

# FACTS

# on Women Workers

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## EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN DECEMBER 1949

From December 1948 to December 1949 the number of women 14 years of age and over in the population rose by more than half a million and the number in the civilian labor force by not far from half a million, according to Census monthly reports. An increase in nonagricultural employment of women was almost exactly balanced by a decline in agricultural employment. Unemployment rose by nearly half a million.

Between November 1949 and December 1949, about 550,000 women withdrew from the labor force. These seemed to be chiefly agricultural workers. Nonagricultural employment rose by about a quarter of a million.

	December 1949			
	Number of women	Percent women of all persons	Change since November 1949	Change since December 1948
Population (14 years and over)	56,048,000	50.9	+ 60,000	+ 636,000
Civilian labor force	18,280,000	29.5	- 548,000	+ 478,000
Employed	17,263,000	29.5	- 472,000	- 9,000
In agriculture	849,000	12.5	- 730,000	- 355,000
In nonagricultural industries	16,414,000	31.7	+ 258,000	+ 346,000
Unemployed	1,017,000	29.1	- 76,000	+ 487,000
Armed forces	21,000	1.5	+ 1,000	+ 7,000
Nonworkers	37,747,000	80.8	+ 606,000	+ 151,000

(U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census)

## WOMEN IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

In September 1949 there were 3,810,200 women wage and salary workers employed in manufacturing establishments, according to a report published recently by the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Women were 27 percent of total employment in manufacturing.

Some of the industries in which women form significant proportions of all workers are apparel and other finished textile products, where they are 75 percent of all employees; tobacco manufacture, where they are 61 percent; leather and leather products, 46 percent; textile-mill products, 43 percent; miscellaneous manufacturing industries (jewelry, silverware, toys, sporting goods, buttons, etc.), 41 percent; electrical machinery, 34 percent; instruments and related products, 34 percent.

## EARNINGS OF WOMEN WORKERS

Cotton Garment Industry—Nearly half (about 45 percent) of the workers employed in cotton garment manufacturing plants earn less than 75 cents an hour, according to a survey recently made by the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. About 90 percent of the workers in the industry are women, who averaged 81 cents. Men averaged \$1.02.

Women's Coat and Suit Manufacturing—Workers engaged in the manufacture of women's coats and suits averaged more than \$1.50 an hour in September 1949 in 11 of 12 leading garment centers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Men, who were almost half of the labor force, earned considerably more than women. Among 11 cities the differences ranged from 52 cents in Baltimore to \$1.45 in Los Angeles. Men workers averaged at least \$2.00 an hour in 9 of the 12 cities studied; average earnings of women were \$1.50 or more in 7 cities, but in no city exceeded \$2.00.

Furniture Manufacturing—Average hourly earnings of women in all plant occupations in wood furniture establishments surveyed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics ranged in September 1949 from 72 cents in Martinsville, Va., to \$1.40 in Los Angeles, Calif. Averages in most of the 10 areas covered were under \$1.00 per hour.

In upholstered furniture, average hourly earnings in all plant occupations ranged for women from .88 in Winston-Salem—High Point, N.C., to \$1.80 in New York, N. Y. Averages in the other two areas included in this study were \$1.25 in Chicago, Ill., and \$1.41 in Los Angeles, Calif.

Clerical Workers—Secretaries are the best paid of the nation's office workers, getting an average of \$57.10 per week, reports Dartnell Management Services, which recently made a study of personnel policies and salary administration in nearly 400 companies. Bookkeepers are second, averaging \$53.82 per week. Billing machine operators get an average of \$44.06 a week; telephone operator-receptionists, \$43.29; and file clerks, \$38.81.

## WOMEN IN SOCIAL WORK

Bryn Mawr College, whose Department of Social Economy has offered graduate training in social service since 1915, has just completed a study of the employment status of women graduated from this Department. Approximately 60 percent of those who graduated before 1949 have full-time positions; another 5 percent are working part time; and about a third are not now in paid employment. Most of the latter gave family responsibilities as their reason for having left their professional pursuits.

It was found that the majority of the graduates now employed are practicing social workers, although a considerable proportion are engaged in teaching, research, industrial relations, and kindred pursuits. Not more than 5 or 6 are employed in work which is unrelated to their graduate training. Average annual salaries in 1949 varied from \$3,144 for those providing direct service to individuals, to \$4,908 for those holding executive and administrative positions. Salaries tended to increase with experience: average annual salary was \$3,300 for those with 1 to 4 years' experience after their graduate training, \$4,934 for those with 15 or more years' experience.

## EQUAL PAY

The International Labor Organization, in a recent questionnaire, has requested its member countries to define their positions on equal pay for women and to propose measures for putting the principle of equal pay into practice. Government, employer, and labor delegates to the 1950 ILO Conference will hold a preliminary discussion on the question next June, and it is expected that international regulations will be adopted at the 1951 session.

## WOMEN COLLEGE GRADUATES

During the school year 1948-49, 102,466 women in the United States and its Territories received bachelor's and first professional degrees, according to a report issued by the U. S. Office of Education. In addition, 15,549 women received master's and second professional degrees, and 522 received doctor's degrees.

"In prewar years the proportion of men and women receiving bachelor's and first professional degrees was fairly stable. The graduating classes in the years immediately preceding the war were made up of about 58 percent men and 42 percent women." The present rate is 72 percent men and 28 percent women, reflecting the large expansion in the male student population following the war. More women took their bachelor's degrees in institutions in the South than in any other region. The greatest concentration of men first-degree earners was in the midwestern institutions.

Education stood far above all other major fields of study in numbers of women receiving bachelor's or first professional degrees. A total of 24,418—almost one-fourth of all women bachelor's or first professional degree recipients—took their degrees in education. Second was English, with 8,720. Next in order were home economics, business and commerce, arts, sociology, music, psychology, nursing. Each of these fields had 3,000 or more women graduates.

There were women taking bachelor's or first professional degrees in every major field of study listed in the U. S. Office of Education report, including 1 in metallurgy, 3 in forestry, 4 in entomology, 88 in dentistry, 158 in engineering, and 226 in theology. In two fields usually thought of as "women's"—home economics and nursing—there were, respectively, 67 and 20 male graduates.

## WOMEN ON FARMS

Along with a general decline in total farm population from 1940 to 1949, the number of women 14 years of age and over living on farms dropped from 10,005,000 in April 1940 to 9,440,000 in April 1949, according to the U. S. Bureau of the Census. In April 1949 there were almost three-fourths million more men on farms than women.

Of the 9,440,000 women 14 years of age and over living on farms in April 1949, 23 percent were in the labor force. Of those employed, roughly half were in agriculture and half were in nonagricultural industries.

## WOMEN IN BUSINESS AND INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONS

Almost  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million women in the United States were working in their own businesses, professions, or trades, for profit or fees, in December 1949, according to data from the U. S. Bureau of the Census. In addition, 173,000 women were self-employed in agriculture--operating farms of their own. The entire group of self-employed women were 9.0 percent of all employed women.

Though independent women workers were significant in numbers, women were relatively less important in this type of employment than among certain other groups of workers. Women were nearly 1 out of every 3 wage or salary workers, for example, but only about 1 out of every 6 persons in self-employment.

## WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Australia -- In connection with consideration of the Women's Basic Wage by the Full Arbitration Court of Australia, an Australian trade union recently undertook a survey of the living costs of women workers in that country to support its case for an adequate wage. On the basis of the survey, budgets representing minimum standards of adequacy for several types of women workers were presented to the Court by the union, the Manufacturing Grocers' Employees' Federation. Materials were sent the union from the Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, on working women's budgets prepared by State minimum wage administrators, and these were used in the cost of living investigation in Australia.

Ireland -- Elected recently to the vice-presidency of the Irish Trade Union Congress in Dublin, Miss Helen Chenevix may some day head the Irish trade union movement, since, it is reported, the vice-president traditionally becomes the next president. The Congress is composed of 200,000 members, mostly men.

New United States Appointment to the Commission on Status of Women, UN -- Mrs. Olive Remington Goldman of Urbana, Ill., has been nominated by President Truman for United States representative on the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations' Economic and Social Council. Mrs. Goldman will succeed Judge Dorothy Kenyon of New York, who has completed her three-year term. The new appointee was a candidate for Congress in 1946 and 1948 and has recently worked with the Department of the Interior. She has been active in many women's organizations, including the League of Women Voters, the Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and the American Association of University Women.

"Three-Fourths of Women in Factories Are Production Workers," in LABOR INFORMATION BULLETIN, December 1949.  
STATE MINIMUM-WAGE LAWS AND ORDERS, July 1, 1942-January 1, 1949. Supplement to Bulletin 191. U. S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau Bulletin 227.  
NIGHT WORK FOR WOMEN IN HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS. U. S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau Bulletin 233.  
"These Women Work for You," by Morton Sontheimer. McCALL'S, January 1950.  
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