.

Nearly one half of the firms, 46.2 per cent, employ only one worker whom they classify as either secretary or stenographer. Of the 270 full-time secretaries and stenographers employed by all firms, 49, or 18.1 per cent, work in offices in which there are no other secretaries or stenographers employed.

Seventy-six, or 71.7 per cent, of the firms each employ not more than two workers who are classified as secretaries or stenographers; yet these firms employ only 103, or 38.1

per cent, of the secretaries and stenographers included in the study. It is apparent that most of the firms have fairly small offices in terms of the number of secretarial and stenographic employees, but the majority of the secretaries and stenographers included in this study are employed in larger offices.

3. What is the minimum age limit for beginning secretaries and stenographers? Only four firms give a minimum employment age of 17 years. A minimum employment age of 18 years was specified by 45 of the 96 firms employing secretaries. The remaining 47 firms specified higher ages, ranging from 19 to 30 years.

Approximately ninety per cent of the 34 firms employing stenographers stated that they would employ beginning workers who were 18 years of age. Only one firm gave a minimum employment age of 17 years. The rest of the firms specified minimum ages ranging from 19 to 25 years.

4. What is the preference by sex as expressed by the employers of secretaries and stenographers? Women were preferred to men as secretaries in all 96 firms employing secretaries. Only 2 firms employing stenographers stated that they preferred men in these positions. However, no men were employed in either of these positions in the 106 firms surveyed.

5. What is the preferred marital status of secretaries and stenographers as expressed by their employers? The marital status of beginning secretaries and stenographers is

immaterial to two thirds of the employers included in this study. Fifteen firms prefer these workers to be married, and only five firms require that their secretaries and stenographers be single.

6. What was the estimated net rate of turnover in secretaries and stenographers during the past 12-month period? There was a turnover of 32.7 per cent in the past 12 months for the positions of secretary included in this study.

There was a turnover of 18.2 per cent of the employees in stenographic positions in the past 12-month period.

7. What are the most effective methods used in obtaining new secretaries and stenographers? Twenty-five of the 96 employers of secretaries said that suggestions from present workers regarding new employees are the most effective method of obtaining secretaries. Eighteen stated that secretaries receive their jobs by being promoted from other positions within the firm. Next in order of frequency of mention were "personal applications" and "friends and acquaintances."

Twelve of the 34 firms employing stenographers stated that they obtain most of these employees through suggestions obtained from present workers. Ten stated that they found the use of the firm's personal application file to be the most effective means for hiring new stenographers.

Only one employer mentioned the high school as a source used in locating new employees for secretarial or

stenographic positions, and he mentioned it as a source in locating stenographers only.

8. What previous secretarial and stenographic experience is required for beginning employees in secretarial and stenographic positions? Working experience is required of the new secretarial employees by 35, or 36.5 per cent, of the 96 firms employing secretaries. Seven, or 20.6 per cent, of the 34 firms employing stenographers require these employees to have previous working experience.

9. What training should be given students in the operation of various office machines? Since the beginning secretaries and stenographers are employed primarily on the basis of their ability to take shorthand dictation, type, and transcribe material, they are not required, but are expected, to be able to operate various office machines.

Approximately 78 per cent of the employers of secretaries and 88 per cent of the employers of stenographers expect beginning employees in these classifications to be able to use the adding machine. Approximately one third of the firms employing secretaries and one fifth of the firms employing stenographers expect these beginning employees to be able to operate the calculator. Next in order of frequency of mention by employers were duplicating machines and voice writing machines.

10. What are the minimum typing, dictation, and transcription rates required of the prospective employee?

Thirty-six employers stated that they require their

beginning secretaries to be able to type at a specific minimum rate. Two require a minimum typing rate of 30 and 35 words a minute respectively; 12 require 40 words a minute; 19 require 50 words a minute; and 3 require 60 words a minute. Seventy employers stated that they require no specific minimum typing rate of their beginning secretaries and stenographers.

A specific minimum shorthand dictation rate was required for beginning secretaries and stenographers by 27 of the 106 firms. Two employers stated that they require 70 words a minute; 15 require 80 words a minute; 6 require 90 words a minute; 2 require 100 words a minute; and 2 require 120 words a minute. Seventy-nine firms specified no minimum shorthand dictation rate.

Only one employer specified a transcription rate from dictated material. He stated that his required rate was 20 words a minute.

11. To what extent do employers give qualifying tests in typing, shorthand dictation, and transcription to their prospective employees? Twenty-one of the 106 firms give pre-employment timed typing tests to prospective secretaries and stenographers. Eleven other employers indicated that they ask the applicant to type some material typical of that frequently dictated in that firm and then check the page for accuracy.

Fifteen of the 106 firms give pre-employment shorthand dictation tests to applicants for the position of secretary

or stenographer. The other ninety-one employers do not give any kind of dictation tests to prospective employees.

Only one of the firms that give pre-employment shorthand dictation tests to prospective employees determines whether these applicants meet the specified minimum transcription rate, which, in this firm, is 20 words a minute.

12. What is the minimum educational requirement for beginning secretaries and stenographers? It was indicated by the employers that no firm included in the survey will employ a secretary or stenographer who does not have at least a high school education. Eighteen that employ secretaries require at least a business college graduate, and one other requires that newly employed secretaries have at least two years of college training. Two firms employing stenographers require these to have at least a business college certificate.

13. What are the duties that beginning secretaries and stenographers are expected to perform? According to the definition given in Chapter I for a secretary and stenographer, these employees are expected to take dictation either in shorthand or from a soundscriber and transcribe on the typewriter. All the secretaries and stenographers in this study performed these and a variety of other duties.

In addition to the specific duties included in the definition given in Chapter I, the secretaries performed the following duties, which are listed according to frequency of mention by employers:

File
 Do some bookkeeping
 Handle money
 Type company bulletins
 Order office supplies
 Make deposits

Of the 96 firms employing secretaries, 93 expect these employees to file. To apply knowledge of bookkeeping principles and practices is a duty that 85 of the firms expect their secretaries to be able to perform.

Eighty-five of the employers expect their beginning secretaries to be able to take shorthand dictation. The remaining 11 firms are supplied with dictaphones and/or ediphones. These 11 firms expect their beginning secretaries to be able to use the dictaphone and/or ediphone. Thus all of the firms employing secretaries expect these employees to transcribe dictated material.

Those duties performed by stenographers in this study and not specifically mentioned under the definition of a stenographer in Chapter I, are listed below according to their frequency of mention by employers:

File
 Prepare statements
 Use telephone
 Handle money
 Take orders

Thirty-one of the 34 firms employing stenographers expect these employees to take shorthand dictation, and all 34 require them to transcribe on the typewriter. Three firms that are equipped with dictaphone and/or ediphone equipment do not require their stenographers to take shorthand dictation.

Of the 34 firms employing stenographers, 25 expect these workers to file. One half of the firms expect their stenographers to meet and direct office callers. Twenty employers stated that they expect these employees to be able to apply knowledge of bookkeeping principles and practices.

14. How many of the secretaries and stenographers included in this study are graduates of the Ouachita Parish High School? This survey shows that 40.8 per cent of the 174 secretaries and 31.2 per cent of the 96 stenographers employed by the firms included in this study are graduates of the Ouachita Parish High School.

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings in this survey of 106 firms located in Monroe, Louisiana, it is believed that the following conclusions may be justified.

As most firms indicate that they are willing to employ beginning secretaries and stenographers at the age of 18, without previous working experience and without formal education beyond high school, it is concluded that there are in Monroe many secretarial and stenographic positions for which women who receive secretarial and stenographic training will be eligible upon graduation from high school.

There are very few opportunities for part-time workers in the positions of secretary and stenographer.

As women secretaries and stenographers are preferred in nearly all of the firms surveyed, and as no men are at present employed in secretarial or stenographic positions in the firms surveyed, it is concluded that few, if any, boys should be encouraged to specialize in this type of training for local employment possibilities.

As marital status for employees in secretarial and stenographic positions is immaterial to the employers in a majority of the offices, it is concluded that opportunities for employment in these positions are available to both married and single women high school graduates.

In locating new employees for secretarial and stenographic positions, the largest number of employers depend upon the recommendations of their present employees. The second most common method of obtaining secretaries is through promotion from other jobs, while the second most common method of obtaining stenographers is through personal applications.

Approximately one third of the firms surveyed state that they require specific minimum typewriting rates for beginning secretarial and stenographic employees. An even smaller number specify minimum shorthand dictation rates, and only one specifies a minimum transcription rate.

Of the firms that state that they have minimum rates for typewriting and dictation, many do not give any kind of formal pre-employment test to applicants. Specifying minimum rates of performance cannot have much meaning in firms that apparently take no steps to ascertain whether or not applicants are able to meet the standards specified.

Inasmuch as all of the employers in the firms surveyed require newly employed secretaries and stenographers to have at least a high school education, high school students who plan to enter positions in these classifications should complete high school before attempting to enter employment.

As a majority of beginning secretaries and stenographers will be expected to be able to file, apply knowledge of book-keeping principles and practices, and compose business letters, these skills should be emphasized in the preparation of students who expect to enter secretarial and stenographic positions.

As many secretaries and stenographers are expected to be able to operate the adding machine, calculator, and duplicating machines, training in the operation of these machines should be included in the programs of students who are preparing to enter secretarial and stenographic positions.

The findings of this study indicate a higher rate of turnover in secretarial positions (32.7 per cent) than in stenographic positions (18.2 per cent). Data to explain this large difference in turnover rates are not included in the study. The fact that a larger proportion of the workers classified as stenographers are employed in the larger offices may have some bearing on this problem.

Apparently very few employers rely on high schools to furnish information concerning the qualifications of applicants for secretarial and stenographic positions or to assist in locating new employees for these positions.

The findings of this study reveal that the graduates of Ouachita Parish High School are employed in approximately one half of the secretarial positions and in approximately one third of the stenographic positions. Therefore, the findings of this study have important implications for the business curriculum and the business graduates of Ouachita Parish High School.

Recommendations

A follow-up study of the business education graduates of the Ouachita Parish High School should be conducted as a means of further evaluating the effectiveness of the business education department.

It is recommended that a complete file, listing qualifications, grades, opinions of teachers, and employment intentions of each business student, be maintained for the benefit of students and businessmen.

It is recommended that the adding machines and calculators in the business education departments of the local schools be used for instructional purposes in the secretarial training courses.

As secretarial and stenographic employees are required to perform record keeping duties, it is recommended that those preparing to enter these positions be advised to take courses in bookkeeping.

It is recommended that training in performance of the following office duties be included in the secretarial courses: composing business letters, answering the telephone, meeting and directing office callers, handling mail, and filing.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:

	Secretaries	Stenographers
Number of full-time employees (30 hours a week or more)	_____	_____
Number newly employed during the past 12 months	_____	_____
Number separated from the job during the past 12 months	_____	_____
Do you prefer male or female employees	_____	_____
What is the minimum age require- ment for beginning employees	_____	_____
Is previous working experience required of these employees	_____	_____
Do you prefer married or single employees (or is it immaterial)	_____	_____
What is the minimum educational requirement for beginners? (Grad of: High Sch, Bus Sch, 2 Yr Col, 4 Yr Col, Other: _____)	_____	_____
How many, presently employed, are graduates of OPHS?	_____	_____

PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS

What is the minimum typing skill requirement for beginning employee? (If a definite rate is given, ask how this rate is determined.)	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
What is the minimum dictation rate requirement for beginning employee? (If a definite rate is given, ask how this rate is determined.)	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
What is the minimum transcription rate requirement from shorthand notes? (If a definite rate is given, ask how this rate is deter- mined.)	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Check the duties you expect beginning secretaries and stenographers to be able to perform:

Duties	SECRETARIES	STENOGRAPHERS
a. Take dictation	_____	_____
b. Transcribe on the typewriter	_____	_____
c. File	_____	_____
d. Type stencils	_____	_____
e. Compose business letters	_____	_____
f. Apply knowledge of bookkeeping	_____	_____
g. Handle mail (open, sort)	_____	_____
h. Answer telephone and place calls	_____	_____
i. Meet and direct office callers	_____	_____
j. Other: _____	_____	_____
k. Operate:		
Typewriter	_____	_____
Adding Machine	_____	_____
Calculator	_____	_____
Comptometer	_____	_____
Check Writer	_____	_____
Mimeograph	_____	_____
Mimeoscope	_____	_____
Cash Register	_____	_____
Soundsciber	_____	_____
Liquid Duplicator	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____

Have beginners in your office been adequately prepared to perform the duties checked above? Yes _____ No _____ (If no, comment.)

Check any deficiencies in skill you have found your beginning secretaries and/or stenographers to possess in performing the above-named duties.

a. Subject Matter

_____ Grammar
 _____ Spelling
 _____ Mathematics
 _____ Writing Letters
 _____ Shorthand
 _____ Typewriting
 _____ Bookkeeping
 _____ Filing
 _____ Use of Machines
 _____ Other: _____

b. Office Duties

_____ Taking Dictation in Shorthand
 _____ Transcribing
 _____ Answering the telephone
 _____ Proofreading typewritten copy
 _____ Meeting Public
 _____ Typing Stencils
 _____ Making long-distance calls
 _____ Handling mail
 _____ Other: _____

c. Personal Skills

____ Attitude
____ Accuracy
____ Neatness
____ Honesty
____ Loyalty
____ Judgment
____ Dependability
____ Confidence
____ Courtesy
____ Initiative
____ Responsibility
____ Getting along with others
____ Following instructions
____ Other: _____

What additional training do you think would be helpful for beginning secretaries and stenographers?

Check the means you have found effective in obtaining new employees: (Answer as "1" (best method), "2", and "3".)

SEC. STENO.

_____	_____	Employment Service
_____	_____	Personal Application
_____	_____	Want Ads in Newspapers
_____	_____	Present Workers
_____	_____	Friends or Acquaintances
_____	_____	Customers (Clients)
_____	_____	Business School
_____	_____	High School Office
_____	_____	College Placement Bureau
_____	_____	Other: _____

How many part-time employees are now employed in your firm?
Secretaries: _____ Stenographers: _____

What kind(s) of typewriters do your employees use in your firm at present? _____

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
of
Monroe-West Monroe
Louisiana

April 3, 1952

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This will introduce Miss Wilma Smith, a Commerce teacher at the Ouachita Parish High School, who is presently making a Secretary Survey in view of her thesis toward receiving a master's degree in Business Education at Oklahoma A & M.

This letter of introduction is issued by the Monroe Chamber of Commerce office, in order that Miss Smith might be recognized as an individual worthy of any subsequent interview pertaining to the above-mentioned survey.

Cordially yours,

/s/ Jim Williams
Jim Williams
Manager

eb

(Heading)

Company Name
Address

Attention: Mr. _____

Gentlemen:

Your firm has been selected to be used in a survey to determine the requirements of beginning secretaries and stenographers. A copy of the specific purposes of this study is enclosed.

The results of this survey should aid in making those changes in content and organization of the high school commercial courses that are necessary for more effective pre-employment training for office positions.

It would help very much if I might have an interview with you at a definite time that would be convenient for you. Within a few days I shall call to ask if I may have an appointment to talk with you.

Sincerely yours,

(Miss) Wilma Smith

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Enclosure

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

1. To determine, to some extent, the duties performed by beginning secretaries and stenographers
2. To determine the minimum age limit for the beginning secretaries and stenographers
3. To determine the extent of training that should be given students in the operation of various office machines
4. To determine the educational level required for beginning secretaries and stenographers
5. To determine the approximate number of part-time and full-time secretaries and stenographers that are employed
6. To determine whether working experience is required for beginning employees in the positions represented in this study
7. To determine the minimum typing, dictation and transcription rate required of the prospective employee
8. To determine the number of new secretaries and stenographers employed within the past twelve months, and the number separated from their positions
9. To determine the preference by sex expressed by employers of secretaries and stenographers
10. To determine the number of Ouachita Parish High School graduates now employed in the positions included in the study

THESIS TITLE: A SURVEY OF SELECTED BUSINESS FIRMS IN
MONROE, LOUISIANA, TO DETERMINE EMPLOYMENT
REQUIREMENTS FOR BEGINNING SECRETARIES AND
STENOGRAPHERS

AUTHOR: WILMA CLEO SMITH

THESIS ADVISER: ROBERT A. LOWRY

The content and form have been checked and approved by the author and thesis adviser. Changes or corrections in the thesis are not made by the Graduate School office or by any committee. The copies are sent to the bindery just as they are approved by the author and faculty adviser.

TYPIST: WILMA CLEO SMITH