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WOMEN AS WORKERS**Women's Economic Progress**

The significant contribution which women are making to the economic life of our country is a direct reflection of the rising number of women workers, their expanding job opportunities, and their effective job performance. Women's present working partnership with men in the economic world has developed largely as a result of the many social and economic changes of the last half century.

Scientific and technological improvements not only simplify many home duties and reduce the time required for the physical tasks of homemaking, but also mean more job specialization and new employment opportunities in offices and factories. Larger business organizations, expanded activities of commerce and communications, and new systems of distribution and advertising require the use of new sources of labor and help change traditional attitudes concerning women's status in the labor force. Two world wars have also placed greater demands on our economy and necessitated extensive employment of women.

The growing demand for women's services has been accompanied by broadened opportunities for their education and training. The nationwide development of free education for both boys and girls and the gradual achievement of equal opportunities for higher learning have encouraged women to prepare for and seek employment in ever-expanding occupational fields.

As working women have actively participated in the production of goods and services and helped raise and maintain living standards, American industry has come to recognize women's abilities and has facilitated women's integration into the working world. Over the years, more responsible jobs, with higher wages and better working conditions, have been opened to women, and these in turn have stimulated more of them to seek paid employment. In the future, women's employment status can be expected to depend even more on women themselves. For women of ability who are willing to secure suitable training and experience, there is a variety of opportunities for advancement in the business, industrial, and professional world.

Numbers and Trends

1. Twenty-two Million Equal One-third

More than 22 million women were in the work force in the early part of 1958. This figure exceeds by almost 2.7 million the number of women workers in April 1945, the peak for World War II. It compares with about 5 million women workers at the turn of the century (June 1900) and with a prewar (March 1940) figure of slightly less than 14 million women workers (table 1).

Table 1.—WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE
(Selected years)

Year	Women workers (14 years and over)		
	Number	Percent of all workers	Percent of all women
RECENT HIGHLIGHTS ¹			
Today (April 1958).....	22, 254, 000	33	36
Korean war (April 1953).....	19, 296, 000	31	33
Pre-Korea (April 1950).....	18, 063, 000	29	32
Postwar (April 1947).....	16, 320, 000	28	30
World War II peak (April 1945).....	19, 570, 000	36	37
Pre-World War II (March 1940).....	13, 840, 000	25	28
LONG-TERM TRENDS ²			
1930 (April).....	10, 396, 000	22	24
1920 (January).....	8, 229, 000	20	23
1900 (June).....	4, 999, 000	18	20
1890 (June).....	3, 704, 000	17	18

¹ From Current Population Reports for civilian labor force.

² From decennial census for total labor force, including Armed Forces.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census.

In addition to the many social and economic changes responsible for the expansion in women's employment, one of the other factors has been the rapid growth of our population. However, the female population 14 years of age and over did not quite triple (from 25 million women in 1900 to 62 million in 1958), while the woman labor force more than quadrupled during the same period.

The proportion of women in the labor force, which includes both the employed and the unemployed, has increased gradually during the

past decades—equaling 18 percent in 1900 and about 25 percent in 1940. It reached a high of 36 percent during World War II and then dropped sharply to 28 percent with the return of war veterans to civilian jobs—before starting to climb again. Today, 1 out of every 3 workers is a woman.

It is pertinent to note that the numerical relationship between men and women in the population has been reversed in recent years. Today there are almost 3 million more women than men of working age (14 years and over). This is the opposite of the situation in 1900, when men outnumbered women by over 11 $\frac{1}{3}$ million. In 1940 there were still slightly fewer women, but in 1942 their number began to exceed that of men. But again, the size of this population change explains only to a small degree the marked increase in women's representation in the labor force.

The number of unemployed women—those actually seeking work—was 1,629,000 in April 1958. This means that at that time there were about 13 women who actually had jobs for every 1 who was unemployed and looking for work. About 32 percent of all unemployed persons were women; this is slightly lower than the percentage of all workers who were women. Although the unemployment rate has traditionally been lower for women than for men, the relationship has frequently been reversed in the past few years, as increased numbers of women enter or leave the labor force for short periods of time.

2. Most Women Are Homemakers

The majority of women continue to be homemakers, whether or not they also have jobs. Over half of all women devote full time to home-making. Almost one-third of the married women, and many single women as well, are both workers and homemakers. During any one workweek in early 1958, about 35 percent of all women were in the labor force and about 55 percent were keeping house full time. The remainder were primarily girls under 20 years of age and in school. This means that practically all adult women in the population are making a contribution to the smooth running of the economy, either as jobholders, homemakers, or both.

3. Outlook for Women Workers

Estimates of population growth in the near future place the total at 193 million persons by 1965. In order to produce the goods and services needed for a population of this size, the economy can reasonably expect to have 10 million more workers than there were in 1955, or a projected labor force of 79 million. More than half of the additional workers predicted for 1965 will be women—about 1.8 million

women from 14 to 24 years of age, 1 million from 25 to 44, and 2.6 million aged 45 and over.

The upward trend in white-collar employment is expected to continue for both women and men. Probably over 2 million of the increase will be in professional fields. Demand for clerical and sales personnel will also be greater. The force of craftsmen, operatives, and managers will also grow, while jobs for unskilled laborers and farmworkers will decline.

These forecasts contain several implications for women workers. Population growth is expected to provide sufficient numbers of persons to meet future labor requirements quantitatively. But the complex nature of many jobs will place new emphasis on the quality of the labor force. The demand will be greatest for those with the needed training and experience. Women's goal, therefore, must be to develop their individual talents to the fullest extent possible.

Major Occupations of Women

The general expansion in women's employment has been accompanied by a marked increase in the number and variety of women's occupational opportunities. In the latest decennial census (1950), women were reported in all of the 446 individual occupations listed. Although there is still considerable concentration in a relatively few occupations, the number of women entering new fields continues to grow.

4. Broad Occupational Categories

The occupational activities of those in the labor force are generally divided into 11 broad categories by the Bureau of the Census. Among women, almost three-fifths were clerical workers, operatives, and service workers. Professional workers were the fourth largest group, with private-household, sales, and managerial workers following in that order. A small miscellaneous group was made up of farm workers, craftsmen, and laborers (table 2).

The most spectacular part of the story about women's recent employment expansion is the increase in women clerical workers from 2½ million in 1940 to over 6 million in 1958 (table 3). This large numerical increase is directly related to the expanded activities of business corporations, large-scale financial organizations, mail-order and other retail establishments, Government operations, and many other types of undertakings. Recently, inventions relating to office machines have mechanized office processes to a greatly increased extent. Better trained clerical workers with special technical and mechanical ability

Table 2.—OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS OF EMPLOYED WOMEN, APRIL 1958

<i>Occupational group</i>	<i>Number (in thou- sands)</i>	<i>Percent distri- bution</i>	<i>Percent of all workers</i>
All women.....	20, 625	100	33
Professional, technical, kindred workers.....	¹ 2, 584	13	37
Medical and other health workers.....	663	-----	56
Teachers, except college.....	1, 198	-----	75
Managers, officials, proprietors, except farm.....	1, 057	5	16
Clerical and kindred workers.....	¹ 6, 241	30	69
Stenographers, typists, secretaries.....	2, 192	-----	97
Sales workers.....	¹ 1, 478	7	36
Retail trade.....	1, 329	-----	56
Service workers, except private household.....	¹ 2, 854	14	52
Waitresses, cooks, and barmaids.....	1, 088	-----	72
Operatives and kindred workers.....	¹ 2, 985	14	27
Durable goods manufacturing.....	710	-----	22
Nondurable goods manufacturing.....	1, 604	-----	53
Private-household workers.....	2, 289	11	98
Craftsmen, foremen, kindred workers.....	220	1	3
Farmers and farm managers.....	126	1	4
Farm laborers and foremen.....	688	3	32
Paid workers.....	174	-----	14
Unpaid family workers.....	514	-----	54
Laborers, except farm and mine.....	105	1	3

¹ Includes women in occupations not shown separately in this category.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-57, No. 190.

are needed, rather than general clerical workers able to perform only fairly simple and routine tasks.

Professional and service occupations also employed more women in 1958 than they had in 1940 or 1950. During the 18-year period, the number of women in professional occupations increased by more than 1 million; and those in service occupations (other than private household), by over 1½ million.

The number of women in factory and other operative occupations rose from 1940 to 1950 but declined subsequently, equaling slightly less than 3 million in 1958. Much of the demand for women in operative jobs arose during World War II and continued into the high-level economy of the postwar period. However, with recent technical innovations and the increased use of automatic machinery in mass production, demand for production workers has not been increasing as fast as that for technicians, research and clerical workers, and skilled craftsmen.

Table 3.—OCCUPATIONAL TREND OF EMPLOYED WOMEN

Occupational group	Number of women (in thousands)			Percent distribution		
	1958	1950	1940	1958	1950	1940
All women.....	20, 625	17, 176	11, 920	100	100	100
Professional workers.....	2, 584	1, 862	1, 570	13	11	13
Managers, officials, proprietors...	1, 057	941	450	5	5	4
Clerical workers.....	6, 241	4, 539	2, 530	30	26	21
Sales workers.....	1, 478	1, 516	830	7	9	7
Service workers (except house- hold).....	2, 854	2, 168	1, 350	14	13	11
Operatives.....	2, 985	3, 215	2, 190	14	19	18
Private-household workers.....	2, 289	1, 771	2, 100	11	10	18
Craftsmen, foremen.....	220	181	110	1	1	1
Farmers, farm managers.....	126	253	690	1	1	6
Farm laborers, foremen.....	688	663				
Laborers (except farm and mine).....	105	68	100	1	(¹)	1

¹ Less than 1 percent.

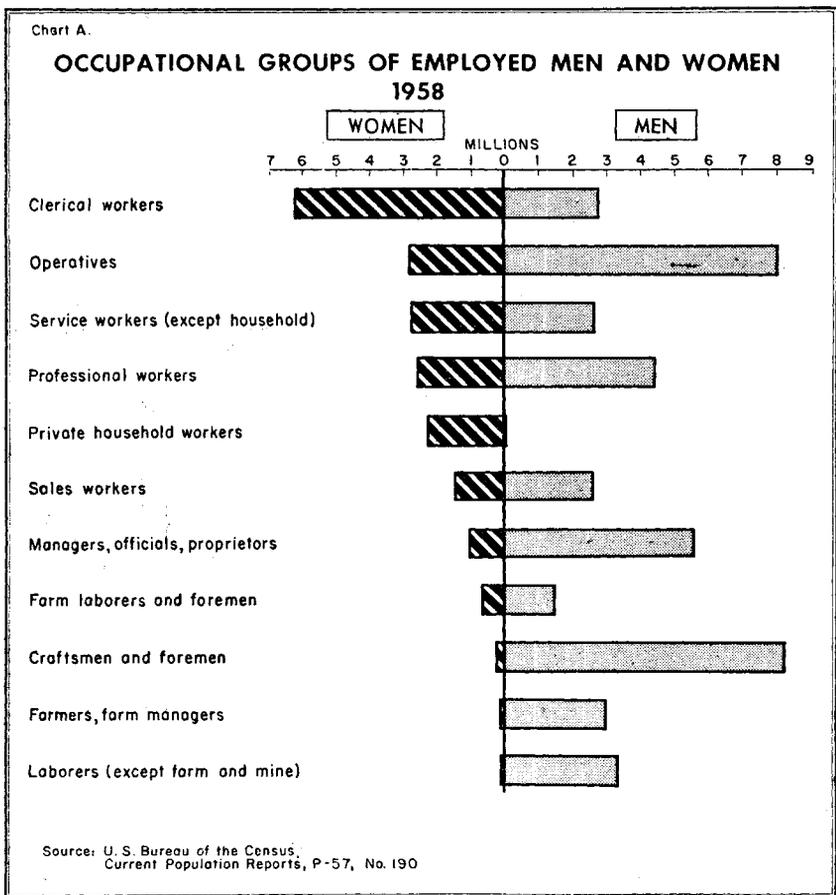
Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports.

At a time when women's employment has been expanding in the occupational areas where education and skill are important, the trend has been reversed for three other occupational groups. Women private-household workers numbered about the same in 1940 and 1958, but their proportion of all employed women decreased from 18 to 11 percent. This drop is part of a long-run decline in the relative significance of domestic work for employed women. For two other groups of women—those employed as general laborers and as farm workers—there have been somewhat smaller percentage decreases since 1940. With the general decrease in agricultural employment, the number of women farmers and farm laborers has dropped from 6 to 4 percent of all employed women.

Occupations with the largest numbers of women workers differ from those of men (chart A). In contrast to the predominance of clerical workers among women, almost 40 percent of all men workers were about evenly divided between craftsmen and operatives in early 1958. On the other hand, the percentages of clerical, service, or sales workers were much smaller among men than among women.

5. Proportion of Workers Who are Women

The importance of women in the labor force is indicated by their proportion of workers in various occupational groups. Women con-



stitute more than two-thirds of the clerical force in the country but relatively fewer of the workers in several other groups: Professional and sales workers (about one-third), operatives (one-fourth), and managers, officials, and proprietors (less than one-fifth). The proportions of women are largest among private-household workers and smallest among craftsmen, laborers, and farmers.

In most occupational groups, the proportion of workers who are women is larger in 1958 than it was in 1940. The greatest gain occurred for clerical workers, among whom the proportion of women rose from a little over half in 1940 to a little over two-thirds in 1958. There were also significant increases of women among service workers (except private household), sales workers, and farm laborers. Only in the professional group was there a decline in the proportion of women. This occurred, however, only because the number of pro-

professional men has increased even faster than the number of women. Many men who were able to receive college training under the veterans' benefits program have obtained professional positions. With the recent stress on engineering and science, large numbers of men have entered these professions—fields in which women constitute only a small minority. Nevertheless, in 1958 there were actually over 1 million more women performing professional work than there were in 1940.

6. Occupations of Nonwhite Women Workers

The civilian labor force in April 1958 included over 2¾ million nonwhite women, most of whom were Negroes. About 1 of every 7 women workers was nonwhite. Among all women in the population, about 45 percent of the nonwhite were working outside the home, as compared with about 35 percent of white persons.

Most nonwhite women were employed in three broad occupational groups: Private-household workers, other service workers, and operatives in factories, laundries, and other workplaces (table 4). In the past 2 decades, there has been a marked decrease in farm laborers and only a small increase in private-household workers. On the other hand, the number employed as clerical workers almost tripled between 1950 and 1958.

Table 4.—OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS OF NONWHITE EMPLOYED WOMEN, 1958

<i>Occupational group</i>	<i>Number (in thousands)</i>	<i>Percent distri- bution</i>
Total employed.....	2, 513	100
Professional workers.....	146	6
Managers, officials, proprietors.....	48	2
Clerical workers.....	201	8
Sales workers.....	35	1
Service workers (except household).....	550	22
Operatives.....	334	13
Private-household workers.....	1, 010	40
Craftsmen and foremen.....	17	1
Farmers, farm managers.....	20	1
Farm laborers and foremen.....	130	5
Laborers (except farm and mine).....	22	1

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-57, No. 190.

7. Detailed Occupations

The latest information on most narrow occupational groups of women workers is contained in the 1950 decennial census. As noted earlier, the majority of women workers are concentrated in a relatively small number of occupations. In 1950, about half were employed in the 28 occupations listed in table 5.

Table 5.—THE 28 LARGEST OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN, 1950

Rank	Occupation	Women employed	
		Number	Percent of all persons in the occupation
1.	Stenographers, typists, secretaries.....	1, 501, 090	94
2.	Sales workers—Retail trade.....	1, 192, 323	49
3.	Teachers (school).....	834, 996	75
4.	Operatives—Apparel, accessories.....	616, 864	81
5.	Bookkeepers.....	556, 229	77
6.	Waitresses.....	545, 565	82
7.	Nurses (professional).....	388, 921	98
8.	Telephone operators.....	341, 706	95
9.	Managers, proprietors—Retail trade.....	320, 139	17
10.	Farm laborers (unpaid family workers).....	317, 578	35
11.	Operatives—Laundry and dry cleaning.....	287, 533	67
12.	Cooks (except private-household).....	242, 422	56
13.	Operatives—Textile yarn, thread, fabric mills.....	220, 054	50
14.	Beauticians (includes manicurists, barbers).....	189, 870	50
15.	Operatives—Food products.....	186, 337	38
16.	Cashiers.....	183, 586	81
17.	Operatives—Electrical machinery, supplies.....	179, 946	54
18.	Housekeepers (private-household).....	134, 453	96
19.	Dressmakers, seamstresses (except factory).....	134, 310	97
20.	Farm laborers (wageworkers).....	130, 327	9
21.	Practical nurses.....	130, 304	96
22.	Attendants—Hospitals, other institutions.....	121, 261	59
23.	Office-machine operators.....	116, 917	82
24.	Farmers (owners, tenants).....	114, 179	3
25.	Operatives—Footwear, except rubber.....	110, 743	53
26.	Operatives—Wholesale, retail trade.....	107, 834	38
27.	Operatives—Knitting mills.....	104, 926	72
28.	Textile spinners, weavers.....	99, 182	55

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Decennial census. 1950.

The largest detailed occupation for women—stenographers, typists, and secretaries—covered 1,501,090 women in 1950 (decennial census). The number had increased to 2,192,000 by April 1958, according to a new census report which gives monthly employment figures not only

for broad occupational groups but also for a few detailed occupations. This gain of 46 percent is evidence of the growing importance of this occupation in our modern society.¹ The two occupations with the next-largest numbers of clerical workers were the bookkeepers and the telephone operators, according to the 1950 census.

Among sales workers, there were 1,329,000 saleswomen engaged in retail trade, as indicated by the April 1958 census report. These included saleswomen in department stores, apparel, variety (5- and 10-cent), and food stores. Women's largest individual occupation among service workers, other than private-household workers, was that of waitresses and cooks, with 1,088,000 women in April 1958.

In certain individual occupations, a very large proportion of all workers are women. The occupations in which three-fourths or more of the workers in 1950 were women are shown in table 6.²

Table 6.—OCCUPATIONS WITH LARGE PROPORTIONS OF WOMEN, 1950

<i>Occupations with 100,000 or more women</i>	<i>Occupations with less than 100,000 women</i>
WOMEN ARE NINE-TENTHS OR MORE OF THE WORKERS	
Nurses (professional)	Nurses (student)
Dressmakers, seamstresses	Laundresses (private-household)
Practical nurses	Attendants—Physician's, dentist's offices
Telephone operators	Dietitians, nutritionists
Housekeepers (private-household)	Librarians
Stenographers, typists, secretaries	Milliners
WOMEN ARE ABOUT FOUR-FIFTHS OF THE WORKERS	
Office-machine operators	Midwives
Waitresses	Demonstrators
Cashiers	Housekeepers (except private household)
Operatives—Apparel, accessories	
WOMEN ARE ABOUT THREE-FOURTHS OF THE WORKERS	
Bookkeepers	Spinners (textile)
Schoolteachers	Attendants, assistants—Library
Operatives—Knitting mills	Boarding-, lodging-housekeepers
	Operatives—Fabricated textiles
	Dancers, dancing teachers
	Religious workers
	Operatives—Tobacco manufacturers

¹ For additional information, see *Employment Opportunities for Women as Secretaries, Stenographers, Typists, and as Office-Machine Operators and Cashiers*. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 263.

² Additional information is provided in *Changes in Women's Occupations, 1940-1950*. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 253.

8. Women in Professional Positions

The 2,584,000 women performing professional and technical work in April 1958 comprised the fourth largest group among women workers—following after clerical workers, operatives, and service workers. This number was almost two-fifths higher than in 1950, and more than three-fifths higher than in 1940. However, as these numerical gains were about average for women, the percentage of all women workers in professional and technical jobs was the same in 1958 as in 1940.

With the demand still rising for teachers to staff the Nation's expanding school system, teaching continues to be the most popular profession among women. The 1,198,000 women teachers (except college) at work in April 1958 equaled 46 percent of all professional women, according to the newly expanded census report. This number of women teachers (considerably above the 767,769 teachers recorded in the 1940 census and the 834,996 teachers in 1950) gives some indication of the rapid expansion of our educational system arising from our population growth.

A general picture representing 1,100,000 public-school classroom teachers in 1955-56 was obtained in a special study by the National Education Association.³ About three-fourths of the teachers were women, and almost 60 percent of these were teaching in urban school districts with 2,500 or more population. Median age of the women teachers was 45.5 years (as compared with 35.4 years for men teachers). Somewhat over half the women were married, one-third were single, and the remainder were widowed, separated, or divorced. With respect to their education, about three-fifths had a first-level professional degree; about one-fifth, a master's degree; and most of the others, no degree. Women teachers averaged 15.4 years of teaching experience (men—8 years).

Among medical and other health workers, the only other category of professional workers reported separately by the Bureau of the Census in April 1958, there were 663,000 women, or 26 percent of all women in professional occupations. The largest single occupation in this group is that of professional nurses, estimated by the American Nurses' Association to number 430,000 in 1956. Other occupations include medical technologists, X-ray technicians, physical therapists, dietitians, pharmacists, occupational therapists, and medical-record librarians. Other women perform a wide variety of professional jobs. Relatively large numbers of women are musicians and music teachers, accountants and auditors, social workers, librarians, and editors and reporters. Women represent a small but growing proportion of law-

³ The Status of the American Public-School Teacher. National Education Association, Research Bulletin XXXV, No. 1, February 1957.

yers in this country.⁴ Small numbers of women are engaged in professions considered relatively unusual for women, such as engineering, architecture, geology, the ministry, and airplane navigation.

The long-time trend toward broadening women's occupational opportunities has been particularly noticeable in the professions. Of the approximately 1½ million women reported as professional, technical, and kindred workers in the 1940 decennial census, about three-fourths were engaged in teaching and professional nursing (including student nursing). Ten years later, despite the fact that the number of women in these two professions increased considerably, they accounted for just two-thirds of the almost 2 million women in professional work. Of the many other professions to which women were attracted, they made their greatest numerical gain as accountants and auditors, totaling 18,265 in 1940 and 55,660 in 1950. Percentagewise their numbers increased from 1 to 3 percent of all women professional workers and from 8 to 15 percent of all accountants and auditors.⁵

Of particular interest, in view of our present-day emphasis on engineering skills, is the relatively large increase in women engineers,⁶ which shows that women are sharing in the expanding demand for qualified personnel. In mathematics,⁷ statistics, and the sciences,⁸ the demand for larger numbers of trained personnel offers women opportunities for employment in a greater variety of jobs, provided they acquire the necessary education and training.

9. Women Proprietors, Officials, Managers

Slightly over 1 million women were classified by the April 1958 census report as proprietors, officials, and managers (except farm). This is over twice as many as in 1940 and over one-tenth more than in 1950. Almost half of the group are salaried workers. The classification is a very broad one and ranges from a large number of women proprietors running their own businesses to relatively few high-level corporation officials. Most of the women proprietors were engaged in retail trade, operating such establishments as restaurants, food stores, or apparel shops. Other women were owners of personal-service establishments, buyers or department heads of stores, public officials and

⁴ Employment Opportunities for Women in Legal Work. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 265.

⁵ Employment Opportunities for Women in Professional Accounting. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 258.

⁶ Employment Opportunities for Women in Professional Engineering. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 254.

⁷ Employment Opportunities for Women Mathematicians and Statisticians. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 262.

⁸ Employment Opportunities for Women in Science. Women's Bureau Bulletin (in preparation).

administrators, postmistresses, and managers and superintendents. Significant numbers of women are entering the insurance, real-estate, banking, and credit fields.

10. Women's Advancement

Women's advancement to high-level positions is a subject of keen interest, not only to women workers but also to educators, women's organizations, and those concerned with the Nation's future manpower needs. As our economy becomes increasingly complex, there is need for more and more high-caliber persons to shoulder administrative and managerial responsibilities. A significant number of women now fill top-level positions successfully. Numerous examples can be found in the field of management, among business proprietors, in most professions, and in government. Nevertheless, the proportion of women is usually much smaller in the upper levels of an occupation than in the occupation as a whole—even in their traditional fields of work. For example, in the library field, women fill a very large proportion of the staff positions but a very small proportion of the administrative positions.

Likewise, there are in the educational field relatively fewer women among administrators than among teachers. However, a survey of over 2,000 urban school systems, made by the National Education Association in 1955-56,⁹ indicated that the situation varied by location and type of school. At least a few women were employed as elementary-school principals in about 70 percent of the school districts, as junior-high-school principals in nearly 12 percent, and as high-school principals in about 6 percent. Women also held about 43 percent of other administrative positions, which included those of supervisors, directors, and assistant superintendents.

In elementary schools, almost nine-tenths of the teachers and about half of the principals are women. The proportion of women principals reported in the 1955-56 survey ranged from 38 percent in small urban school districts (2,500 to 5,000 population) to 62 percent in large districts (500,000 and over population). In secondary schools, where women fill about half the teaching positions, they were reported as comprising about 9 percent of the principals in junior-high schools and about 5 percent in senior-high schools. Again, the percentages of women principals were highest in the largest school districts.

Women constituted over one-fourth of the administrators in colleges and universities but were concentrated in women's colleges, ac-

⁹ Status of Urban School Systems, 1955-56. National Education Association.

ording to a study by the National Council of Administrative Women in Education (1952). Women held about three-fourths of the administrative positions in women's colleges and one-fifth in coeducational colleges. Positions in which two-thirds or more of the persons were women included dean of women, director of food service, director of residence, and head librarian. Among other college administrative positions, women were from one-third to one-half of the registrars, bursars, auditors or accountants, and directors of student guidance, health, student activities, practice teaching, alumni contact, and student personnel. Over nine-tenths of the women's colleges and about two-thirds of the coeducational colleges had women members on their governing boards. However, women were less than one-tenth of all board members in coeducational colleges having any women on the board, and just over one-third of those in women's colleges.

Industry Groups

11. Distribution of Women by Industry

About 95 percent of all employed women were working in nonagricultural industries in 1957, and almost two-thirds of these were engaged in the distribution of goods and services. Among the 7.7 million women providing services, almost 4 million were employed in professional services, about $3\frac{1}{4}$ million in personal services, and almost half a million in business services and recreation and entertainment. In each of these branches except personal services, women's employment has increased markedly since 1940; in that branch, it has been affected by the decline in the number of domestic workers. In relation to total employment expansion in each of the services, women have made their greatest gain in the business services, with their proportion rising from one-tenth of the workers in 1940 to two-tenths in 1958. Of the women engaged in the distribution of goods, about 4 million were employed in retail trade and almost $\frac{1}{2}$ million in wholesale trade.

Manufacturing industries, also large employers of women workers, had about 4.5 million women employees in 1957. In finance, insurance, and real-estate establishments, which employed about $1\frac{1}{4}$ million women in 1957, the proportion of women increased from one-third of the workers in 1940 to one-half in 1957. Of the remaining major industry groups, each employed fewer than 1 million women workers (table 7).

12. Women as Factory Workers

More than one-fifth of all employed women are working in manufacturing industries, and they constitute about one-fourth of all manu-

Table 7.—MAJOR INDUSTRY GROUP OF EMPLOYED WOMEN: 1957, 1950, AND 1940

Industry group	Number (in thou- sands) 1957	Percent distribution			Percent of all workers		
		1957	1950	1940	1957	1950	1940
Total.....	20, 592	100	100	100	32	29	26
Services.....	7, 736	38	36	45	58	55	59
Professional and related..	3, 975	19	16	17	59	55	57
Personal.....	3, 284	16	18	26	73	71	73
Business.....	336	2	1	1	21	13	10
Entertainment and recre- ation.....	141	1	1	1	28	24	21
Manufacturing.....	4, 474	22	23	21	25	25	23
Retail trade.....	3, 967	19	20	17	40	36	31
Finance, insurance, real estate..	1, 270	6	5	4	49	43	33
Public administration.....	853	4	4	3	29	25	20
Transportation, communica- tion.....	847	4	4	3	18	15	12
Agriculture.....	806	4	4	5	15	10	6
Wholesale trade.....	459	2	3	2	18	19	16
Construction.....	138	1	(¹)	(¹)	4	2	2
Mining.....	42	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	7	2	1

¹ Less than 1 percent.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports.

facturing employees. Their numbers include women working in factory offices, as well as production workers. The relative importance of these two groups varies considerably from industry to industry. In some of the primary-metal industries, less than half of the women manufacturing employees have production jobs, while in the apparel and textile industries, more than nine-tenths do.

Manufacturing industries are generally considered in terms of two major divisions: Durable-goods industries and nondurable-goods industries. As indicated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in its quarterly report on the numbers of women in manufacturing industries, almost 2.5 million women, about 61 percent of all women factory workers were employed by nondurable (consumer) goods industries in January 1958 (table 8). This division was relatively more popular for women than men, as it covered only about 43 percent of all factory workers. Industries that manufacture apparel, textiles, and food products had the largest numbers of women workers. In two industries—textiles and tobacco manufacturing—there were fewer

women than in 1950. Women's total employment in nondurable-goods industries, which has had a small net decrease since 1950, shows a

Table 8.—WOMEN IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES: 1958 AND 1950

Industry	1958					
	Number of women	Percent change from 1950	Percent distribution		Percent of all workers	
			1958	1950	1958	1950
Total manufacturing.....	4, 094, 200	+9	100	100	26	27
NONDURABLE GOODS						
Subtotal.....	2, 496, 500	-1	61	67	37	38
Apparel, finished textile products.....	924, 400	+1	23	24	79	76
Textile mill products.....	406, 900	-26	10	15	43	43
Food and kindred products.....	334, 900	+1	8	9	24	24
Printing, publishing, and allied industries.....	235, 800	+22	6	5	27	27
Leather and leather products....	190, 200	+5	5	5	51	46
Chemicals and allied products..	148, 400	+29	4	3	18	17
Paper and allied products.....	121, 000	+12	3	3	21	23
Rubber products.....	65, 000	+8	2	2	25	26
Tobacco manufactures.....	52, 200	-3	1	1	57	57
Products of petroleum and coal..	17, 700	+64	(¹)	(¹)	7	5
DURABLE GOODS						
Subtotal.....	1, 597, 700	+29	39	33	18	17
Electrical machinery.....	430, 400	+42	11	8	37	38
Machinery (except electrical) ..	214, 700	+27	5	4	14	13
Transportation equipment.....	209, 600	+96	5	3	12	10
Fabricated metal products.....	186, 600	+12	5	4	17	19
Instruments and related products.....	110, 500	+44	3	2	34	33
Stone, clay, and glass products..	81, 400	+4	2	2	16	16
Primary-metal industries.....	72, 100	+21	2	2	6	5
Furniture and fixtures.....	61, 500	+9	2	1	17	16
Lumber and wood products (except furniture).....	43, 600	-13	1	1	7	7
Ordnance and accessories.....	21, 400	+386	1	(¹)	18	17
Miscellaneous manufacturing industries.....	165, 900	-1	4	4	37	40

¹ Less than 1 percent.

Source: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employment and Earnings. Figures are for January 1958 and March 1950.

strong seasonal influence, dropping somewhat in April and July and rising in October.

The durable-goods industries employed about 1.6 million women in 1958—about one-quarter of a million more than in 1950. Among the individual industries in this division, only lumber and wood products had fewer women workers in 1958 than 1950. The overall gain stems largely from two main factors: Industrial expansion in response to economic and military needs has brought many new jobs. And secondly, developments in industrial technology have introduced new processes which tend to lighten the physical demands on the worker and thus open more industrial jobs to women. As a result, durable-goods industries employed 39 percent of the women factory workers in 1958, in contrast to 33 percent in 1950. Largest employer of women in this industry division is the electrical-machinery industry, which includes firms manufacturing radio and television sets, telephones, electric lamps, electric measuring instruments, and household appliances.

13. Women on Farms

Of almost 7 million women living on farms in the United States in April 1958, slightly over one-fourth (1,903,000) were in the labor force (table 9). The numbers in both these groups were smaller than they had been in April 1950—as might be expected in view of the steady decline in farm population since 1933. About 37 percent of

TABLE 9.—EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN LIVING ON FARMS, 1958

<i>Employment status</i>	<i>Number of women 14 years and over</i>	<i>Percent distrib- ution</i>	<i>Percent change 1950 to 1958</i>
Women living on farms.....	6, 888, 000	100	- 17. 9
In labor force.....	1, 903, 000	28	- 1. 1
Employed.....	1, 792, 000	26	- 3. 2
Agriculture.....	703, 000	10	- 21. 5
Nonagriculture.....	1, 089, 000	16	+ 14. 0
Unemployed.....	111, 000	2	+ 52. 1
Not in labor force.....	4, 985, 000	72	- 22. 9

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Farm Population Report, P-27, No. 25.

the women workers residing on farms in April 1958 were employed wholly or primarily in agriculture; the majority of women in this group were unpaid family workers. Another 57 percent were employed in nonagricultural industries and 6 percent were unemployed. In April 1950, about 47 percent had been engaged in agricultural work and slightly less than 50 percent in nonagricultural work. Principal factors explaining the move away from farm dwellings and farmwork have been the lower manpower requirements in agriculture, the increased employment opportunities in urban areas, and the relatively higher financial returns from many types of nonfarm work.

The urbanization of the population has been a factor in the increase of women's employment in the past 2 decades. Just as some persons have migrated to the city in search of jobs, so other women who have moved to the city with their families have entered the labor market because jobs were more readily available. Evidence that women's participation in the labor force is influenced to some extent by their location of residence is the fact that 28 percent of farm women were in the April 1958 labor force, compared with 36 percent of all women.

In April 1958, about 855,000 women were employed in agricultural industries. Of these, 126,000 were farmers and farm managers, and 688,000 were farm laborers and foremen. The remainder were performing a variety of clerical, sales, or service operations for agricultural firms. These figures are rather low for agricultural employment, as the peak periods of farm activity come in June and October. The lowest period is during the winter—with employment rising fairly steadily from March through June, when crops are planted and cultivated. Following a slight midsummer lull, fall harvesting brings farm employment to a secondary peak in September and October. During 1957 women's agricultural employment reached 1,860,000 in June and 1,546,000 in October. Fluctuations in farm employment are much greater than in nonagricultural employment and are one of the primary reasons for the seasonal pattern of the labor force as a whole. Women's employment shares in these fluctuations, as many housewives and schoolgirls enter the labor force temporarily to take summer jobs on farms.

14. Women in the Railroad Industry

The railroad industry, which has annually employed from 1½ to 3 million workers during the past 2 decades, has traditionally had few women employees. Part of the reason for this is that most railroad jobs are physically strenuous and not considered suitable for women. In the years just prior to World War II, there were about 50,000 to 60,000 women railroad employees (about 3 percent of the

total), according to a recent study made by the United States Railroad Retirement Board. Women's employment in the industry reached a peak 269,000 in 1944, or 9 percent of the total, and then dropped sharply at the end of the war. In 1955, about 99,000 women comprised 6 percent of all railroad employees. They represented a rising proportion of total railroad employment—primarily because technological changes have decreased employment in several jobs filled by men but to date have not greatly affected clerical and office jobs, to which most women railroad employees are assigned.

With many women first entering the railroad industry between 1941 and 1945, it is not surprising that women's average (median) length of service in the industry amounted to 9 years in 1955. Median age of the women employees was 40 years—about 4 years lower than that of railroad men.

At least two-thirds of the women railroad employees have office jobs, according to the Railroad Retirement Board's study of 75,000 women employed by Class I railroads in 1955. Some of the nonoffice jobs filled by women include those of coach cleaners; section women; waitresses, cooks, and kitchen helpers; general laborers; and baggage, parcel-room, and station attendants (table 10).

Table 10.—WOMEN EMPLOYEES OF CLASS I RAILROADS: 1955

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number of women</i>	<i>Percent distri- bution</i>	<i>Percent of employees in occupation</i>
Total.....	75, 054	100	5
Clerks (B and C).....	24, 895	33	22
Stenographers and typists (B).....	12, 384	17	67
Mechanical-device operators.....	7, 339	10	70
Telephone-switchboard operators and office assistants.....	4, 438	6	67
Coach cleaners.....	2, 825	4	22
Stenographers and secretaries (A).....	2, 331	3	55
Janitors and cleaners.....	1, 734	2	24
Telegraphers, telephoners, and towermen....	1, 504	2	7
Section men.....	1, 427	2	1
Clerks and clerical specialists (A).....	1, 407	2	12
Messengers and office boys.....	1, 326	2	22
Waiters, camp cooks, kitchen helpers, etc....	1, 254	2	10
Clerk-telegraphers and clerk-typists.....	923	1	9
General laborers.....	876	1	3
Baggage, parcel-room, and station attendants..	755	1	6
Other occupations.....	9, 636	13	1

Source: U. S. Railroad Retirement Board. The Monthly Review, December 1957.

15. Women in the Federal Service

More than a half million women—about one-fourth of the total—are now working for the Federal Government, the largest single employer in the Nation. This number, about half as high as the World War II peak, is considerably above the prewar level of about 173,000 women. The gain is related largely to the Government's need to carry out its increased responsibilities and defense requirements, as well as to the Nation's expanding economy (table 11).

Table 11.—WOMEN IN THE FEDERAL SERVICE ¹
(Selected years between 1923 and 1957)

Year ²	Number of women	Women	
		Percent of total employees	Percent of women in D. C. area
1957.....	533, 802	25	17
1956.....	533, 318	24	18
1954.....	521, 945	24	19
1952 (Korean war).....	601, 215	25	19
1950.....	410, 327	23	24
1947 (return of war veterans).....	444, 194	24	22
1944 (World War II peak).....	1, 110, 545	37	15
1939.....	172, 733	19	29
1923.....	81, 486	16	34

¹ Civilian employees in continental United States.

² June figures are shown for each year except 1944 (July), 1956 (December), and 1957 (December).

Source: U. S. Civil Service Commission.

The variety of jobs held by women in Federal service is extensive.¹⁰ About 375,000 women, almost 85 percent of the women white-collar workers, were in clerical and related jobs in 1954—with the largest numbers employed as clerk-typists, clerk-stenographers, and secretaries. Another 16,000 women, about 4 percent, held jobs which may be described as semiprofessional, semiscientific, or semitechnical. About 33,000 women, slightly over 7 percent, had professional or scientific jobs requiring either a college degree or its equivalent. Women in higher level positions who determine policy or administer programs of the Federal Government represented somewhat less than 1 percent of all women white-collar workers. The remaining 4 percent of the women were miscellaneous workers, such as technicians

¹⁰ Government Careers for Women: A Study of the Salaries and Positions of Women White-Collar Employees in the Federal Service, 1954. Women's Bureau, 1957.

and specialists. (See chapter 2, table 22, for numbers of women and average salaries in selected occupations.)

16. Women in Public Office

Women administrators in the Federal Government have responsible positions as members of commissions and boards helping to determine Government policy, and as directors and deputy directors of agencies or divisions within an agency responsible for carrying out major Government programs. Some top-level women also serve as advisers to executives or are experts in highly specialized fields. Among the top administrative positions which women held in the executive branch in mid-1958 were the Under Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the Treasurer of the United States, Director of the Passport Office, Chairman of the Subversive Activities Control Board, a Commissioner of the Patent Office, a Civil Service Commissioner, Director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Chief of the Children's Bureau, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor, and Assistant to the Secretary of Labor.

Other important positions held by women include Associate Press Secretary at the White House, Judge of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Deputy United States Commissioner General of the Brussels Universal and International Exhibition, and as United States representative on each of the following commissions of the United Nations: Human Rights Commission, Social Commission, and Status of Women Commission. Women have also served regularly in the United States Delegation to the UN General Assembly.

In the legislative branch of the Federal Government, 1 woman was elected to the Senate and 15 women to the House of Representatives in the 85th Session of Congress. The Congresswomen are about evenly divided between the two political parties.¹¹

An all-time high of 321 women were in State legislatures in 1957—33 in upper houses and 288 in lower houses. There was at least one woman in the legislature of every State except Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin. Thirty-eight women in 21 States had achieved statewide elective positions, including Secretary of State (6), member of the State Board of Education (8), State Superintendent of Public Instruction (4), State Auditor (4), and Trustees of the State University (4).

A considerable number of women have top-level appointive positions in the States. They serve in Governors' cabinets, as assistants and deputies to department heads, and as members of State boards

¹¹ For a biographical sketch of each woman in Congress, see *Women of the 85th Congress*. Women's Bureau, 1957.

and commissions. In addition, it is estimated that about 18,000 women serve in such county positions as circuit and county clerk, tax collector, auditor, treasurer, and superintendent of schools. In municipal posts, where about 10,000 women hold responsible jobs, there are significant numbers of women city clerks and chief finance officers and a few women mayors and city managers.¹²

17. Women in the Armed Services

Women are accepted for active duty in the four services of the Armed Forces of the United States. Members of the Women's Army Corps, popularly referred to as Wacs, have a minimum enlistment period of 2 years. Those in the Navy, the WAVES, enlist for at least 4 years. The WAF (women in the Air Force) and the Women Marines enlist for at least 3 years. Nurses, dietitians, and occupational or physical therapists are commissioned to a special branch in each of the services (except the Marine Corps, whose medical services are provided by the Navy).

In January 1958, there were 31,099 women on active duty in the armed services. They included 20,152 enlisted women, who constituted about 1 percent of total enlisted personnel, and 10,947 women officers, who were 3 percent of all military officers. About four-fifths of the women officers were nurses and other medical personnel. Women's peak participation in the Armed Forces came in May 1945, when there was a total of 266,184 women in the four above military services. Of these, 183,484 were enlisted women; 67,507, nurses and other medical personnel; and 15,193 nonmedical officers. In addition, at that time, there were about 10,000 enlisted women and 1,000 women officers in the Coast Guard (SPAR).

As in civilian life, enlisted women in the Armed Forces are more likely to have clerical jobs than any other kind. They serve as general clerks, typists, stenographers, file clerks, and accounting-machine operators. Some are promoted to supervisory jobs, such as office managers and personnel experts. Others are assigned as teletype or switchboard operators, as chauffeurs, and in food services, radio maintenance, repair and cleaning of clothing, entertainment, information, intelligence, weather observation, and other technical operations.¹³

¹² More detailed information is available from the Women's Division of the Republican National Committee and from the Office of Women's Activities of the Democratic National Committee.

¹³ See *Careers for Women in the Armed Forces*. U. S. Department of Defense in cooperation with the Women's Bureau.

18. Women in the Foreign Service

A total of 2,644 women served in the Foreign Service of the United States in February 1958. They equaled about one-third of all Foreign Service employees. Top position held by a woman was that of Ambassador to Norway—the only woman among 76 chiefs of mission. Other Foreign Service officers included 342 women, somewhat less than one-tenth of the total. Most of the women in this group were Secretaries, Counselors, and political officers in embassies and legations (table 12).

TABLE 12.—FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL, BY RANK, 1958

Rank	Total	Women		Men	
		Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Total.....	8, 032	2, 644	100	5, 388	100
Foreign Service officers: ¹					
Chief of Mission.....	76	1	(²)	75	1
Career Minister and class 1....	233	1	(²)	232	4
Class 2 and 3.....	1, 054	18	1	1, 036	19
Class 4 and 5.....	1, 415	129	5	1, 286	24
Class 6 to 8.....	1, 425	195	7	1, 230	23
Foreign Service staff:					
Class 1 and 2.....	64	1	(²)	63	1
Class 3 to 5.....	134	8	(²)	126	2
Class 6 to 8.....	334	104	4	230	4
Class 9 to 11.....	1, 659	917	35	742	14
Class 12 to 14.....	1, 638	1, 270	48	368	7

¹ Includes 746 Foreign Reserve Officers (38 women).

² Less than one percent.

Source: U. S. Department of State. Analysis of American Personnel Activity. February 28, 1958.

Three-fifths of the staff positions in the Foreign Service were held by women. They were employed in a variety of specialized occupations, including clerk, stenographer, typist, and secretary, as well as assistant attaché, liaison officer, fiscal officer, consular attaché, administrative assistant, librarian, and political and research analyst.

Characteristics Affecting Women's Working Life

19. Why Women Work

Whether or not a woman works outside the home depends on numerous economic and social factors. When a group of women workers

themselves were questioned by the Women's Bureau ¹⁴ about why they were working, most of them gave financial reasons. Practically all the women workers without husbands were supporting themselves and sometimes dependents as well. Most of the married women workers were contributing to essential living expenses. Some were working to raise family living standards and some were helping to send their children to college. Very few of the women were working just for the satisfaction of having a job or for the purpose of keeping their skills from getting rusty.

In addition to economic considerations, a woman's decision about paid employment is influenced by such personal factors as her age, marital status, and family responsibilities. These affect not only her decision on seeking employment, but also on how long to remain at work, on whether to reenter the labor force when family responsibilities decrease, and on when to retire. In recent years, new technological procedures, modes of living, and social customs have resulted in a striking increase in the number of women workers. In the following sections, consideration is given to several characteristics of working women which show the changes that are taking place—affecting not only the work-life pattern of individual women but also the total size and composition of the woman work force.

Ages of Women Workers

20. Rise in Average Age

The importance of older women in the work force has increased considerably in the last 2 decades. In 1940, women 45 years of age and over equaled just 22 percent of all women workers; by April 1958, their proportion had almost doubled—having jumped to 38 percent of the total. Part of this development stems from the fact that the country now has more women in this age group. But this is not the whole explanation, as the increased number of mature women in the labor force has far exceeded their gain in the population (table 13).

While the rise in the age of women workers has been a continuous one since the turn of the century, the change has been much more rapid since 1940 than previously. The average (median) age of all women workers rose from 26 years in 1900 to 32 years in 1940 and then to 40 years in 1958. Pertinent events which took place during the earlier part of this period include reforms in school-attendance and child-labor laws, requiring children to stay in school longer and raising the

¹⁴ Women Workers and Their Dependents. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 239, 1952.

Table 13.—AGE DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN THE POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE, 1958 AND 1940

Age	1958		1940	
	Popula- tion	Labor force	Popula- tion	Labor force
Total (percent).....	100	100	100	100
14 to 44 years:				
14 to 17 years.....	8	4	10	3
18 to 24 years.....	12	16	17	28
25 to 34 years.....	19	19	21	28
35 to 44 years.....	19	23	18	19
45 years and over:				
45 to 54 years.....	16	22	15	13
55 to 64 years.....	12	12	10	7
65 years and over.....	13	4	9	2

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-57, No. 190.

minimum age at which young people might go to work. In 1938, the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act established a minimum age of 16 years for employment by companies engaged in interstate commerce or industry. By curtailing the number of young people in the labor force, these actions tended to raise the average age of women workers.

World War II also contributed to the higher average age of women workers, as large numbers of mature women entered the labor force to assist in the war effort. By 1945, the average age of women workers was 34 years. After the war, the larger labor requirements of our expanding economy enabled many of the mature women to remain on the job and encouraged others to join them.

The higher age trend is likely to continue for another decade, since the women now entering the labor force are members of the relatively small generation born during the 1930's, when birth rates were low. This scarcity of young workers, both men and women, improves the job prospects of older workers for the next few years. By the 1960's, however, the generation of war and postwar babies will be entering the labor market in large numbers. Their numerical strength might be expected to lower the average age of women workers. But since the larger labor force predicted for the 1960's is also expected to include many more women in the group 45 years of age and over, the average age of women workers may not be greatly altered during this period.

21. Variation in Labor-Force Participation

Age is one of several important factors which influence women when they decide whether or not to work outside the home. The extent of labor-force participation is usually highest among young women and drops somewhat among women age 25 to 34, many of whom leave the labor force because of homemaking responsibilities. In April 1958, however, the percentages of workers among young women 18 and 19 years of age (47 percent) and 20 to 24 years of age (46 percent) were exceeded slightly by that (48 percent) of women 45 to 54 years of age, many of whom had returned to work when their family responsibilities decreased. The proportion fell to 36 percent for women 55 to 64 years old and to 11 percent among those 65 and over. This sharp drop reflects the large numbers of women who retire when they qualify for old-age insurance or retirement benefits (table 14).

Table 14.—TREND IN LABOR-FORCE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN, BY AGE

Age	Women workers as percent of woman population ¹				
	1958	1955	1950	1945	1940
Women, 14 years and over.....	36	34	32	37	28
14 to 17 years.....	16	15	17	26	8
18 and 19 years.....	47	44	46	67	43
20 to 24 years.....	46	44	45	55	48
25 to 34 years.....	36	35	34	40	36
35 to 44 years.....	43	41	38	41	29
45 to 54 years.....	48	43	37	37	24
55 to 64 years.....	36	33	28	27	18
65 years and over.....	11	11	10	10	7

¹ Statistics are for March in 1940 and for April in remaining years.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports.

Striking increases have occurred since 1940 in the proportions of women engaged in gainful employment. The greatest change was among women 45 to 54 years of age—with the proportion of women workers rising from 24 to 48 percent between 1940 and 1958. Also noteworthy is the increase from 18 to 36 percent among women 55 to 64 years of age. The slight decline since 1940 in the proportion of workers among women 20 to 24 years of age probably results from the large numbers who are going to college and the earlier ages at which some are marrying and starting their families.

22. Mature Women Workers

Since a major source of new workers in the labor force during the last decade has been women past 35 years of age, it is interesting to consider the types of jobs they have been obtaining. Special studies made by the Bureau of the Census indicate that the total number of women workers 35 years and over rose from less than 9 million in 1948 to almost 13 million in 1956. About one-third of the increase was in clerical jobs; one-sixth, in service jobs (excluding private-household work), and another sixth, in jobs as operatives in factories. Among the many other types of jobs obtained by mature women, the most significant numerically were professional, sales, and private-household work. In relation to other women workers, mature women made their greatest gains between 1948 and 1956 as sales workers, rising from 50 to 68 percent of all employed women in this field.

Table 15.—MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUP OF EMPLOYED WOMEN 35 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, 1956

<i>Major occupational group</i>	<i>Women 35 years of age and over</i>		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent distribution</i>	<i>Percent of all women in each group</i>
Total.....	12, 356, 000	100	61
Professional workers.....	1, 335, 000	11	63
Managers, officials, proprietors.....	803, 000	6	86
Clerical workers.....	2, 852, 000	23	47
Sales workers.....	1, 011, 000	8	68
Service workers (except household).....	1, 663, 000	13	64
Operatives.....	2, 270, 000	18	64
Private-household workers.....	1, 381, 000	11	65
Craftsmen and foremen.....	201, 000	2	(¹)
Farmers, farm managers.....	180, 000	1	(¹)
Farm laborers and foremen.....	614, 000	5	74
Laborers (except farm and mine).....	46, 000	(²)	(¹)

¹ Percent not shown where base is less than 225,000.

² Less than 1 percent.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 75.

As women 35 years of age and over comprised 61 percent of all women workers in 1956, it is not surprising that they constituted a majority of the women workers in most occupational groups. The single exception (among the occupations studied by the Bureau of

the Census) were women clerical workers, of whom 47 percent were 35 years and over. The highest proportions of women 35 and over were employed in three occupational groups: Managers, officials, and proprietors (86 percent); farm laborers and foremen (74 percent); and sales workers (68 percent) (table 15).

Marital Status

The increased tendency for married women to assume the dual role of homemaker and wage earner has been an important factor in the recent expansion of women's employment. Together with the higher marriage rates during and after World War II, it accounts for much of the rise in the number of women workers. But despite this significant change in social attitudes, the likelihood of a woman's being part of the labor force is still affected by her marital status.

23. Distribution by Marital Groups

Marriage rates, which started to rise during World War II, reached their peak about 1945 to 1948—their highest since the turn of the century. As a result, the proportion of single women aged 14 years and over fell from 28 percent in 1940 to only 19 percent in 1957. Another factor related to the increased work force of married women is that both men and women are getting married at an earlier age. In 1890, the average (median) age of women at first marriage was 22 years; in 1940, 21.5 years; and in 1956, 20.1 years. (The comparable ages for men in these three periods were 26.1 years, 24.3 years, and 22.9 years.)

The great increase of married women in the labor force has resulted from a steady gain during the past 2 decades. In 1940, married women (with husbands present) accounted for one-third of the female labor force; in 1950, almost half; and in 1957, more than half. Conversely, the proportion of single women fell from about one-half in 1940 to one-third in 1950, and to one-fourth in 1957. While the number of other women workers (widowed, divorced, or married with husband absent) has also increased since 1940, their proportion among all women workers (about one-fifth) is approximately the same throughout the 17-year period (table 16).

24. Proportion of Single and Married Women Who Work

The extent of labor-force participation among single women (14 years of age and over) has remained stable during the last 2 decades—

Table 16.—MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE:
MARCH 1957 AND 1940

(Women 14 Years of Age and Over)

Marital status	Number of women 1957	Percent dis- tribution		Change 1940-1957	
		1957	1940	Number	Percent
POPULATION					
Total.....	61, 863, 000	100	100	+11, 314, 000	+ 22
Single.....	11, 487, 000	19	28	-2, 449, 000	-18
Married, husband present..	38, 940, 000	63	56	+10, 423, 000	+37
Other ¹	11, 436, 000	18	16	+3, 339, 000	+41
LABOR FORCE					
Total.....	21, 524, 000	100	100	+7, 684, 000	+56
Single.....	5, 378, 000	25	49	-1, 332, 000	-20
Married, husband present..	11, 529, 000	54	30	+7, 329, 000	+175
Other ¹	4, 617, 000	21	21	+1, 687, 000	+58

¹ Includes women who are widowed, divorced, or married with husband absent.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 76.

aside from the temporary rise during World War II. From a level of 48 percent in 1940, the proportion of workers among single women rose to 59 percent in 1944 and then dropped back again to 47 percent in 1957 (table 17). Among the smaller group of single women 20 to 64 years of age, the same proportion (77 percent) were in the labor force in 1957 as in 1940.

The most remarkable change in women's participation in paid employment has occurred among married women (with husbands present). In 1940, 15 percent of these women were at work; by 1957, the percentage had doubled. As might be expected, this was still a much lower rate of labor participation than prevailed among other marital groups. Nevertheless, because of their predominance in the population (nearly two-thirds of all women 14 years of age and over are married and living with their husbands), married women make up more than half of the woman labor force.

Of the 2.3 million married women whose husbands are absent from home, over one-half are in the labor force. This exceeds the percentages of women in other marital groups, as it usually has except during wartime and early postwar years. Some of the absent husbands are in the Armed Forces, but most are absent or separated from their wives

Table 17.—TREND IN LABOR-FORCE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN, BY MARITAL STATUS

(Women 14 Years of Age and Over)

Marital status	Women workers as percent of woman population ¹				
	1957	1955	1950	1944 ²	1940
All women workers	35	34	31	35	27
Single	47	46	51	59	48
Married	31	29	25	26	17
Husband present	30	28	24	22	15
Husband absent	52	51	47	52	53
Widowed and divorced	38	36	36	36	32

¹ Statistics are for March in 1940, 1950, and 1957; for April in 1944 and 1955.² Information not available for 1945.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports.

for other reasons, such as separation by choice, residence in an institution, or employment away from home.

Of the 9 million widowed and divorced women in the population, slightly less than two-fifths were at work in 1957. Labor-force participation in this group has increased moderately since 1940.

25. Marital Status and Age Groups

When the labor-force participation of single and married women is analyzed in terms of age groups, it is evident that the probability of their working is generally affected more by their marital status than by their age. Differences in participation are most noticeable among women from 20 to 34 years of age—when women are most likely to have young children needing their care. For example, in the age group 25 to 29 years, 78 percent of the single women were at work in 1957 but only 26 percent of the married women (husband present). After age 35, the differences tend to decrease, as many married women seek paid employment. Among women 45 to 54 years of age, the percentage of married women in the labor force rose to 37 percent (the peak for married women), while the percentage of single women remained near its usual high level—78 percent (table 18).

In every age group starting with 20 years, the percentage of single women in the labor force is consistently highest and the percentage of married women lowest, with other women somewhere between (and

usually closer to the percentage for single women). Among girls under age 20, those most likely to work are the young girls who have married and lost their husbands.

The percentages of married women (husband present) in the labor force resembled those of single women more in the youngest and oldest age groups than in others. This suggests that the presence of a woman in the labor force during her earlier and later years is affected more by such factors as age, education, and health than by marital status.

Table 18.—LABOR PARTICIPATION RATES OF WOMEN, BY AGE AND MARITAL STATUS, 1957

Age	Women workers as percent of woman population		
	Single	Married ¹	Other
Total.....	47	30	40
14 to 19 years.....	27	24	36
20 to 24 years.....	75	30	53
25 to 29 years.....	78	26	60
30 to 34 years.....	82	28	64
35 to 44 years.....	82	36	69
45 to 54 years.....	78	37	66
55 to 64 years.....	67	25	48
65 to 74 years.....	33	7	20
75 years and over.....	11	3	3

¹ With husband present.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 76.

Of the more than 7 million increase in married women workers between 1940 and 1957, the largest group—over 3 million—were 45 to 64 years of age. They represented a 348-percent gain over 1940. Also particularly noteworthy is the approximately 200-percent increase between 1940 and 1957 of married women workers in two other age groups: 35 to 44 years, and 65 years and over. The number of women workers in these age groups increased to a much greater degree than the total population of married women (table 19).

26. Occupations of Single and Married Women

Even though clerical workers were the predominant occupational group among women workers in each of the three major marital groups in March 1957, there were significant differences in the occu-

Table 19.—AGE OF MARRIED WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE, 1957 AND 1940

Age	Number of married women workers ¹		Percent increase 1940-1957 of married women in—	
	1957	1940	Labor force	Popula- tion
Total.....	11, 529, 000	4, 200, 000	175	37
14 to 19 years.....	193, 000	70, 000	176	22
20 to 24 years.....	1, 013, 000	530, 000	91	18
25 to 34 years.....	2, 723, 000	1, 510, 000	80	26
35 to 44 years.....	3, 487, 000	1, 150, 000	203	39
45 to 64 years.....	3, 939, 000	880, 000	348	43
65 years and over.....	174, 000	60, 000	190	87

¹ With husband present.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 76 and No. 22.

pations of single and married women (table 20). That relatively more single women than other women workers have clerical jobs may be related to the fact that a majority of single women workers are under 25 years of age and many are employed in entry clerical positions, which require relatively little previous training and have correspondingly lower pay. In addition, most single women are able to accept full-time, year-round employment, as demanded in most clerical jobs. The percentage of single women in professional and technical

Table 20.—MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUP OF EMPLOYED WOMEN, BY MARITAL STATUS, 1957

Major occupational group	Total	Single	Married ¹	Other
Total.....	100	100	100	100
Professional workers.....	12	17	11	9
Managers, officials, proprietors.....	5	2	6	7
Clerical workers.....	30	40	28	22
Sales workers.....	7	6	8	6
Service workers (except household).....	13	9	13	19
Operatives.....	17	11	19	17
Private-household workers.....	11	11	7	17
Other occupations.....	5	3	7	4

¹ With husband present.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 76.

positions also exceeds that of women in other marital groups, possibly because many more single women with considerable education and continuous work experience are able to qualify for these jobs.

Among married women living with their husbands in 1957, the largest group aside from clerical workers was that of the operatives. The relatively high popularity of operative jobs among married women may stem from the small amount of previous work experience required in many of these jobs and the relatively higher pay.

Among women workers who have lost their husbands, there were large proportions of service workers employed both in private households and in other types of service establishments. As many women in this group must seek work on short notice, they frequently accept service jobs, which are usually the most readily available type of work.

As married women (husband present) constituted over half of all women workers in 1957, they were also predominant in each of the major occupational groups. However, married women accounted for less than half of women professional workers and less than two-fifths

Table 21.—MARITAL STATUS OF EMPLOYED WOMEN IN MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS, 1957

<i>Major occupational group</i>	<i>Total women workers</i>	<i>Marital status of women</i>		
		<i>Single</i>	<i>Married</i> ¹	<i>Other</i>
Total (percent)-----	100	25	54	21
Professional workers-----	100	36	48	16
Managers, officials, proprietors-----	100	11	62	27
Clerical workers-----	100	33	51	16
Sales workers-----	100	22	61	17
Service workers (except household)-----	100	17	53	30
Operatives-----	100	17	61	22
Private-household workers-----	100	27	38	35
Other occupations-----	100	15	69	16

¹ With husband present.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 76.

of private-household workers. On the other hand, married women had above-average representation in three occupational groups: operatives; managers, officials, or proprietors; and sales workers (table 21). Wives of proprietors are frequently in business with their husbands; and many married women interested in part-time employment take jobs as saleswomen.

Family Status of Women Workers

27. Types of Families

There were almost 43½ million families in the United States in 1957—with husband-wife families forming more than 85 percent of the total. Slightly over 10 percent of the families had a woman as head, and the remaining were families (other than married couples) headed by a man.

In addition to these related family groups, there were about 5¾ million women (and 4 million men) classed as “unrelated individuals” who were not living with relatives. Over 4 million of these women had their own homes or apartments and were living independently as “primary individuals.” Almost two-thirds were widows and over four-fifths were 45 years of age or over. The remaining group of unrelated individuals were roomers, boarders, hotel guests, resident employees, and inmates of institutions (including special schools and homes). More than half of these women were single, and more than half were 45 years or over.

Husband-wife families are likely to be larger than other types of families. In 1957, there were 4 or more members in nearly half of these families and only in about one-fourth of other types of families. However, about one-fifth of all husband-wife families had just one additional member, and nearly one-third had no other member. In the latter group were many couples whose children were grown and no longer living with them, and many young couples who had no children. Of all husband-wife families, almost two-fifths had 2 or more children under 18 years of age.

Of the almost 4.4 million families in which a woman was the head, almost half had 2 members; almost one-fourth, 3; and the remaining, 4 or more. Fifty-eight percent of these women who were family heads in 1957 had no children of their own, but 25 percent had 2 or more children of their own. In the family group of many of these women were children who were related to them in other ways, as, for example, younger sisters, brothers, or grandchildren.

The women family heads were a somewhat older group than the wives. Almost two-thirds were 45 years of age or over; only one-tenth were under 30.

28. Employment of Women in Relation to Family Status

The extent to which women enter the labor force varies considerably with their family status. Women who are not part of a family group—the unrelated individuals—are more likely to work than

women living with their families, since the former must support themselves, unless they have independent means. In recent years, somewhat over half the women in this group have engaged in paid employment.

Another group of women with a high proportion of employed persons is that in which women are heads of families. About 47 percent of this group were in the labor force in 1957. In contrast, 30 percent of wives living with their husbands were working.

29. Working Wives

A record number of working wives—11.5 million—accounted for 53 percent of all women in the labor force in March 1957. About 10.8 million of this number had husbands who were also in the labor force and together they amounted to 28 percent of all married couples (38.9 million) in the population. This represents a remarkable increase over 1940, when working couples numbered 3 million, or 11 percent of all married couples. By 1950, the group had increased to 8 million and their proportion to 22 percent.

The 1957 labor force also included over two-thirds of a million working wives whose husbands did not work. Most of the husbands outside the labor force were permanently retired or disabled. Among families where the wife was not in the labor force—husbands and other family members worked in about 4 million families; only family members other than the husband and wife worked in about one-half million families; and no one worked in about 2¼ million families. Nevertheless, in slightly over half (almost 20 million) of all husband-wife families in 1957, the husband was the only earner.

More wives work when their husband's income is relatively low than when it is high. In March 1957, about one-third of the wives were working in those families where the husband's income was under \$5,000; about one-fourth, where it was between \$6,000 and \$7,000; and one-eighth, where it was \$10,000 and over (table 22). The highest proportion of working wives (two-fifths) was found among couples in which the husband was unemployed. Part-time employment was secured most frequently in families where the husband's annual income was very low (under \$2,000) or very high (\$10,000 or over). It is not surprising to find that there is relatively more part-time employment (and thus less full-time employment) among wives in the high-income groups. But in the low-income groups, possible explanations may be that many of these wives have children to care for, are in poor health, or have reached an advanced age. Some may also be engaged in domestic service or other types of work where part-time employment is usual.

Table 22.—LABOR-FORCE STATUS OF WIFE, BY INCOME OF HUSBAND, 1957

<i>Income of husband in 1956</i>	<i>Percent of wives in labor force, 1957</i>	<i>Percent distribution of employed wives</i>		
		<i>Total</i>	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>
Total.....	30	100	75	25
Under \$1,000.....	31	100	69	31
\$1,000 to \$1,999.....	29	100	69	31
\$2,000 to \$2,999.....	35	100	76	25
\$3,000 to \$3,999.....	36	100	79	21
\$4,000 to \$4,999.....	32	100	79	22
\$5,000 to \$5,999.....	29	100	75	25
\$6,000 to \$6,999.....	27	100	72	28
\$7,000 to \$9,999.....	21	100	73	27
\$10,000 and over.....	12	100	67	33

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 81.

Comparison of the occupations held by husbands and wives indicates that about one-third of them pursue similar lines of work. That the highest correlation for husband-wife jobs exists among those who are farmers is not surprising, since many farm wives have very few other job opportunities open to them. Also, about half of the wives of clerical workers had clerical jobs in March 1957, and over two-fifths of the wives of professional men were employed in professional work. The greatest difference in husband-wife jobs was indicated in the case of husbands who were employed as managers and officials and as sales workers. The generally low similarity between the jobs of husbands and wives stems primarily from the fact that the kinds of jobs held by most women in the labor force are still quite different from those of men (table 23).

30. Working Mothers

Of the 21½ million women in the labor force in March 1957, almost 7 million, or about one-third, had children under 18 years of age. About 4½ million of these women had children of school age only (6 to 17 years); and the others, about 2½ million, had one or more children of preschool age (under 6 years). The number of working mothers increased sharply during World War II and has continued to rise steadily since then. In 1940, they numbered only 1½ million (about one-tenth of all women workers) and by 1950 they exceeded 4½ million (about one-fourth). Most of 1957's working mothers were married women with husband present, but about 1.3 million women

Table 23.—OCCUPATION OF WIFE, BY OCCUPATION OF HUSBAND, MARCH 1957

Occupation of wife	Occupation of husband									
	Profes- sional workers	Managers and officials	Proprie- tors	Clerical workers	Sales workers	Service workers	Opera- tives	Crafts- men	Laborers	Farmers
Total.....	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Professional workers.....	42	16	7	13	16	6	4	9	4	8
Managers and officials.....	4	9	-----	3	6	4	3	4	2	(¹)
Proprietors.....	1	-----	26	-----	1	1	(¹)	1	(¹)	2
Clerical workers.....	39	42	27	51	43	22	23	32	18	8
Sales workers.....	6	9	17	6	14	7	8	9	5	4
Service workers (except house- hold).....	3	7	9	10	9	30	15	13	19	7
Operatives, craftswomen, labor- ers.....	4	13	12	13	10	18	36	27	25	12
Private-household workers....	2	2	2	3	1	13	9	5	24	9
Farmers.....	-----	1	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)	2	1	3	52

¹ Less than 1 percent.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 81.

were widowed, divorced, or separated from their husbands for other reasons (table 24).

Table 24.—WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE, BY MARITAL STATUS AND PRESENCE AND AGE OF CHILDREN, 1957

<i>Marital status and presence and age of children</i>	<i>Labor force</i>		<i>Percent distribution within marital group</i>
	<i>Number (in thousands)</i>	<i>Percent distribution</i>	
All women workers.....	21, 524	100	
Married women, husband present.....	11, 529	54	100
With no children under 18.....	5, 805	27	50
With children:			
6 to 17 only.....	3, 517	16	31
6 to 17 and under 6.....	1, 247	6	11
Under 6 only.....	961	4	8
All other women ever married.....	4, 617	21	100
With no children under 18.....	3, 353	16	73
With children:			
6 to 17 only.....	884	4	19
6 to 17 and under 6.....	167	1	4
Under 6 only.....	212	1	5
Single women.....	5, 378	25	-----

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 81.

Overall, about 1 of every 3 mothers with children under 18 years of age was working in 1957. But the ratio changed considerably when the ages of the children were taken into consideration. Among mothers with school-age children only, about 2 out of 5 were working. For those with some preschool children, the ratio was about 1 out of 5. There is little doubt that most mothers prefer, when possible, to stay at home to take care of their young children. Once the children reach school age, however, the employment of mothers rises markedly (table 25).

Mothers whose husbands are dead or absent from the home are generally subject to more severe economic pressures than are married women with husbands present. Although some receive other income,

such as social-security benefits for dependent children and veterans' benefits for dependents, many must work to support themselves and their children. Four-tenths of the mothers who are widowed, divorced, or separated are in the labor force, as compared with three-tenths of the mothers whose husbands are present. Of those having children under 6 years of age, 36 percent of the former group work, compared with 17 percent of the latter. Despite these major differences in extent of labor-force participation, however, both groups appear to be influenced by the state of family finances when they make their decisions regarding work outside the home. Among

Table 25.—EMPLOYMENT OF MOTHERS, MARCH 1957

<i>Group of mothers</i>	<i>Number of mothers (in thousands)</i>		<i>Percent of population in labor force</i>
	<i>Popula- tion</i>	<i>Labor force</i>	
All women with children under 18.....	50, 376	16, 146	32
Married, husband present.....	38, 940	11, 529	30
Other women ever married.....	11, 436	4, 617	40
Mothers with school-age children only ¹	11, 011	4, 401	40
Married, husband present.....	9, 599	3, 517	37
Other women ever married.....	1, 412	884	63
Mothers with preschool children ²	14, 073	2, 587	18
Married, husband present.....	13, 016	2, 208	17
Other women ever married.....	1, 057	379	36

¹ Includes mothers with some children 6 to 17 years but none younger.

² Includes mothers with some children under 6 years (with or without children 6 to 17).

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 81.

mothers (husband present) 20 to 44 years of age, the largest proportions in the labor force were those whose husbands earned less than \$4,000 a year. As the husband's income rose, the labor-force participation of the wife dropped. Since more than fourth-fifths of all working mothers are living with their husbands, it can be concluded that most mothers who are working are doing so to help pay living expenses.

Working Life of Women

31. Predominant Work Patterns

The differing effects that marriage, children, widowhood, and divorce have in determining women's participation in the labor force indicate that the work pattern of women is much more complex than that of men. Most women work sometime during their lives, whether they marry or not. But marriage and the presence of children tend to curtail their employment, while widowhood, divorce, and the decrease of family responsibilities tend to attract them back into the labor force. As indicated from the preceding statistics on women's characteristics and from a special Bureau of Labor Statistics study on work-life expectancy,¹⁵ several major work patterns are found to exist among women.

For women who remain single, the work pattern is relatively simple and bears a strong resemblance to that for men. Women in this group, which includes about one-tenth of all women, work most of their lives. Those who enter the labor force before age 20 and remain unmarried, will probably continue to work for about 40 years—not quite as long as the 43-year average for men. These single women can expect to live an average of 13 years after retirement.

Women who marry, do not have children, and remain married (about one-tenth of all married women) have a work-life expectancy of 31 years—9 years less than single women. After age 35, these married women have an average of 20 more working years (about 7 years less than single women). Whereas most single women must depend on their own earnings for support, these women with husbands are in a better position to stop work when they have minor disabilities or for other reasons.

The length of the average working life for the large group of married women with children cannot be readily estimated because of the intermittent nature of their work careers. Like other women, they typically start to work immediately after finishing school—generally when they are 17 or 18 years old. After about 4 years, they typically quit work to get married and have children. Since the current tendency is for women to marry and have children at a younger age than formerly, many are in their early thirties when all their children are in school and their family responsibilities considerably decreased. Stimulated by such factors as economic pres-

¹⁵ Tables of Working Life for Women, 1950. U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletin No. 1204. The study is based on a "stationary population" and assumes that 1950 rates of birth, marriage, death, and labor-force participation will remain constant.

tures, lighter housekeeping tasks, and better job opportunities, those who return to the labor market have generally been out for about 8 to 10 years. If they reenter when they are 30 years of age and have no more children, they can expect to average another 23 years of work.

Among women who are widowed, divorced, or separated, a relatively large percentage return to the labor force after losing their husbands. After age 30, the length of time these women can expect to remain in the work force is slightly shorter than for single women but is more comparable to this group than any other.

Women generally retire at an earlier age than men. Their separation from the labor force for reasons other than marriage and child-bearing becomes significant for women after age 45. When family finances improve—because of higher earning power on the part of husbands or decreased family expenses—some wives leave the labor market. In the age group 55 to 60, about twice as large a proportion of women workers leave the labor force as that of men. Nevertheless, about 95 percent of the women workers of this age continue at work.

32. Women as Part-Time Workers

Many women who cannot work full time because of family and household responsibilities are willing and able to work on a part-time basis. During April 1958, almost 6½ million women—about 30 percent of the women workers in nonagricultural industries—were employed part time, that is, less than 35 hours a week (as defined by the Bureau of the Census). Women who were regular part-time workers equaled 22 percent of all nonfarm women workers.

Less than 4 percent of all women workers indicated they were usually employed full time but working part time in April 1958 for economic reasons such as slack work, repairs to plant or equipment, or inability to find full-time work. The remainder were working part time for personal or miscellaneous reasons.

Part-time employment has characterized the work pattern of many women for a long time. Many women who are married and have children value part-time work as a way of supplementing or increasing their income, utilizing their skills and abilities, and providing outside interests and contacts. To their employers, part-time work has such advantages as furnishing needed aid during peak business load and relief periods.

The extent to which women are in part-time jobs varies in different occupations. Part-time work exists most frequently among private-household workers, farm laborers and sales workers. According to a census survey made in 1956, relatively few women workers were employed part time in four occupational groups: Managerial and pro-

prietary, operative, clerical, and professional. A Women's Bureau study¹⁶ of more than 9,000 women part-time workers and over 1,000 employers of such workers (excluding manufacturing, household, and farm workers) indicated that establishments and organizations which frequently employ women on a part-time basis include retail stores, restaurants, educational groups, hospitals, social agencies, and libraries.

Part-time work is more likely to be sought by women than men, since women frequently need to combine a paid job with household cares. Over 60 percent of all those who usually work part time are women.

33. Labor Turnover

Since many part-time workers enter and leave the labor market in a relatively short period, women's employment tends to fluctuate more than men's. Economic forces, of course, have similar influences on the employment of both groups and are largely responsible for major changes. However, labor turnover, or movements of employees among firms, is generally somewhat higher for women than for men. In a study of average turnover rates for factory workers during the period from January 1950 to January 1955, women's hiring rates were about 16 percent above men's. Their separations were also higher because women's quit rates were consistently above men's (table 26).

Table 26.—LABOR TURNOVER RATES OF WOMEN AND MEN FACTORY WORKERS, 1950-1955

<i>Type of labor turnover</i>	<i>Rate per 1,000 employees</i>	
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
Accessions (hires).....	44	38
Separations, total.....	43	38
Quits.....	24	18
Layoffs and other involuntary separations.....	19	20

Source: Women's Bureau. Monthly Labor Review, August 1955 (p. 889).

There are some indications that factory women are less inclined to quit their jobs than they formerly were. This is borne out in a comparison of quit rates for 1950-55 with those for 1944-47. Women's quit rates exceeded men's by only 33 percent in 1950-55, in contrast to a 40-percent difference in 1944-47. Some of the possible explana-

¹⁶ Part-Time Jobs for Women. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 238, 1951.

tions for women's greater employment stability include their growing interest in continuous employment, the higher family income required by higher living standards, and the larger proportion of mature women workers with fewer home responsibilities.

34. Women's Work Experience

Because of part-time and intermittent work, the number of women in the labor force at any one time (figure previously quoted) is smaller than the number of different women who work all or part of a year. Preliminary figures show that a total of almost 29 million women worked at some time during 1957, whereas an average of 22 million women workers were in the labor force during that year.

Approximately 47 percent of all women 14 years of age and over in the population had some work experience during 1957. More than 10¾ million women (37 percent of the women with work experience in 1957) held full-time jobs the year round. Another 9 million (32 percent) were employed in full-time jobs for part of the year. Of these, about half worked from 27 to 49 weeks and half from 1 to 26

Table 27.—WORK EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN WORKERS IN 1956, BY MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

Major occupational group of longest job	Total with work experience		Percent of women who worked at—			
	Number (in thousands)	Per-cent	Full-time jobs			Part-time jobs
			50-52 weeks	27-49 weeks	26 weeks or less	
Women, 14 years of age and over.....	¹ 27,948	100	37	16	17	29
Professional workers.....	2,835	100	44	27	12	18
Managers, officials, proprietors..	1,156	100	63	14	9	14
Clerical workers.....	7,562	100	53	14	16	17
Sales workers.....	2,471	100	26	10	18	46
Service workers (except household).....	3,632	100	31	18	21	30
Operatives.....	4,606	100	39	26	21	14
Private-household workers.....	2,618	100	21	8	11	60
Craftswomen.....	288	100	49	16	17	18
Farm laborers, foremen.....	2,449	100	6	6	20	68

¹ Includes women employed as "farmers and farm managers" and "laborers except farm," although separate information was not released for these groups.

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 77.

weeks. On the other hand, almost 9 million women (31 percent) had part-time jobs. Since 1950 the number of women in part-time jobs has increased more rapidly than the number in full-time work.

Detailed information on women's work experience is available for 1956, when 19.7 million women worked at full-time jobs at least part of the year and 8.2 million women at part-time jobs. By occupation, approximately half or more of the women managers, officials, and proprietors; clerical workers; and craftsmen worked at year-round full-time jobs in 1956 (table 27).

Principal reasons offered by women for part-year work (less than 50 weeks at either full-time or part-time jobs) were household responsibilities, unemployment or layoffs, school attendance, and illness or disability.

Regularity of employment was highest for women workers 45 to 59 years of age. This group had the largest proportion of women workers at full-time year-round jobs (table 28). For those working the year round at part-time jobs, the extent of regular employment among women workers 45 to 59 years of age was exceeded only by that among women 60 years of age and over. Short-time employment occurred most frequently among girls 14 to 17 years of age. Regularity of employment increased among women 18 to 19 years—the age group in which the largest proportion of women had work experience in 1956.

Table 28.—WORK EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN IN 1956, BY AGE GROUP

Work experience in 1956	Total	Age group of women workers				
		14-17 years	18-24 years	25-44 years	45-59 years	60 years and over
Number of women (in thousands)	27, 948	1, 688	10, 377	6, 189	7, 225	2, 469
Percent	100	100	100	100	100	100
Primarily at part-time jobs ¹	29	69	22	28	28	41
26 weeks or less	14	50	12	11	9	14
27 to 49 weeks	6	8	4	6	6	8
50 to 52 weeks	10	12	6	11	13	19
Primarily at full-time jobs ¹	71	31	78	72	72	59
26 weeks or less	17	25	23	14	10	11
27 to 49 weeks	16	4	19	16	17	13
50 to 52 weeks	37	2	36	42	45	35

¹ Part-time jobs were those lasting less than 35 hours a week and full-time jobs, 35 hours or more a week.
Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, P-50, No. 77.

35. Women Not in the Labor Force

A current report on the total number of women who have obtained some work experience during their lifetime is not available. However, a 1951 survey made by the Bureau of the Census among women not in the labor force indicated that about one-third had had some previous work experience during or after World War II. These women, along with others who have secured some work experience since 1951, can be viewed as a flexible reserve of experienced workers, capable of rapid utilization in time of labor shortage—provided, of course, that family responsibilities would permit their return to the labor force. Since over half the survey group were from 20 to 34 years of age, it is likely that many would be responsible for the care of young children.

A more practical estimate of the supply of women actually available for increasing the Nation's work force would exclude young mothers and elderly women. Even if these groups are not included, the number of women in the labor reserve exceeds that of men—making women the largest single source for labor-force expansion. It emphasizes the importance of providing more opportunities for women to improve their skills when our manpower resources need to be fully developed.

36. Women as Members of Unions

About 3.4 million women were members of labor organizations at the end of 1956, according to estimates of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. They accounted for just under one-fifth of all union members and slightly over one-seventh of all women in the labor force. The relatively low proportion of women members is influenced by the nature of women's employment. Women who plan to remain in the labor market only a few years, as well as many who are part-time or part-year workers, are less inclined to join a union than persons who expect to work during most of their lifetime.

Of the 189 unions participating in the 1956 membership survey, 137 unions indicated they had women members. The highest membership figures for women were reported by unions engaged in collective bargaining in industries with large numbers of women. These include the needle trades, electrical-goods manufacturing, service industries, communications, retail trade, and textile mills. In addition, there were large numbers of women in several big industrial and transportation unions, although women were only a small portion of their total membership. This second group of industries includes automobile and machinery manufacturing, as well as trucking (table 29).

There are no separate unions for women alone. In 8 unions, women constituted at least three-fourths of the membership, but in 79 unions

Table 29.—NUMBER OF WOMEN MEMBERS OF LABOR UNIONS, 1956
(Unions reporting 25,000 or more women members)

<i>Union</i>	<i>Approximate number of women</i>
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations:	
International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.....	338, 100
Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.....	238, 800
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.....	202, 500
Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union	176, 400
International Union, United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America.....	175, 000
International Union of Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers... Communications Workers of America.....	159, 000
International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America ¹	155, 400
Retail Clerks International Association.....	150, 500
International Association of Machinists.....	150, 000
Laundry Workers' International Union ¹	95, 000
Textile Workers Union of America.....	85, 500
Building Service Employees International Union.....	81, 100
Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America	69, 000
Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.....	62, 000
Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International Union of America ¹	58, 800
United Textile Workers of America.....	53, 300
Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees.....	52, 000
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees...	43, 900
United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers of America...	37, 500
International Brotherhood of Bookbinders.....	35, 600
International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers	35, 000
United Garment Workers of America.....	33, 000
United Shoe Workers of America.....	32, 000
American Federation of Teachers.....	30, 000
United Packinghouse Workers of America.....	30, 000
Tobacco Workers International Union.....	27, 000
United Steelworkers of America.....	26, 000
Office Employees' International Union.....	(²)
Unaffiliated:	
Alliance Independent Telephone Unions.....	(²)
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America.....	60, 000
	25, 000

¹ Expelled by AFL-CIO Convention, December 1957.

² Number of women members not available but believed to be significant.

Source: U. S. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Directory of National and International Labor Unions in the U. S., 1957. Bulletin No. 1222.

their representation was less than 20 percent. Not included in the latter figure are 51 unions with no women members. Most of these unions cover occupations not likely to employ women, such as bricklayers, fire fighters, locomotive engineers, and plasterers.

Union contracts frequently provide maternity benefits not only for women employees but also for dependent wives. A Bureau of Labor Statistics survey¹⁷ in late 1955 revealed that of 300 health and insurance plans established by collective bargaining, 272 plans (covering 4.8 million employees) contained maternity provisions for women workers and 263 plans covered wives of workers. The majority of plans provided a combination of hospital and surgical benefits to workers and dependents in maternity cases plus sickness benefits to workers during maternity leave.

The major labor federation in the United States, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, has formed a separate union auxiliary for women in the families of men who are members of one of its affiliate unions. The purpose of the auxiliary is described in part III, which lists national organizations of interest to women.

37. Women Receiving Vocational Rehabilitation

From 20,000 to 25,000 handicapped women yearly are being helped to become useful workers through the State-Federal program of vocational rehabilitation. The almost 25,000 women aided during the year ending June 30, 1957 equaled about 35 percent of all persons served by the program, according to a report prepared by the Women's Bureau in cooperation with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.¹⁸

A major purpose of these programs is to help disabled people build up and use their remaining abilities so that they can make a living. Besides counseling, training, and job placement based on individual requirements, the programs include medical or physical treatment and furnish such equipment as hearing aids and braces when needed by the individual.

Of the 23,000 women rehabilitated through the State-Federal program in 1956, 70 percent became gainfully employed and the remainder stayed at home to care for their families or do unpaid family work. Over one-fourth of the handicapped women who became wage earners were clerical workers, and about one-sixth were in each of the following

¹⁷ Analysis of Health and Insurance Plans under Collective Bargaining, Late 1955. U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Bulletin No. 1221.

¹⁸ Help for Handicapped Women. Women's Bureau Pamphlet 5. U. S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, in cooperation with U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. 1958.

fields: Private-household service; other services; and crafts or skilled and semiskilled manual work. Nearly one-tenth were professional or semiprofessional workers. Most of the others were salespersons, proprietors of vending stands, or unskilled workers on farms or in industrial production.