

FACTS | on Women Workers

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May 31, 1950

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EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN APRIL 1950

Nearly 900,000 more women were in the civilian labor force in April 1950 than in April 1949, according to monthly reports of the U. S. Bureau of the Census. Non-agricultural employment of women increased by nearly a million, while agricultural employment decreased. There were over a quarter of a million fewer women non-workers in the population in 1950 than in 1949.

From March to April 1950 the number of employed women increased by half a million, about evenly divided between agricultural and nonagricultural workers. Unemployment fell by nearly a quarter of a million.

	April 1950			
	Number of women	Percent women of all persons	Change since March 1950	Change since April 1949
Population (14 years and over)	56,257,000	50.9	+ 53,000	+ 648,000
Civilian labor force	18,063,000	29.0	+ 267,000	+ 896,000
Employed	17,176,000	29.3	+ 502,000	+ 820,000
In agriculture	923,000	12.8	+ 235,000	- 148,000
In nonagricultural industries	16,253,000	31.6	+ 266,000	+ 968,000
Unemployed	887,000	25.2	- 234,000	+ 76,000
Armed forces	21,000	1.6	No change	+ 4,000
Nonworkers	38,173,000	81.2	- 214,000	- 252,000

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

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MINIMUM WAGE CONFERENCE HELD BY WOMEN'S BUREAU

The Fifteenth Annual Conference of State Minimum Wage Administrators was held by the Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, in Washington April 20-21. Representatives from 19 States attended and reported on their minimum-wage activities for the past year.

The workshop sessions of the Conference discussed preliminary information obtained from Women's Bureau questionnaires sent out in connection with a study on minimum-wage legislation. Points discussed were (1) organization and operation of State minimum wage agencies, i.e., data on budgets and staff, and on current operating methods of handling records and reports and conducting inspections; and (2) enforcement activities, i.e., amounts of wages collected for workers, civil and criminal court actions. Also considered were effects of the new 75-cent Federal minimum wage on State programs.

A significant new development was the unanimous request for increased technical assistance on equal pay, similar to the kind the Bureau now gives on the subject of minimum wage.

MINIMUM WAGE

Rhode Island's revised restaurant and hotel order, effective June 1, 1950, establishes basic hourly minimums of 60 cents for nonservice and 40 cents for service employees having a workweek of over 24 and up to and including 45 hours. For work in excess of 45 hours, time and a half the applicable basic minimum must be paid for every hour of working time. Part-time hourly rates for 24 hours or less in a week are 70 cents an hour for nonservice and 45 cents for service employees.

COST OF LIVING

Estimated living costs at a minimum adequate level as of May 1949 for an employed woman in the District of Columbia show that \$1,476 is necessary annually to buy the commodities and services allowed in the District's budget. An additional \$207 for taxes and \$187 for savings bring the total to \$1,870 per year. This represents a small decrease in the annual cost of the budget since the August 1948 estimate; the decrease in the cost of food and clothing more than absorbed increases in other items over the nine-month period.

HOURS OF WORK

An amendment to the labor law relating to hours of employment of women over 21 years of age in mercantile establishments takes effect in New York State on July 1, 1950, for a one-year period. Instead of the present provision which prohibits the employment of women in mercantile establishments after 10 o'clock in the evening, the amendment would allow employment until 12 o'clock midnight.

MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN WORKERS, 1949

In April 1949, about two-thirds of all the women in the United States were married, one-fifth were single, and a little less than one-seventh were widowed or divorced, according to recent estimates of the U. S. Census Bureau. About 24 percent of all married women were in the labor force, as compared with 17 percent in 1940.

The numbers of married women in the labor force have steadily increased since the 1940 census period and this most recent estimate shows the 1949 proportions of married and single women in the labor force to be the reverse of those reported in 1940. Of the 17 million women in the labor force in April 1949, 51 percent were married, 33 percent were single, and 16 percent widowed or divorced. In 1940 the proportions were: 36.5 percent married, 48.5 percent single, and 15 percent widowed or divorced.

Women 14 Years Old and Over in the Labor Force

	Number (in thousands)		Percent of woman population		Percent distribution	
	April 1949	March 1940	April 1949	March 1940	April 1949	March 1940
Total	17,167	13,840	30.7	27.4	100.0	100.0
Single	5,682	6,710	50.9	48.1	33.1	48.5
Married	8,739	5,040	23.6	16.7	50.9	36.4
Widowed or divorced	2,746	2,090	35.1	32.0	16.0	15.1

MAJOR OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN, APRIL 1950

Census reports on employment of women in April 1950 show that their number has risen by $5\frac{1}{4}$ million in the decade since the last regular census. In general the greatest relative increases were among white-collar workers. Women in the managerial group more than doubled, though they still were a very small proportion of the whole. Clerical workers, the largest occupation group both in 1940 and 1950, and sales workers increased by about 80 percent. The gain among professional and semiprofessional workers was much less marked. Manual workers (operatives, etc.) increased by about 45 percent and service workers not in homes by about 60 percent. Only domestic service workers showed a decline.

Occupation group	Women, April 1950			
	Number	Percent distribution	Percent of all workers	Change in number from March 1940
All occupations	17,176,000	100.0	29.3	+ 5,256,000
Clerical and kindred workers	4,539,000	26.4	59.3	+ 2,009,000
Operatives and laborers (except farm and mine), craftsmen and foremen	3,464,000	20.2	15.3	+ 1,064,000
Service workers (except domestic)	2,168,000	12.6	45.4	+ 818,000
Professional and semi-professional workers	1,862,000	10.8	41.8	+ 292,000
Domestic service workers	1,771,000	10.3	92.1	- 329,000
Sales workers	1,516,000	8.8	39.0	+ 686,000
Farmers and farm workers	916,000	5.4	13.0	+ 226,000
Proprietors, managers and officials (except farm)	941,000	5.5	14.8	+ 491,000

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

WOMEN IN AVIATION

A new international altitude record for light airplanes has been set. On March 31, Mrs. Anna Luisa Branger, cultural attaché of the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, flew her Piper Cub Special at 24,504 feet. The National Bureau of Standards reported the record after calibration of barographs carried on the flight.

The latest tally by the Civil Aeronautics Administration shows that as of May 1, 1949, there were 9,678 women pilots, of whom 8,115 held private pilot certificates, 1,561 held commercial ratings, and 2 had air-line transport pilot ratings. The previous count as of July 1, 1945, showed only 5,122 women holding pilot certificates, of whom 4,166 held private licenses and 956 held commercial ratings.

Other airmen ratings held by women in the 1949 tally included 1,811 air-traffic-control operators, 1,221 ground instructors, 400 parachute technicians, 47 mechanics, 16 glider pilots, and 4 dispatchers. The CAA also noted that women hold approximately 20 percent of all the air-traffic-control operator and parachute technician certificates now on record.

WOMEN IN POLITICS

In a recent poll the American Institute of Public Opinion asked this question: "If the party whose candidate you most often support nominated a woman for President of the U. S., would you vote for her if she seemed qualified for the job?" Forty-eight percent answered "yes"; 48 percent "no"; 4 percent had "no opinion." In a poll on this same question made in 1937, 33 percent had answered yes; 63 percent no; and 4 percent had no opinion. A breakdown of opinion by sex follows:

	Men		Women	
	Today	In 1937	Today	In 1937
Yes	45	27	51	40
No	50	69	46	57
No opinion	5	4	3	3

(Percent distribution)

WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Arab Countries — Under the trade union laws of the various Arab countries, there is no discrimination against women as members or officers of labor unions, according to a report from the U. S. State Department representative in the Middle East. Recently, however, women have, for the first time it is believed, appeared in the Executive Councils of unions in the Arab world. In March 2 women were elected to the Executive Council of the Union of Shell Company Employees, in Cairo, Egypt. In Lebanon a woman was elected Secretary of the Bank Employees Union. Women have also been active in the leadership of the Union of Workers and Employees of the Regie Company (Syro-Lebanese government tobacco monopoly). This union is the only one of those with women officers which also includes manual workers, among them many women. One of the union's outstanding leaders was a woman worker who was killed in labor riots in the fall of 1947. The union's club house and social center is dominated by a large picture of this woman. Since women in these countries have not had the personal, property, or franchise rights of western women, it is noteworthy that working women first obtained a responsible voice in self-government through the labor union movement.

Iceland — A recently elected woman member of Iceland's Althing (Congress) has introduced 4 bills. The first proposes a luxury tax on home owners who have excess space or unused rooms in their houses, the tax money to be used as a fund from which prospective builders of homes can draw to supplement their costs. Her second bill provides for increased tax exemptions for women who because of outside jobs must have hired help. The third bill calls for separate filing of income tax reports by married couples in place of the joint-return system now in use, and the fourth bill would set up a national corps of household workers to be paid a fixed salary from the government and a smaller sum by their immediate employers.

A Century of Medical Education for Women, by Louise Pearce, M.D., in
INDEPENDENT WOMAN, April 1950.

BOWERY TO BELLEVUE, by Emily Dunning Barringer, M.D. New York, W. W. Norton.
262 pp. \$3.00. (Autobiography of the first woman interne in a New York City hospital.)

REPLIES TO THE ECOSOC QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE LEGAL STATUS AND TREATMENT OF WOMEN.
Part I - Public Law. Section G, Nationality (Supplemental Replies Requested).
December 30, 1949. U. S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau.

MOVEMENT FOR EQUAL PAY LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES, MAY 1, 1950. (Revision of earlier edition.) U. S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau.

(The printing of this publication has been approved by
the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, March 9, 1950.)