

# FACTS

# on Women Workers

U. S. Department of Labor  
Maurice J. Tobin, *Secretary*

Women's Bureau  
Frieda S. Miller, *Director*

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

LIBRARY  
A. & M. COLLEGE OF TEXAS

December 31, 1950

## EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN NOVEMBER

The number of women employed in nonagricultural industries increased by more than a million from November 1949 to November 1950, according to the Bureau of the Census. Agricultural employment declined and so did unemployment, leaving a net increase in the civilian labor force of about 2/3 million. The number of women nonworkers was practically unchanged.

A decline in women's employment over the month between October and November 1950 resulted from a seasonal decrease in farm employment, partly counteracted by a seasonal rise in other employment reflecting the start of the preholiday upswing in trade and other activities. Unemployment increased, as is normal during this period, when women move out of the "nonworker" group and begin to hunt for Christmas jobs.

	November 1950			
	Number of women	Percent women of all persons	Change since October 1950	Change since November 1949
Population (14 years and over)	56,676,000	51.0	+ 57,000	+ 688,000
Civilian labor force	19,493,000	30.7	+ 57,000	+ 665,000
Employed	18,561,000	30.3	- 107,000	+ 826,000
In agriculture	1,395,000	18.5	- 507,000	- 184,000
In nonagricultural industries	17,167,000	32.0	+ 401,000	+1,011,000
Unemployed	931,000	41.6	+ 163,000	- 162,000
Armed forces	26,000	1.3	+ 2,000	+ 6,000
Nonworkers	37,158,000	81.2	- 2,000	+ 17,000

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

## A MILESTONE IN MEDICAL HISTORY

1950 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania—the first college in the world organized for the medical education of women. It opened in October 1850 as the "Female Medical College," with 40 students and a faculty of six. The entire cost of the original 2-year course of study was about \$150, and board could be obtained for from \$1.50 to \$3.00 per week.

Ann Preston, a graduate of the school's first class, became the first woman medical professor in the country when in 1852 she took the Chair of Physiology and Hygiene. Another of the school's famous early graduates was Dr. Hannah Longshore, the first woman holding an M.D. degree to "hang out her shingle" for the practice of medicine. The world's first woman medical missionary, Dr. Clara Swain, sailed for India to begin her work there immediately after graduating in 1869.

## YOUNGER WOMEN WORKERS

Over 11 percent of all girls in the 14-17 age group were in the civilian labor force in March 1950, according to preliminary statistics from the 1950 Census. These statistics, released by the Census Bureau especially for use at the Mid-century White House Conference on Children and Youth, showed that 485,000 girls 14 to 17 were working or looking for work, and that about 60 percent of these were enrolled in school at the same time. Of the next older age group, 18 to 20 years, almost  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million girls were in the civilian labor force—45 percent of all girls in this age group.

For girls 14-17 the most important occupation numerically was saleswork. Over 20 percent of employed girls 14-17 were in this occupational group. Occupational groups next in order of importance were private household workers; clerical and kindred workers; service workers, except private household; craftsmen, foremen, operatives and kindred workers; and farm laborers. The occupational distribution of employed girls 18-20 followed more closely that for the entire woman labor force 14 years of age and over, with the top three occupational groups the same: clerical and kindred workers, first; craftsmen, foremen, operatives and kindred workers, second; and service workers, except private household, third.

"They Work While You Play"—Nearly 200,000 young people under 18—including 37,900 girls—were employed in 1947 in amusement industries—movies, theaters, bowling alleys, skating rinks, swimming pools, golf courses, amusement parks, etc., according to a study just released by the U. S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Standards. This study, "They Work While You Play," besides giving statistics on employment, also discusses the kinds of work young people do in amusement industries, their wages and working conditions, the effect on their health and schooling, and the need for legal regulation of their employment.

## WORKING MOTHERS

Recent figures on characteristics of families, also published by the Census Bureau for use at the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, throw new light on the subject of married women workers and working mothers. In March 1950 there were 7,551,000 husband-wife families in which both the husband and wife were in the labor force. Most (4,212,000) of these families had no children under 18, but among the remaining 3,339,000 families, there were 6,462,000 children under 18. There were in addition 532,000 husband-wife families in which only the wife was in the labor force, and 106,000 of these families had children under 18. The total number of these children was 213,000.

## LONG-TERM DISABILITY AMONG WOMEN

Estimates on disability just published by the Social Security Administration show that in February 1949 there were 783,000 disabled women in the civilian noninstitutional population aged 14-64. They include women who for 7 months or more had been unable to do their regular work or other duties because of sickness or disability, and women who had a long-term physical or mental condition that allowed them to work only occasionally or not at all. Analysis of the age distribution of this group reveals that most of the disabled women were 45 or over. About 52.4 percent of all the disabled women were classified as keeping house, 36.3 percent were reported as unable to work, and 8.3 percent were in the labor force. Of all the disabled women, 51 percent had been employed before becoming disabled.

## NEGRO WOMEN WORKERS

Progress Notes—A Negro woman gynecologist, Dr. Helen O. Dickens, was recently elected to membership in the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Dickens, a diplomate of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, becomes the first Negro woman to be so honored....A compilation by the Southern Regional Council has disclosed that 77 cities and towns in 13 southern States now employ 427 Negroes on police forces. Among these are 17 policewomen. Cities employing Negro police invariably report that the practice helps deter crime, increases respect for law and order, and improves race relations.

Statistics—Almost half (48 percent) of the total nonwhite woman population 14 years of age and over was in the labor force in November 1950, according to the Bureau of the Census. In contrast, only 33 percent of the white women 14 years of age and over were in the labor force. About 75 percent of the nonwhite women and 90 percent of white women workers were employed in nonagricultural industries. A much greater percentage of the nonwhite women than of the white women were working in agricultural industries. Unemployment among nonwhite women was heavier than among white women—6.9 percent as compared with 4.5 percent.

The differences in labor force status between white and nonwhite women were slightly less striking in November 1950 than in November 1949. Last year the Census Bureau reported as "in the labor force" 51 percent of the female nonwhites and 32 percent of the whites. Also, 25 percent of the women nonwhites were in agriculture then compared with only 18 percent this year, while the proportion of white women in agriculture remained roughly the same, at about 6 percent. Differences between white and nonwhite women workers in percent unemployed are about the same as last year.

## WOMEN COLLEGE GRADUATES

During the school year 1949-50, 103,915 women in the United States received the bachelor's and first professional degrees, according to a report issued by the U. S. Office of Education. In addition, 16,982 women received master's and second professional degrees, and 643 received doctor's degrees.

College graduating classes of 1949-50 were the largest in history, according to the report. Among the bachelor's degree recipients, men outnumbered women by more than 3 to 1. The number of men earning their first degrees was about 25 percent greater than in 1948-49, while the increase in the number of women was slightly over 1 percent. The differences in rate of increase for the advanced degrees was less marked, though.

Most popular field of study among women at all levels in 1949-50 was education: 27,753 women received bachelor's degrees in this field; 7,723, master's; and 142, doctor's. Among women receiving bachelor's degrees, the next most popular subjects were, in order, English (9,023 graduates); home economics (7,885); business and commerce (6,226), sociology, music, psychology, history, nursing and fine arts. Each of these fields had over 3,000 graduates at the bachelor's level. Education and English were also the top two fields for women (142 and 49 respectively) receiving doctor's degrees, and next in importance were psychology (42), chemistry (39), modern languages (33), history (29), and zoology (23).

## WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT

The first woman appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense is Mrs. Anna Rosenberg, who will specialize in manpower problems. Mrs. Rosenberg's long, successful career in the labor field includes service as regional director of the NRA (1935), of the Social Security Administration (1936-43), and of the War Manpower Commission (1942-45). She has also worked as a consultant on labor relations to private industry.

The Subversive Activities Control Board, a 5-member board appointed in October by President Truman, includes one woman, Dr. Kathryn McHale, former general director of the American Association of University Women. The Board was set up under the McCarran-Wood Act which requires Communists and Communist organizations to register with the Attorney General.

Miss Mary E. Switzer, recently appointed director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Federal Security Administration, will promote the vocational rehabilitation of persons disabled in industry or otherwise and their return to civil industry. Miss Switzer previously served as assistant to the Federal Security Administrator, with the responsibility for coordinating the health and medical interests of the Federal Security Administration.

Succeeding former Senator Hattie Caraway as a member of the U. S. Department of Labor's Employees Compensation Appeals Board, is Miss Grace McGerr. Miss McGerr has been an attorney with the U. S. Department of Agriculture since 1933.

## INTERNATIONAL GRANTS TO WOMEN STUDENTS FROM ABROAD

Denmark, Finland, France, Norway, and 11 other countries in Europe and Asia are represented in a group of 52 women students brought to the United States by the American Association of University Women for advanced study here in 1950-51. From the Netherlands comes Miss Jacqueline Rutgers, head of the legal department of the Board of Government Mediators, The Hague, to study labor problems. Dr. Balbina Borenstein of Brussels, formerly with the Belgium Center for Economic and Social Studies, is here to study economics. Almost every field of advanced study is included among the subjects the AAUW's international students will pursue.

## WOMEN IN KOREA

Before the North Korean attack, South Korea had established a Women's Bureau on a national level as part of the Department of Welfare; branches were in all cities. A dozen or so Korean women led the work of getting the women to assemble at the district offices for discussions of public matters, according to a report in the United Nations World recently. From these meetings developed women's business and professional clubs, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, Altrusa, and parent-teachers' associations.

"The Western world can hardly comprehend the burden of drudgery a Korean woman must support to keep her family going," says the report's author, who served as welfare adviser to the city of Seoul in 1948-49. Nevertheless, before the current war, women were slowly forging their emancipation. One woman succeeded in getting her name on the ballot for President of South Korea. Another was appointed head of the Department of Commerce by President Syngman Rhee.

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