

# FACTS

# on Women Workers

U. S. Department of Labor  
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Women's Bureau  
Frieda S. Miller, *Director*

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## EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN MAY 1950

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Over the year from May 1949 to May 1950 there was an increase in the population of nearly  $2/3$  million women 14 years of age and over, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The civilian woman labor force increased by nearly  $2/5$  million. Nonagricultural employment of women rose; whereas agricultural employment was below that of 1949 because of the less favorable weather conditions.

The increase in numbers of women in the labor force between April and May 1950 was nearly 10 times the increase in the number of women in the population. This is a season when agricultural employment normally advances, and most of those who joined the labor force were girls and women who were helping on family farms. There was no material change in the number of women unemployed.

	May 1950			
	Number of women	Percent women of all persons	Change since April 1950	Change since May 1949
Population (14 years and over)	56,300,000	50.9	+ 43,000	+ 641,000
Civilian labor force	18,472,000	29.4	+ 409,000	+ 375,000
Employed	17,545,000	29.4	+ 369,000	+ 372,000
In agriculture	1,473,000	18.3	+ 550,000	- 392,000
In nonagricultural industries	16,072,000	31.1	- 181,000	+ 763,000
Unemployed	927,000	30.3	+ 40,000	+ 4,000
Armed Forces	22,000	1.7	+ 1,000	+ 4,000
Nonworkers	37,806,000	81.3	- 367,000	+ 261,000

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

## EQUAL PAY

Support was given to equal pay for equal work for women by Secretary of Labor Maurice J. Tobin and Director of the Women's Bureau Frieda S. Miller in their testimony on May 19 before a Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor in behalf of H.R. 1584 and H.R. 2438, bills to provide equal pay for equal work for women.

These bills introduced, respectively, by Congresswomen Woodhouse of Connecticut and Douglas of California, are similar to bills considered by the 79th and 80th Congresses, and they identify as an unfair labor practice the payment of wages to any female employee at a rate less than the rate paid to male employees "for work of comparable character on jobs, the performance of which requires comparable skills, except where such payment is made pursuant to a seniority or merit increase system, which does not discriminate on the basis of sex."

## NEW ENGLAND AND MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES CONFER ON STATE LABOR DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS

Representatives of the labor departments of 11 Northeastern States met in New York City on May 23-25 to discuss their programs relating to labor statistics and to State labor legislation for women. The latter session was presided over by the Director of the Women's Bureau and was devoted to a discussion of the economic and social background of women's labor legislation, review of existing laws, and discussion of problems relating to equal pay legislation.

## JURY SERVICE

State — The jury law in Virginia was amended by the 1950 Assembly to include women on trial jury lists. Any woman selected may be released from service upon her written request submitted to the jury commissioners within 15 days after she is notified of her selection. Women are not yet eligible for grand jury duty.

Federal — On May 17 the Women's Bureau Director testified in favor of amending the Federal Judicial Code (H.R. 2051) to permit women to serve on juries in Federal courts in all States, even though they may be barred from serving on juries of State Courts. There now remain only 9 States in which women are barred from jury service in State courts.

## PART-TIME WORK

"As women become older they tend to be more and more interested in part-time and even full-time outside jobs," concludes a WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION poll on whether women want employment outside the home. If completely free to choose, the women (who were all COMPANION readers) said their preferences would be as follows:

Full-time job outside home	10 percent
Part-time job outside home	36 percent
Keeping house full time	52 percent
No answer or don't know	2 percent

According to the U. S. Census Bureau's latest figures—for November 1949—3,483,000 women (20 percent of all employed women) were regular part-time workers: 3,029,000 did not prefer or could not accept full-time work; the remaining 454,000 preferred and would have accepted full-time work if available. Only 6 percent of all employed men usually worked part time.

## AAUW FELLOWSHIP GRANTS ANNOUNCED

Thirty-two women have been awarded a total of \$51,650 in fellowships for advanced research by the American Association of University Women. The projects for which the fellowships were granted show women exploring the intricacies of electricity, the physical sciences and other fields traditionally men's. Only a few are in the conventional feminine subjects—literature, history, and education.

Some typical projects: One woman will do research on a problem in electromagnetic theory and electric circuit analysis. A research paleontologist will survey fossil brains in museums in America, and in 5 European countries, then write a book on paleoneurology. Research basic to an understanding of disturbances in muscular coordination arising in polio will be carried on by another fellow, who goes to Ghent, Belgium, and Stockholm, Sweden, for a study of micro-electrical stimulation and recording techniques as applied to spinal-cord and muscle physiology.

## BIRTH RATES AMONG WOMEN COLLEGE GRADUATES

The number of children born to men and women college graduates has steadily increased from the class of 1936 to the class of 1940, according to a survey recently made by the Population Reference Bureau of Washington, D. C. Women graduates of the class of 1940 have families 21 percent larger than women graduates of the class of 1936. The increase in size of family among men graduates for the class of 1940 was 37 percent over the class of 1936.

This study's findings were similar to those of an earlier survey made by the U.S. Census Bureau. Both indicate a very substantial increase in reproduction rates of college graduates during the last ten to fifteen years, although as late as 1947 women with only a grade school education had reproduction rates 48 to 78 percent higher than needed for replacement, while college graduates fell 5 percent short of reproducing themselves.

Ten years after graduation, the Population Bureau's studies of 925 colleges' classes of 1936 through 1940 show an average of 1.09 children per female graduate and 1.29 per male graduate. Birth rates are considerably higher among graduates of co-educational and western colleges. Highest birth rate for women of the class of 1940 was found among Brigham Young University (Utah) graduates, who averaged 2.03 babies each. By contrast, University of Pennsylvania alumnae averaged only .86 of a child apiece, and Mary Washington, Va., only .79.

## FERTILITY RATES, ENTIRE POPULATION, BY INCOME GROUP AND LABOR FORCE STATUS OF WOMAN

The first direct data ever published for the U.S. as a whole on variations in fertility by family money income, have been issued by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for April 1949. (In this survey, fertility is measured by number of children under 5 years old, not by actual birth rates.) Even when differences in ages of wives in the various income groups are accounted for, fertility rates consistently fall as income rises. Married couples in the lowest income group—under \$1,000 a year—had a rate of children under 5 years old that was roughly two-thirds higher than that among couples in the highest income group—\$5,000 and over. The decline with advancing income is especially noticeable above the family income level of \$4,000 a year.

Also reported were data on the number of children under 5 years old per 1,000 married women (husband present) of ages 15 to 49, according to labor force status of the woman. There were 216 children under 5 per 1,000 married women in the labor force and 658 children per 1,000 married women not in the labor force. These figures bear out indications of other studies that women with young children tend to remain outside the working force.

## WOMEN IN THE ARTS

One of this year's Pulitzer prizes went to a woman. In May, Gwendolyn Brooks, 33-year old Negro poet received the annual Pulitzer poetry prize for her cycle of poems entitled, "Annie Allen," the story of a woman as daughter, wife, and mother.

The New York Drama Critics Circle has chosen as the best American play of the season, "The Member of the Wedding," by Carson McCullers. Mrs. McCullers, 32, had previously won two Guggenheim fellowships.

## NATIONAL WOMEN'S TRADE UNION LEAGUE TERMINATES ACTIVITIES

The National Women's Trade Union League, after 47 years of forwarding organization of women into trade unions, terminated its activities as of June 15. Founded in 1903, at a time when working women and the labor movement had few sympathetic supporters, the League has had a long and proud history of achievement for women workers. It successfully pioneered in labor education for working women, in establishing industrial standards for women through organization and legislation, in industrial hygiene, in interpreting to the public the problems of women wage earners and of the trade union movement, and in support of international cooperation among women and among nations.

Announcing the disbanding, Elisabeth Christman, for 28 years the Secretary-Treasurer of the League, said, "Our task is not done, but much of it has been taken over by the labor movement and by other groups which we have helped to form. In effect we are and should be a self-liquidating organization. There is now an enormous opportunity for women in the trade union movement...to participate directly in the implementation of the program to which the National Women's Trade Union League has been dedicated for so many years."

The League's unusual collection of papers on women in industry have been assigned to various archives, and the Library of Congress accepted all the League's original records.

## WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held its fourth session at Lake Success in May. Representing the United States was Mrs. Olive Remington Goldman of Illinois.

The Commission noted the progress that has been made in women's suffrage, 19 countries having granted women equal franchise since the organization of the United Nations in 1945. The Commission endorsed the principle of independent nationality for married women and requested the Economic and Social Council to arrange for the immediate drafting of a United Nations Convention along this line. It noted the plans of the International Labor Organization to discuss equal pay for women in its conference in June and encouraged United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization to continue its efforts to expand educational opportunities for women, especially in rural and undeveloped areas. It suggested that the Social Commission give attention to discriminations against women in prisons and in its plans for rehabilitation of offenders. It also recommended that more attention be given to obtaining qualified women for higher posts in the United Nations Secretariat and again urged Governments to include more women in their delegations to United Nations meetings.

At the request of the delegate from Greece, the Commission passed a strong resolution in regard to the repatriation of Greek children still detained in Iron Curtain countries. It also urged the Economic and Social Council to ensure that women be given opportunities for service under Technical Assistants Programs wherever these are developed and underlined the need in areas where economic development is taking place of safeguarding women workers against exploitation and promoting equal pay for equal work.