Spokane, Washington Area

Location
Spokane is located in the east central part of the state some 200 miles east of Seattle. It is the only city of metropolitan proportions located east of the Cascade Mountains in the Pacific Northwest.

Area Covered
The Spokane area encompasses Spokane County and is dominated by the City of Spokane which includes 80 percent of the county's population.

USBS Offices
Two USBS offices serve the area. The main office is located at South 309 Howard Street, Spokane. The casual labor office is located at North 220 Stevens Street, Spokane.

Economic Characteristics
Spokane is primarily a trading center for a large and prosperous agricultural, mining, and lumbering region. Normally, over 50 percent of the employed workers of the area are engaged in trade and service industries. During the war the economy of the area was significantly affected by two developments—the coming of the light metal industry and the location of important military establishments in the area. The Defense Plant Corporation built three light metals plants in the area—an aluminum reduction plant, an aluminum rolling mill, and a magnesium reduction plant. These plants employed over 4,000 workers at peak (July 1943) as contrasted to the 100 employed four years earlier. All plants are on a "standing" basis at the present time pending disposition by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. While it is not possible to tell how soon this will be, the existence of the industry is undoubtedly the most important single new factor in Spokane's economy. During the war several large military installations were located near Spokane—the most important being the Air Technical Service Command, which at peak employed over 10,000 workers, and a Naval Supply Depot employing as high as 2,500. These establishments are still operating at a comparatively high level but their post-war position is uncertain. Total government employment in mid-1945 had quadrupled from the 1940 level of 1,800. Spokane is an important railroad center, its repair shops servicing five transcontinental
railroads and feeder lines providing employment for several thousand persons. Total non-agricultural civilian employment increased from about 54,000 in 1940 to over 71,000 by mid-1944. Half the increase was composed of women who accepted service and government jobs. Another development that will have significant bearing on the economy of the area is the massive irrigation system that is being developed by the Bureau of Reclamation as a part of the Grand Coulee Dam project. A total of 1,970,000 acres are expected to be reclaimed for agricultural use. Spokane will play an important role in this development and will profit immeasurably by the increase of population that will result.

**Population and Labor Force**

The civilian population of the area increased from the 1940 level of 182,600 to about 175,000 1/2 in July 1944, and continued to rise by several thousand until 1945. Since then, some decrease has taken place. The population is predominantly white. The 1940 census showed only 0.8 percent non-white and there has been no significant increase in this proportion during the war. In mid-1944, the civilian non-agricultural labor force had expanded by nearly 10,000 over the 61,000 of 1940.

**Educational and Training Facilities**

Spokane offers the following educational facilities: (1) 36 elementary public schools, 10 of which provide special services to handicapped, deficient and maladjusted children; (2) four special service units, two of which are at hospital centers, and one parent unit; (3) two junior high schools and three standard high schools; (4) auxiliary services by public schools, including child guidance, family life education, health department, and transportation of pupils; (5) public night school adult education classes; (6) trade or vocational school offering a variety of instruction, with courses modern in scope and equipment; (7) three accredited colleges in the immediate vicinity of Spokane—Whitworth, which is co-educational and seven miles north of the city center; Gonzaga University, which has an outstanding men’s law school and special courses in nursing and law for women; and Holy Names College, which is a women’s college offering special education and music. Besides these, the Eastern Washington College of Education is located 20 miles from Spokane in Cheney and is the largest of three state teachers training schools. Spokane has also several Catholic schools of elementary and high school level located throughout the city and providing for both boarding and day pupils.

† Excluding 16,200 in armed forces
Spokane, Washington Area - Cont'd.

Government Employment

The war-born military establishments employed over 7,000 workers in December 1945. In addition to the Spokane Air Technical Service Command and the Naval Supply Depot, these include Fort George Wright, Bitter General Hospital, and Geiger Field. It is possible that some permanent installations may develop out of these war-created facilities. Ultimate post-war employment, however, will undoubtedly be much lower than at the present time. City and county government provide a sizable payroll, Spokane being the county seat of Spokane County. A number of federal agencies also maintain branch offices in Spokane.

Major Industries and Firms