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Women In Utah History

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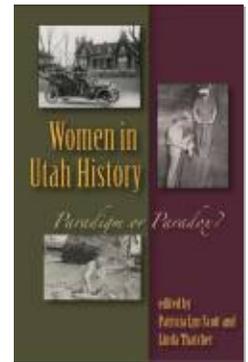
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Gainfully Employed Women

1896–1950

Miriam B. Murphy

In the seventeenth century, women wage earners were primarily domestic servants. Following European traditions, American women did not usually hold land or have access to apprenticeships that could have provided skills leading to economic independence. Nevertheless, the idea of a man supporting his wife was not commonly accepted, for “husband and wife were . . . mutually dependent and together supported the children.” The colonial wife used her physical stamina to produce “household necessities and ply . . . her crafts and her plow beside a yeoman husband.”¹

In the change from an agrarian economy to a balance of farming and manufacturing in the Revolutionary War period, the work of women became critical. Women from all levels of society labored in support of this war as they would in subsequent wars involving U.S. troops. Following the war for independence, urban poor women and surplus farm women were sought as factory workers. However, confusing messages produced confusing role perceptions. Home and family were to remain the centerpieces of their lives. Yet America’s lack of an adequate supply of workers and ongoing need for cheap labor required that women become the first industrial proletariat.²

With the development of factories and mills, men like Alexander Hamilton saw mercantilism as the helpmeet to agriculture, with industry providing jobs for farm wives and children. Factories would also absorb the idle and dependent, making them productive members of society. With the decline in home manufacture of many items, farm women had the time to accept either “given out” work (clothes to be sewed at home from cutout patterns, for example) or to spend their days at nearby mills or factories.

The large number of women working in factories and mills challenged basic assumptions about the role of women in society and led, among other things, to the beginning of class differences between women who had to work

for their own or their family's survival and those who did not, paternalism, and public reaction against women who organized or went out on strike to better working conditions and wages.

With increasing urbanization and higher factory productivity, upper-class women—most often native-born whites—no longer needed to contribute their wage labor to ensure the financial security of home and family; but poorer women—especially widows, free blacks, immigrants, and rural women who moved to the cities in search of jobs—had no choice. Female wage earners, “whether they worked inside or outside their homes . . . fulfilled the hopes of the most ardent Hamiltonians. They constituted the essential core of industrial development.”³ By 1840 some 65 percent of the industrial workers in New England were women, while in the less industrialized South, 10 percent of free white women worked in industry. Despite the regional disparity, half of all workers employed in manufacturing in America were women.

As industrialization moved ahead, fueled in large measure by female labor, something else was affecting women's lives in the first half of the nineteenth century. Social mores were changing, and a new domestic code embracing the old Puritan ethic and *laissez-faire* economics was becoming a powerful force. While this new outlook encouraged men to develop competitive, individualistic attitudes and to look for greater economic success, it offered women very constricted roles. Pious, nurturing, submissive creatures, they were to provide males with emotional support, make the home a refuge, and guard society's moral values. Homemaking came to be viewed as a profession requiring training, and women became almost the sole supervisors of children with men gone from home for long hours trying to climb the economic ladder.

Although the domestic code could mean little to new immigrants, blacks, and other women for whom work was a necessity, society's “sympathetic perceptions of women wage earners sacrificing for the sake of their families gave way to charges of selfishness and family neglect.” Women workers were very adversely affected. They did not stop working—most of them could not afford to—but “the belief that women belonged at home permitted employers to pay wages that were merely supplemental,” justified men in discriminating against their female co-workers, increased job stereotyping, and thwarted the efforts of women to unionize for their mutual benefit.⁴

Middle-class, non-wage-earning women failed to understand or support their working sisters. Myths arose: The workplace was more dangerous for women than men and would harm future mothers and their unborn children. Women would find it difficult to overcome the temptation to sin. Marriage would solve all or most of the problems of women. Governments often collaborated in such myths by passing legislation that restricted the roles of women at work, thereby confining them to the lowest rungs on the economic ladder.

Nevertheless, after 1880 married women began entering the work force in greater numbers for several reasons: smaller households, lower birthrates,

and technology that displaced domestic help. As a by-product of the new technology, married women became more isolated in their homes, and the more affluent of them became bored. Young unmarried women began looking for work and aspired to new goals. Professions like medicine and anthropology attracted women, and education at the college level became more accessible. Despite these changes, at the end of the nineteenth century, notions of woman's place in the home and the temporary nature of female employment were solidly entrenched. Such ideas channeled most women into a few slots in the work force and, instead of providing them with the safe, clean jobs talked of in state legislatures and union halls, reduced them to working under some of the worst conditions of any wage earners.

Necessarily brief, this overview provides at least some context for examining the economic role of women in Utah.

From the beginning of permanent white settlement in the mid-1800s to the turn of the century, Utah experienced a gradual shift from a frontier economy based primarily on agriculture to the mixed economy of a developing agricultural-commercial-industrial state. The role of women in that transformation resembled that of women in other parts of westering America.⁵

In the first stage of settlement in Utah the individual family formed the basic economic unit of most towns. Husband, wife, and children worked together to build the family dwelling, raise food, and make or barter for as many of the other necessities of life as possible. Some Mormon women assumed larger roles in the home economic unit when polygamy required them to share a husband or when missionary work took him from home for prolonged periods. Polygamy and evangelism aside, the frontier farm home as the center of economic activity was essentially the same in Salt Lake City, Cache Valley, and Parowan as it had been in colonial New England; however, transformation occurred much more rapidly in Utah.⁶

Almost as soon as a new settlement was firmly rooted, it began to change. Individuals with special skills—dressmaking and teaching, tinsmithing, and bricklaying, for instance—found outlets for their talents and began altering the character of the town. Structures to house fledgling businesses and industries were erected along dozens of Main Streets from Kamas to Kanab. As these businesses became increasingly important, the economic life of most towns no longer rested entirely on more or less self-sufficient (although interdependent) farm families.

Once begun, the breakdown of the family economic unit continued apace. As commercialization and urbanization increased, the family and its activities became divided. Some women participated in the shifting economy by opening millinery and dress shops or running boardinghouses and small hotels. A few entered the professions. Some continued to work alongside their husbands by becoming active partners in a family business. Young unmarried women became clerks, telegraph operators, and office workers, while other

women and girls—especially the foreign-born and black—entered domestic service and worked in factories and laundries. The number of women working outside the home increased each decade from 1850 to 1900, with economic necessity as the principal factor propelling them toward gainful employment. Yet society consistently undervalued the contribution of women to the economic development of cities and towns. Furthermore, no matter how vital her wages were to the survival of her family, the female domestic or factory worker of the late nineteenth century never enjoyed the status of the sturdy farm wife of frontier fame.

By the turn of the century, the pattern of most working women's lives in Utah was largely set by national events and trends. War and peace, depression and prosperity dictated the circumstances of daily life, while social theorists and the arbiters of social convention defined the proper role of women whether they lived in Buffalo, Memphis, or Ogden. The dynamic interplay of national forces with the particular conditions found in urban and rural Utah has affected working women from 1900 to the present. This chapter focuses on the contributions of gainfully employed women in Utah, the conditions of their employment, and their place in the larger regional and national context. Special attention is paid to women in business and industry during the first half of the twentieth century, with other female workers mentioned in passing to show the total employment picture.

CHANGE AND OPPORTUNITY, 1896–1920

The quarter-century from statehood in 1896 through the first two decades of the twentieth century may have produced more dramatic changes and opportunities for women than any comparable period in Utah history. The events leading up to statehood brought at least to an official end the practice of polygamy, and the state constitution restored women's right to vote and guaranteed other equal rights. Laws enacted in 1911 and 1913 set maximum hours (fifty-four per week) and minimum wages (\$1.25 per day). A workmen's compensation law was finally passed in 1917.

In addition, technology dramatically altered women's lives, especially in urban areas. Electric service, indoor plumbing, central heating, and the small power motor revolutionized homemaking. The growth of commercial laundries and expanding factory production of clothing, processed foods, and other household items relieved women of many tasks and created hundreds of jobs for them outside the home. Although agriculture and mining dominated the economic life of the state, manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, banking, and services were growing rapidly. The success of many of these ventures depended on women.

Utah was not a major manufacturing state, but it boasted a larger and more diverse list of manufacturers than most of the Mountain West. During these years, Ogden, for example, became a center for the canning industry, and



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Interior of the shipping room, J.G. McDonald Chocolate Company, Salt Lake City, July 6, 1911.

by 1914 Utah ranked fifth among the states in canning. World War I stimulated further growth of this industry when twenty-two Ogden canneries secured government contracts.⁷ The development of the canning industry hinged on the availability of female workers. Many were young unmarried women, but the seasonal nature of canning operations also attracted married women who could join the work force for a while without permanently altering their domestic arrangements. A majority of these women were apparently not recorded as workers by the census. The Utah Manufacturers Association (UMA) reported 1,715 employees in thirty-five canneries in August 1913, but the 1910 census showed only fifty-eight cannery workers in the state, thirty-six of them male; the 1920 census fell far short of the UMA figures, too. The UMA defined canning as “light” work that could be “done as well by women and children as by men.” Tomatoes topped the list of canned items. Jets of hot steam followed by a cold spray loosened the skins so that a girl could peel fourteen to sixteen bushels a day. “Girls” helped to produce over 600,000 cases of Utah canned foods in 1913.⁸

Candy was a logical by-product of Utah’s booming sugarbeet industry. By 1916 Utah ranked third in the nation in sugar production, and Utah’s candies were being exported to such distant places as Tokyo. The number of women working in candy factories more than doubled between 1910 and 1920, rising from 178 to 459, according to the census. However, these figures



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Millinery store in Moab run by “Cap’s” mother who was a member of the Taylor family. She is on the right of Philander Maxwell, Sr., ca. 1910.

are probably low since, like canning, candy making has seasonal peaks that require part-time or temporary workers—most likely women—who may have eluded the census net. The J. G. McDonald Candy Company in Salt Lake City employed some 400 workers in 1914 in a new factory that featured a roof garden where employees took breaks. McDonald’s was one of the twenty-one wholesale and manufacturing confectioners along the Wasatch Front. At least one of these firms, the Miriam Brooks Candy Company, had a woman in top management.⁹

Textile mills and clothing factories continued to be major employers of women in the United States until outsourcing sent many such jobs to Third World countries later in the twentieth century. Historically, thousands of women



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Whitaker & Dallas Cigar Factory (located in Salt Lake City) interior showing cigars being made, May 24, 1905.

contracted to do piece work at home or were self-employed as dressmakers, seamstresses, tailoresses, and milliners. The self-employed sometimes parlayed their talents into business careers, opening small retail clothing shops in almost every city or town. In 1900 female dressmakers and seamstresses working outside of factories totaled 1,533 in Utah, while milliners and millinery dealers totaled 277. These numbers rose in 1910 but by 1920 had dropped to 759 and 219 respectively. However, as further evidence of Utah's continuing industrialization, the number of women working in textile mills and clothing factories rose from a reported 278 in 1900 to 553 in 1920. Underwear and work clothes were among the finished goods that found a market out of state, especially in mining towns.¹⁰

The ZCMI clothing factory, which shipped its overalls, jumpers, and other heavy cotton wear throughout the West and into Canada and Mexico, was managed by Annie H. Bywater, probably the most important woman in Utah manufacturing. Trained in the industrial center of Manchester, England, she was associated with ZCMI for many years and was described by the UMA as "a remarkably shrewd woman, with exceptional executive ability." She supervised a production line of 100 power-driven sewing machines, bought all the material used by the factory, and personally directed the filling of all the wholesale orders.¹¹

Whether Bywater received compensation comparable to male manufacturing executives is not known, but most female factory workers did



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Telephone operators, Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company, Salt Lake City, February 3, 1945.

not. The Utah Manufacturers Association, in an article on the knitting industry, noted that in 1915 Utah had thirteen knitting factories employing nearly 300 workers—mostly young women who earned an average of \$9.00 for a six-day week, \$1.50 above the legal minimum for women. Men employed in the same factories earned an average of \$17.00 a week, according to the UMA, which did not comment on the disparity.¹²

By 1920 the variety of products women were helping to make in factories included, among others, chemicals, soap, cigars, crackers and other baked goods, and sugar. Women also continued to be an important factor in the printing and publishing business where one out of every seven workers was a woman in 1920. Females had begun working as compositors as early as the 1880s when the *Salt Lake Herald* employed Sadie Asper. Asper and another woman, Mrs. E. E. Sylvester, served for a time as officers in the Salt Lake Typographical Union, Local 115.¹³

In all, the number of women engaged in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits in Utah rose less than 10 percent between 1900 when 2,440 such workers were counted and 1920 when the census enumerated 2,667. However,

the most significant fact concerning these women is not their number but the nature of their work and the work place. The individual dressmaker working out of her home was disappearing. Almost 800 abandoned this occupation, most of them in the 1910–20 decade. Nevertheless, the number of women in manufacturing grew. The growth of factory work for women was so rapid in the early twentieth century that it easily absorbed the loss of dressmakers. Fully a thousand new jobs were created for women in manufacturing and mechanical industries located primarily along the Wasatch Front.¹⁴ Additionally, some one thousand female workers may have gone uncounted by the census because of the seasonal or part-time employment already discussed. Except in agriculture, gainful employment for women at home was rapidly diminishing in importance.

It is difficult to appraise the role of women in agriculture. The number of female farmers and farm laborers in Utah declined from 1,013 to 887 between 1900 and 1920, but these census figures do not reflect the actual contribution of women to agriculture. The census reveals only how many women owned or operated farms or were paid laborers in farming. Although most farms were run by families and required the daily work of each family member, only the farm husband and hired hands were likely to be listed as gainfully employed by the census. The farm wife—who may have raised poultry and garden crops, made and sold dairy products, and kept the farm accounts in addition to managing the household, rearing the children, and assisting with seasonal farm chores—was seldom listed as employed by the census. Yet it seems obvious that her labor included an economic component lacking in the tasks of many urban housewives.

Rural farm women were among the last to benefit from electric service and improved household technology. As a result, their lifestyles changed more slowly than those of urban and rural nonfarm women. Because their work was essential to the success of the total farm operation, they seldom looked for employment elsewhere, although many of their daughters did. The census notwithstanding, agriculture was no doubt the principal occupation of Utah women in the first two decades of the twentieth century, just as it had been during the last of the nineteenth.¹⁵

Although a majority of Utahns still lived in rural areas in 1920, the margin was dwindling. Urbanization was proceeding at a steady pace. At the turn of the century 61.9 percent of the population was rural. A dramatic shift in the first decade of the twentieth century dropped the rural percentage to 53.7. This movement slowed in the 1910s, but by 1920 Utah's urban areas had attracted 48 percent of the population and, in the next decade, would take the lead. Nowhere was urban growth more visible than in downtown Salt Lake City where more than fifty major office buildings, warehouses, hotels and apartments, and other business and civic buildings were erected between 1900 and 1920. While hundreds of women found work in Utah's new factories,

many more found employment in communications, retail stores, and hotels in developing cities and towns throughout the state.¹⁶

Women's role in communications began in the 1860s when young single women as well as young men were trained as telegraph operators at the suggestion of Brigham Young. The telegraph remained an important link in the communications network in Utah in 1910 with 32 female and 215 male operators, numbers that had increased to 127 females and 250 males by 1920. But the telephone was gaining preference for many personal messages and was indispensable in intracity business transactions. From the beginning, women predominated as telephone operators. Only 23 males were Utah telephone operators in 1910 and 29 in 1920, while women operators in the state increased from 427 to 745 in the same period. Yet despite their early and persistent work in this field, few women advanced beyond the lowest supervisory positions.¹⁷

The jobs created for women by the expanding telephone system were among the 2,590 new positions women found in trade and transportation between 1900 and 1920. Job opportunities for women in these fields tripled in the first two decades of the twentieth century and doubled for men. That women found increased employment in retail stores is hardly surprising. By 1920 Utah's population stood at 449,396, having grown almost 60 percent since 1900. Immigration, especially of southern Europeans who came to work in mines and smelters and for the railroad, plus the highest birthrate since 1880, fueled the population growth. Growth, in turn created a demand for additional goods and services. By 1920 women filled 2,059 sales positions and 580 jobs as store clerks. They also found work in insurance, banking, and real estate. In addition, at least 223 women owned or managed retail businesses, a figure that may not include women who were co-owners of family enterprises.¹⁸

In the professions, the number of women more than doubled between the turn of the century and 1910 and increased by another 26 percent by 1920. Most of these women were concentrated in the fields of teaching and nursing. However, several hundred pursued careers in the visual, literary, and performing arts. The number of female physicians and surgeons dropped from a high of 55 in 1910 to 22 in 1920, while male physicians dropped from 481 to 439. Stricter professional standards may have prevented some practitioners from hanging out their shingles; but in the case of women, conditions that had encouraged them, especially in the developing West of the nineteenth century, had changed. Additionally, women's medical colleges had closed and coeducational institutions had begun limiting the percentage of female applicants accepted for medical school.¹⁹

Of the almost 2,900 new positions women found in professional fields during the first two decades of the twentieth century, more than 60 percent were as schoolteachers. That figure is not surprising in light of a school enrollment that had grown 140 percent in twenty years. With women averaging only five years in teaching, replacements were needed for one-fifth of the women teachers

every year, a challenge the state's colleges and the normal school at Cedar City were hard pressed to meet. Low salaries and the failure of local school boards to implement an 1896 state law mandating equal pay for female and male public schoolteachers accounted for much of the turnover. Rather than fight for their turf, women abandoned it. Many, according to the Utah Education Association, found greater financial rewards in office employment.²⁰

Whether they were former teachers looking for better pay or high school graduates who had taken classes in typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping, office workers were usually young, single, native-born white women. Office work appealed to them for very good reasons: "It was cleaner and less strenuous than factory work, and socially much more acceptable. Workers were paid a weekly salary rather than hourly wages, and work tended to be regular, layoffs less frequent." Equally important, no doubt, it put young women into legitimate contact with men, including potential husbands. Although some women encountered unfavorable working conditions—long hours, low pay, and sexual harassment—most did not.²¹

By 1900 women had gained a solid foothold in business offices, although 40 percent of the stenographers and typists were still men in 1900, and men outnumbered women as bookkeepers, accountants, and clerks. Women filled only 518 positions in these five job categories in Utah in 1900, but twenty years later their numbers had increased eightfold to 4,168. Utah enjoyed "unprecedented prosperity" until the end of World War I, and the heightened business and commercial activity of those years is reflected in the phenomenal growth of office jobs for women. No matter that most of these positions offered little opportunity for advancement, for few women thought of competing with men for promotion in the office hierarchy. The office, more than most other work places, mirrored for many employees a pattern of socialization (the patriarchal family) that they accepted with little question, then and for many years to come.²²

About a fourth of all gainfully employed women in Utah in 1920 found work in domestic and personal service. Although this category had increased from 4,519 female workers in 1900 to 5,458 by 1920, it could not keep pace with the growth of other occupational fields for women. During this twenty-year span, the number of servants declined by 600. Young women were refusing to enter such a low-paying, low-status occupation. Instead, they harkened to the whistles of commercial laundries or the clatter of dishes in the fast-growing cafe and restaurant business. The dozen new hotels in Salt Lake City gave hundreds of women jobs making beds and cleaning rooms. Although the tasks were similar to those performed in private homes by domestic servants, the pay was generally better for hotel workers and they were not on call twenty-four hours a day. Service workers outside of private homes also found greatly increased opportunities for socializing, even in the physically demanding environment of a steam laundry. They also encountered union activity.²³

During the first decades of the twentieth century “strong union organization and a high degree of job control . . . were . . . major features of skilled occupations in Salt Lake City and Ogden.”²⁴ Union activity was especially intense in the 1910–20 decade. In April 1911 an estimated two thousand people paraded in Salt Lake City in support of the laundry workers’ drive to achieve union recognition. Almost one-fourth of the seven hundred laundry workers went out on strike. The Crystal Laundry signed a closed-shop agreement with the union, and in May the remaining laundries agreed not to discriminate against union members.²⁵

Other unions had a more difficult time establishing themselves. On January 15, 1910, female employees of the McDonald Candy Company, claimed they were “underpaid considering the high price of living” and petitioned management for higher wages. When the company denied their request, the women returned to work; but when a foreman insulted them, they walked off the job and, with the help of union official J. G. Wilks and others, organized the Chocolate Dippers Union of Utah #1 with Sarah Rindfleish as president. The women wanted a flat \$10 wage per week for eight-hour work days. However, while the chocolate workers were organizing, helpers at the McDonald’s factory, typically girls age twelve to fifteen, replaced the strikers. The Utah State Federation of Labor and the Salt Lake Federation of Labor raised funds to help the chocolate dippers and asked all union members to refrain from buying McDonald products. There is no evidence that a boycott actually occurred or that the company policy was changed.²⁶

The most significant union activity involving women occurred after World War I when the Culinary Alliance succeeded in closing most of the restaurants in Salt Lake City as union members walked off the job at 6:00 p.m. on May 1, 1919. The union demanded “straight eight-hour shifts” with a twenty-minute break for a meal instead of the split shifts they typically worked. Dishwashers, vegetable peelers, and other miscellaneous male restaurant workers wanted a wage of \$2.50 per shift, and the union asked “that female waitresses be granted a minimum scale of \$2.25 per shift.” According to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, employers were willing to accede to the \$2.25 wage for waitresses but countered the other demands with offers of their own. As the strike dragged on—because of “the union’s insistence on a closed-shop agreement”—the publicity ended up helping Utah Associated Industries, an employers’ organization, in its effort to promote the American Plan (open shop) as the standard in Utah.²⁷

Unfortunately for union workers, 1919 was a watershed year in Utah. Radical elements appeared to be taking over the labor movement, triggering a backlash that effectively destroyed all that labor had gained in several decades of organizing efforts. The long-range effect of this collapse on the Utah work environment is difficult to assess.

As women became more visible in the work force, they became a subject for editorial comment. Locally, a Mormon periodical, the *Young*

Woman's Journal (1889–1929) displayed ambivalent attitudes toward women's roles in society during this period. A series of articles in 1891–92 discussed in rather heady language the opportunities for young LDS women in such fields as dentistry (“there is no good reason . . . why our girls should not crowd out the men from this easy, lucrative and fairly clean business”) and law. Stenography and typewriting were seen as “sedentary” occupations for girls who wanted to “dress up and look always ‘sweet’ and now-a-days that is a great thing.” As for merchandising, girls were advised to set their sights above a small millinery or candy shop and plan to own a general merchandise store. However, this series, “Professions and Business Opportunities for Women,” cannot be considered typical of LDS thought. The avowed purpose was to solve a perceived “surplus women problem” since polygamy had officially ended. The editorial page more accurately reflected Mormon values: God intended girls to become homemakers. Their math studies should prepare them for keeping domestic rather than commercial accounts. If misfortune kept a woman from marriage and motherhood there would be “time enough then to study the occult sciences [chemistry!] and dabble in stocks and real estate.”²⁸

Later articles in the *Young Woman's Journal* focused more realistically on women in industry and business rather than professions like dentistry and law. Girls were told how to prepare themselves for office work and how to conduct themselves on the job. Home and family remained “the big job” for young women to prepare themselves for, but office work could be a training ground of sorts for the responsibilities of marriage and something to fall back on should a woman need to earn a living later in life.²⁹

The Mormon attitude toward women who chose a career over marriage—or worse, perhaps, tried to combine them—fit right in the midstream of American thinking on this volatile topic. Nationally, even reformers like Florence Kelley worked to block “any programs that might have encouraged the employment of married women, such as day nurseries, charitably run kindergartens, or cash relief payments contingent upon women's accepting any available work.”³⁰ The working wife and mother might be decried from the pulpit and lecture platform and have many obstacles placed in her path, but she was part of a “long range shift in the female work force from young, single women to older, married women workers.”³¹

When the working mother could define her job as a matter of survival, rather than a social or political statement, she sometimes found allies. That was the case in 1894 when Emma McVicker, a prominent educator and state school superintendent during 1900–01, and other women leaders organized the Free Kindergarten Association that evolved into the Neighborhood House serving the west side of Salt Lake City. In addition to the kindergarten, Neighborhood House offered a day nursery, a library, sewing and other domestic classes, and club activities for girls, boys, and mothers. The program won support from all segments of society and even received a small yearly grant from the state.³²

Over the years, Neighborhood House outgrew its facility several times. It clearly filled a need in the lives of some working women, as its history notes: "During 1915–1916, the day nursery department . . . had a remarkable increase. Mothers engaged in work, were coming to appreciate the privilege of leaving their infants in the care of competent nurses. A charge of ten cents a day for each child was asked by the association if the mother could afford it, if not, the child was cared for regardless of circumstances."³³

Neighborhood House was "strained to the utmost" during World War I to meet the demands placed on it, but individuals came forward with donations of time and money so that services could continue to grow.³⁴ The broad support that Neighborhood House found in Salt Lake City did not, of course, signal a change in society's attitude toward working mothers. Rather, the community recognized a specific need in a specific place and responded appropriately.

The twenty-five-year span that began with statehood and the equal rights section in the Utah State Constitution and ended with ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution brought many dramatic changes to women's lives. Technology altered both the home and the work place. Urbanization and industrialization encouraged many rural dwellers, especially single women, to seek new lifestyles in cities and towns where automobiles, bobbed hair, and the fox-trot seemed to be ushering in a new age. More women found work outside the home, and more of them continued their education beyond high school. Although it is tempting to label these changes revolutionary, they were, in the main, evolutionary. Many changes had arrived on the wings of a healthy economy, but those wings were about to be clipped.

GAINS AND LOSSES IN THE 1920S

Economic growth in agriculture, mining, and manufacturing could not be sustained after the end of World War I, and Utah suffered a depression in the early 1920s. The immediate effect on the economy was "in some ways . . . worse than that of the crash of the early 1930s, although the optimistic 'boosterism' of business and governmental spokesmen camouflaged the earlier hard times to a degree. The aggregate current liability of Utah businesses that failed during the four years from 1921 to 1924 was actually greater than the liability of failures from 1931 to 1934. Retail sales during 1921 and 1922 were actually below the 1935–39 average."³⁵

The postwar economic distress in farming lasted throughout the 1920s and 1930s and affected entire families. Manufacturing, especially food processing, slumped without wartime contracts; and when the federal government dumped cases of stockpiled canned goods on the market, the industry was further undercut. The number of manufacturing firms in Utah dropped from a thousand in 1919 to 645 in 1921. The best women could do in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits was to remain in 1930 about where they had been in 1920, gaining only two dozen jobs in this category.³⁶

The kinds of jobs women held in manufacturing shifted during the decade. The number of dressmakers not working in factories and the number of milliners and millinery dealers continued to decline, following a trend that had begun in 1910. Offsetting these losses were notable gains in clothing factories and textile mills where women increased their number by more than 60 percent between 1920 and 1930 as 343 new jobs were created for them. Women also made gains in the furniture industry and as forewomen, managers, and manufacturers.³⁷

After 1922 the economic picture brightened. Growth in transportation, communications, construction, and tourism helped to spark the recovery.³⁸ A quick run-down of census figures in four important job categories for women shows that the number of female telephone operators increased by more than a third between 1920 and 1930. Women picked up 963 jobs in trade with two-thirds of the new positions found in sales. The number of office jobs for women continued to rise, up from 4,268 to 5,835 in 1930.

In the professional category, women gained 1,652 positions, most of them as teachers and trained nurses. None of these increases is surprising, for each carried on a trend established in earlier decades. What *is* surprising during the 1920s is the leap in the number of jobs for women in domestic and personal service. Service occupations rose from 5,458 in 1920 to 8,123 in 1930. Gains and losses within in this category reflect changing lifestyles. For example, the 1920 census counted only 84 hairdressers; ten years later there were 569. The first permanent waves had been given by London hairdressers in 1909, and bobbed hair had swept the fashion world in 1917. Utah women in the 1920s were obviously willing to pay hairdressers to arrange their locks in the latest styles.

More Utahns must have been dining out as well, for women gained 661 new jobs as cooks and waitresses, and about one in four eating establishments was operated by a woman. There were more elevator operators, dry-cleaning workers, and commercial laundry employees in 1930 than in 1920, while the number of home laundresses, midwives, and untrained nurses declined. These shifts in employment document an increasingly urban society's demand for a variety of services and the willingness of women to supply those services.

In 1930 the number of persons age ten or older in Utah stood at 386,347, 44 percent of whom were employed. When the census described these

Table 1
Gainfully Employed Utahns Age Ten or Older, 1930

Ethnic Group	Males Employed	Females Employed
Native-born whites	68.7%	15.6%
Foreign-born whites	86.4%	14.1%
Negroes	82.9%	29.0%
Other races	83.6%	10.7%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Census, *Fifteenth Census . . . 1930: Occupations, Utah, Table 6, p. 11.*

people in terms of their nativity, race, and gender, significant data were revealed. (See Table 1.)

Immediately noticeable are the high employment rate of foreign-born males, followed by other races and blacks, and the quite different rankings among females. It is reasonable to suppose that native white males were in a better position than other males to extend their educational years and join the ranks of the employed at a later age than immigrants and racial minorities. As for the high employment rate of black women, it does not necessarily validate the stereotypical image of large numbers of black households headed by women. The typical black household in Utah in the early twentieth century consisted of a husband, wife, and children. However, since "racial discrimination and the lack of educational skills generally limited black Utahns to employment opportunities in the servant or laborer categories," it seems likely that some black women ensured the family's economic survival by providing a second income.³⁹

The lower employment rate of women of other races (Native Americans and Asians) and foreign-born white women may have been due to cultural factors, in some instances. First-generation Greek women, for example, would have been most unlikely to seek work outside the home.⁴⁰ Language barriers and prejudice undoubtedly kept non-English-speaking women and non-white women out of burgeoning female fields such as teacher, trained nurse, telephone operator, sales, office work, and perhaps waitress and hairdresser as well. (See Table 2.)

More than 90 percent of the employed black women were in domestic and personal service. Although most were listed as servants, five were restaurant, cafe, or lunch-room keepers, three were waitresses, and six were boarding and lodging housekeepers. Two black women were trained nurses and one was a retail dealer. Women of other races enjoyed a wider variety of occupations. About 40 percent worked in manufacturing, the highest percentage of any group. Most of these were textile workers and may, in fact, have been Navajo women self-employed as weavers. Some owned or operated farms, retail stores, hotels, and restaurants. A few were nurses and schoolteachers, waitresses and saleswomen. Along with blacks, no Native Americans worked in candy factories, other food industries, or clothing manufacturing plants. None were telephone or telegraph operators or employed in public service. Fewer than 20 percent of them worked in Salt Lake City.⁴¹

Almost half of the foreign-born women were employed in domestic and personal service, many as servants. But they also worked in commercial laundries, kept boardinghouses, and ran hotels.⁴² They filled many more jobs in factories, offices, trade, and communications than non-white workers; and more were professionals—teachers, trained nurses, and librarians. Although native-born white women made up the bulk of the female work force in Utah, other foreign-born whites and women of other races made important contributions in proportion to their numbers in the population.

Table 2

Nativity and Race of Females Ten or Older in Major Census Employment Categories in Utah, 1930

Employment Sector	Total	Native White	Foreign White	Negro	Other Races
All categories	28,984	25,688	2,910	122	284
Agriculture	963	760	156	1	46
Extraction of Minerals	8	8	—	—	—
Manufacturing/Mechanical	2,701	2,139	450	4	108
Transportation/Communication	1,294	1,240	53	—	1
Trade	3,978	3,654	314	1	9
Public service	105	100	5	—	—
Professional service	5,977	5,726	235	5	11
Domestic/personal service	8,123	6,442	1,441	110	86
Clerical	5,835	5,576	255	1	1

Source: Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census . . . 1930: Occupational Statistics, Utah, Table 11, p. 16.*

In 1929 married women made up 17.4 percent of the female work force in Utah. Ten years later they accounted for 23.9 percent. As noted earlier, this was part of a long-term, nationwide trend. Some social critics in the twenties saw this pattern as the end of the family and of society itself. Deep levels of class and racial anxiety are revealed in some of the criticism directed toward middle-class white women who were accused, among other things, of committing “race suicide” by allowing the birthrate to decline.⁴³ Middle-class mores and fears obscured very real problems in the work place for wives and mothers who had to work: adequate wages, child care, health, etc. For lower-class women, many immigrants, and non-whites, working was not a feminist issue, a challenge to the social order, or a way to pay for luxuries or a child’s college education. Work meant bread on the table. Unfortunately, when women earned the bread, it was most often only half a loaf.

As one might expect, census statistics also show a gradual aging of the female work force. Compulsory education through high school is largely a twentieth-century phenomenon in the United States. In 1905, there were only 181 high school graduates in Utah. But as notions of education evolved and reaction against child labor mounted, the time was ripe for change. Utah’s compulsory education law was passed in 1919.⁴⁴ By 1930 there were 20 percent fewer girls between ages ten and seventeen at work in Utah than in 1920. All other age categories posted increases. The number of women ages twenty to twenty-four who were working grew by 37 percent; and among women twenty-five to forty-four, the growth rate was 47 percent. Women ages twenty to

forty-four made up over 73 percent of the female work force in 1930. In 1920 they had accounted for 63 percent of the working women.⁴⁵

By 1930 slightly more than one out of every six workers in Utah was a woman, and in Salt Lake City more than one-fourth of the work force was female. These women were older and more were married than ever before.⁴⁶ Overwhelmingly white, they formed, despite obstacles and objections, the essential core of workers in communications, education, hospitals, laundries, libraries, lodging and restaurant businesses, most offices, domestic service, and the manufacturing of textiles, clothing, and several food products. They also made significant contributions in retail trade, the printing industry, real estate, recreation, cleaning and dyeing, hair care, and the visual, performing, and literary arts. Although the Great Depression would subject these working women to new trials and criticism in the 1930s, they were sometimes in a better position than working men to retain their jobs unless they were married.

Despite the development of certain industries and services, the Utah economy grew at a slower rate than the national economy during the first three decades of the twentieth century. As a result, "jobs had not opened up fast enough to absorb those who wanted to work"; and unlike other western states, Utah had experienced a net yearly out-migration since 1910. The sluggish economy affected wages as well, and per capita income slid from 90.1 of the national average in 1900 to 79.5 percent in 1929. When the stock market crashed in 1929, the shock waves were immediately and severely felt in Utah. High freight rates further distressed agriculture and mining, while "weak labor organizations, a high birthrate, and a severe drought in 1931" compounded the economic woes. When the depression hit bottom, 35.8 percent of Utah's workers were unemployed, and more than 20 percent of the population was on relief.⁴⁷

The unemployed organized and protested, and the Socialist and Communist parties gained adherents, but the government at first did little. The 1931 state legislature could only recommend the "dismissal of working wives, no overtime work, and the saving of leftover food." These simplistic ideas did not pass muster at the local level, and every county in Utah had some relief plan for the unemployed in place by 1931. The following year, Reconstruction Finance Corporation funds began to trickle in, the beginning of a monumental federal relief program for Utah that would eventually provide thousands of women with jobs.⁴⁸

THE CHALLENGES OF THE 1930S

Women found work under the programs of the Civil Works Administration in 1933–34, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in 1934–35, and most important, under the Works Progress Administration from 1935 to 1943. After the scattershot projects of the CWA gave way to the FERA and WPA programs, a clear division became discernible between works or building projects (they employed mostly men and left the state with many visible improvements such

as roads, reservoirs, and school buildings) and service projects (that employed many women and left few, if any, tangible remains).

Service projects under both the FERA and the WPA fell into several broad categories: the manufacturing of clothing and household items, canning and other food programs, the arts, adult education, recreation, health, school lunches and other programs geared to children, and miscellaneous programs.⁴⁹

The Services Division of the WPA, under the direction of Ruby S. Garrett, was “set up . . . to provide projects for women, and create employment for artists, writers, musicians, clerical workers, teachers, and others who were not involved in . . . construction.” The WPA aimed “to include more professional people [than the earlier programs] and also recognize the problems of unemployed women who were heads of households.” The program promised improved working conditions for women and nondiscriminatory wages.⁵⁰

The manufacturing of clothing, first aid supplies, and household items employed 500 women. Many of those who were certified as eligible for WPA employment “began working here, as it was a ‘buffer project’ or labor pool.” Manufacturers who had at first objected to the project came to realize that clothing made for those on relief did not compete with their goods. During World War II, factory owners found that women trained by the WPA had become skilled workers who could make everything from uniforms to parachutes.⁵¹

Under the WPA the extensive canning projects of the earlier FERA program that had employed 100 women in Salt Lake City alone were abandoned, and food was preserved primarily for the school lunch program sponsored by the Utah State Board of Education, local boards, and other organizations.⁵²

From its inception during the 1935–36 school year, when 405 persons were employed, the WPA school lunch program grew each year until 1941–42 when it employed 858 persons in all twenty-nine Utah counties and served an average of 32,039 children every school day.⁵³ Mildred Younker, the school lunch supervisor in Cache County, described how her program worked:

In 1938 the food in Cache County was prepared in cooks’ homes and carried to the school; often WPA men or NYA men were assigned to this task of transporting the food. The women were paid \$5.00 per month for using their kitchens. However, as the program progressed, many kitchens were added to the schools. . . .

When school terminated in the spring, the cooks became seamstresses and made their own uniforms, with the state furnishing the patterns and material. During the summer many of the school lunch workers canned peas, corn, and fruits, and after the tomatoes were canned in October, the school lunch program began.⁵⁴

The WPA adult education programs involved 1,700 as teachers of a range of subjects from citizenship, art, and agriculture to health and vocational training. Nursery schools in fourteen Utah communities employed



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Women workers canning produce in Salt Lake City, ca.1930s.

needy professionals, assisted preschool children and parents from low-income families, and trained potential nursery school workers. During World War II, some of these nursery schools provided day care for the children of women working in war industries. WPA recreational programs that served thousands of Utahns grew out of earlier CWA and FERA efforts that had trained leaders and stimulated community interest. Both Salt Lake City and Ogden offered separate recreational programs for “colored” children and adults.⁵⁵

It is impossible to detail here all of the federal programs of the 1930s and early 1940s that employed women, but clearly their cumulative effect was enormous. Both professional women and skilled workers found employment in the arts and as nurses, teachers, administrators, social workers, cooks, factory

workers, recreational supervisors, and clerical workers. In addition, on-the-job training enhanced future employment opportunities for some women.

Although the 1940 census showed many women still employed on WPA projects, a majority of working women had jobs in the private sector. The female labor force totaled 33,888, of whom 28,777 were either at work or had jobs, while 2,078 were engaged in public emergency work (WPA) and 3,033 were looking for work. The job seekers included 2,195 experienced workers and 838 new workers hoping to find employment. The unemployment rate for experienced females was only two-thirds that of experienced males, one indication that working women may have fared better during the Great Depression than men.⁵⁶

The poor economic performance of agriculture, mining, and heavy industry put many skilled males out of work, while layoffs for women tended to be more sporadic. Over a third of the women at work were in office or sales positions like stenographer or department store clerk. Professional work, primarily as teachers and nurses, and various service occupations such as domestic servant, waitress, and hairdresser accounted for almost half of the jobs women held. The highly sex-segregated nature of most women's jobs belied the criticism often heard during the depression that working women were taking jobs away from men. An unemployed steel worker could not serve as an operating room nurse or style hair no matter how desperate his situation. Although sex stereotyping protected some women from layoffs during the depression, in the long run it reinforced trends that concentrated women in a few occupational categories at the low end of the pay scale.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, the popular belief that a woman at work kept a man in the unemployment line affected women in Utah and elsewhere. A spate of bills introduced in twenty-six state legislatures across the country sought to curtail the employment of married women. When the Utah House of Representatives passed its version of this discriminatory legislation, women rallied against it. The Salt Lake Council of Women, representing forty-two women's clubs, passed a resolution condemning H.B. 67 "and demanding that a public hearing on the bill be held." Judge Reva Beck Bosone, a former state legislator and future U.S. congresswoman, compared the abuse of women's rights to what was "going on in Germany and Italy" under fascism and pointed out to rural legislators that, under H.B. 67, their wives might be prohibited from selling butter and eggs while their husbands worked for the state.⁵⁸

Businesswomen and housewives joined in denouncing the measure which made it "unlawful for the state or any of its political subdivisions to employ a person whose husband or wife is regularly employed in private industry" and earning \$800 or more a year. Backers of the legislation claimed it was "aimed at one of the vultures that is tearing away at the very purse strings of economic recovery" and declared that the bill's intent was to place "a bread-winner in every household." Bosone countered that a similar measure in Washington,

D.C., had failed to distribute jobs more equitably and was later repealed. In the end, “only the lower houses of Ohio and Utah passed discriminatory bills.” However, the legislature issued a joint resolution requesting political units in the state not to hire persons who had an employed spouse or other family member living with them. The defeat of these bills nationally was an important victory for women who had learned from experience that it is easier to defeat legislation than to repeal it.⁵⁹

Despite the defeat of H.B. 67 in Utah, married women did lose jobs. Public schoolteachers were especially vulnerable because local school districts often “fired women teachers who married. Some women deeply resented this . . . and kept their marriage a secret as long as they could in order to keep working.” Female office workers in state government, the WPA, and private business sometimes lost their jobs upon marriage as well. As one might expect, women doing drudge work as domestic servants, migrant farmers, or laundresses did not offend society when they married and continued working.⁶⁰

The depression challenged women who were already in business or self-employed and tempted others to launch new businesses on the uncertain economic waters. The 1940 census shows 221 female farmers and farm managers and 1,587 other proprietors, managers, and officials. Another 2,503 women are listed elsewhere as employers or “own-account workers.” The latter figure certainly overlaps the other two, but, even so, the woman business owner or self-employed woman accounted for at least 8 percent of the employed females in Utah.⁶¹

Women had ventured into business from the earliest days of white settlement in Utah. The small millinery or dress shop and the boarding house were among the first businesses in almost every town. State and city directories provide yearly lists of women operating a variety of small businesses, and detailed community histories have preserved the names of many businesswomen.⁶²

Women in the small town of Gunnison in southwestern Sanpete County, for example, have owned or managed an impressive number of businesses over the years. Many businesses were jointly run with another family member—usually a husband, but there were also two mother-son operations and one business that teamed a daughter with her father. The enterprises included specialty stores, restaurants, motels, a theater, an insurance agency, a builders supply house, and a sawmill. Surprisingly, several of these ventures were founded during the depression: Iva Christensen opened a bonnet shop in Gunnison in 1931 and later expanded into infants’ and children’s wear and formal and wedding attire. Several motels built in the 1930s were owned by women or wife-husband teams. A sawmill established in 1930 and later operated by a woman and her son produced a half-million board feet of lumber in later years. Finally, in 1941, the last lean year before the war, Mr. and Mrs. Vance B. Peterson opened Valley Builders Supply that in less than two decades boasted branch stores in five other central Utah towns.⁶³

Gunnison was by no means unique in offering women entrepreneurial opportunities. The histories of Midvale, Payson, Richfield, and Murray—to name only a few—tell similar stories of women involved in private enterprise.⁶⁴ Metaphorically at least, these pioneering entrepreneurs can be called foremothers of such late twentieth-century business giants as Debbie Fields (chocolate chip cookies) and June Morris (Southwest Airlines), nationally and even internationally known in the food and travel industries.

Nevertheless, the historical role of women in business remains dimly perceived at best. Census data may not accurately reflect the number of women actively engaged in business as partners if the partner was also the husband. Furthermore, without business records and interviews with those involved it would be difficult to gauge what each partner contributed to the running of a business. It is fair to say, however, that women as sole proprietors, partners, and corporate officers have carved a sizeable niche for themselves in the Utah business community and that a number of them chose to begin during the depression.

While some women were opening stores and restaurants or seeing them foreclosed, other women, employees of the Utah State Industrial Commission, were monitoring the wages, hours, and working conditions of women throughout the state. When the first hours and wage laws affecting women were passed in 1911 and 1913, the State Bureau of Immigration, Labor, and Statistics was assigned the task of overseeing compliance. The reports of this bureau and, after 1917, of the Industrial Commission indicate that women investigators visited almost every city and town in Utah, examined payrolls and time sheets, and talked with employers and employees.⁶⁵

After some initial hostility most employers welcomed the investigators and attempted to comply with the laws. Relatively few violators were turned over to county attorneys for prosecution, for employers were usually ready to pay back wages to employees who had been underpaid or to adjust hours or improve restroom facilities rather than go to court; but in other instances, employees who refused to testify against employers for fear of losing their jobs forestalled court action.⁶⁶

One theme running through these reports is the inadequacy of the minimum wage: “The Utah female wage scale provides for a smaller wage than that fixed by any wage scale commission in any other State.” When the depression hit, some women took 5 to 30 percent wage cuts. The Industrial Commission report issued in 1932 noted that “in some cases women and girls were hardly able to eke out an existence and hundreds are without employment at all.” Even some employers joined with employees in requesting “a reasonable minimum wage for women.” After the minimum wage was repealed in 1929, some employees were paid as little as \$2 a week including meals. From mid-1933 to October 1936 the Women’s Division of the State Industrial Commission had no funds for inspection, and many employers failed to abide by the eight-hour law.⁶⁷

Under legislation enacted in 1911, the Industrial Commission adopted standards governing the welfare of women and minors in industry and made time and wage reports mandatory under an order that became effective on June 1, 1937. Wage boards were set up to recommend wages in retail trade, manufacturing, laundries, cleaning and dyeing establishments, restaurants, beauty shops, and canning and poultry packing. The U.S. Supreme Court had established the constitutionality of minimum wage laws for women and minors in March 1937, but the Utah law was challenged in the Utah Supreme Court by 125 retailers. In December 1938 the court ruled that the law was constitutional but that the wage order of the Industrial Commission had been implemented without following proper procedures.⁶⁸

To comply with the Utah Supreme Court order, a group of experts conducted a cost-of-living survey, completed in July 1939, and determined that working women needed a wage of \$19.42 a week “to protect health and morals and provide a standard of living essential to . . . well being.” As had happened in other states where minimum wage surveys were made, Utah responded to the report by setting a minimum wage considerably below the one recommended—\$10 to \$14 a week in different “zones” throughout the state.⁶⁹

While the mandatory wage orders were being formulated, the Industrial Commission surveyed retail stores, bakeries, hotels, cafes, beauty parlors, dry cleaners, laundries, offices, and hospitals in central and southern Utah in 1939. Its report, published as *Bulletin No. 5* in 1940, gives payroll data on 428 working women. The commission found hotel employees to be among the lowest paid and office workers the highest. At one hotel, investigators found “a girl who was on duty practically all the time for \$2 per week with board and room.” However, “the worst example of low pay for skilled work” was found in a drugstore where “a girl, working full time and being acquainted with the stock to such a degree that the owner could leave her alone in charge of the store for several hours” received only \$5 a week.⁷⁰

Most of the women surveyed worked eight-hour days and forty-eight hour weeks—the legal maximum for most jobs. However, many cafes worked their employees seven days a week at an average wage of \$7 plus meals. When restaurant owners cut weekly hours to comply with the law, most of the employees would lose a day’s pay, the investigator reported.⁷¹

Wage surveys in Salt Lake City and Ogden showed that urban wages were slightly higher than wages in rural nonfarm areas of the state. The weekly wage in Salt Lake City ranged from \$4 to \$22.50 with 50 percent of the women surveyed receiving between \$12 and \$14 a week. The very few women earning \$16 to \$22.50 had “extra” responsibilities.⁷²

WORLD WAR II’S NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The problems of the depression were not fully solved until World War II primed the economic pump. Women who had lost jobs, endured pay cuts, enrolled

in WPA projects, fought for the right to work, and struggled to launch new businesses or keep old ones solvent were ready to face the challenges of the greatest mobilization effort in American history. Gender, marital status, age, and experience would mean very little to employers during World War II, for Utah would have “a higher concentration of war workers than any other state in the Union” and would have to enlist many marginal workers to meet the demand.⁷³

Wartime need sent women into the work force in unprecedented numbers and opened many job categories to them. “Rosie the Riveter” became a symbol of women filling nontraditional jobs while men served in the armed forces, but society’s attitude toward Rosie and her female co-workers was ambivalent. On the one hand, government and industry actively courted women workers, sometimes providing day care and wage parity as incentives; on the other hand, women were sometimes harassed or ridiculed, given only minimal training, denied equal pay, and quickly dismissed after the war. Despite women’s varied experiences during World War II, “the evidence offers little support to those who suggest that the war was either a turning point or a milestone.”⁷⁴ The work force generally resumed the sex-segregated configuration of the prewar years in the late 1940s, and many “Rosies” returned home—where society told them they belonged—married G.I. Joes, and contributed to the postwar baby boom, suburban sprawl, and consumer demand for goods and services.

Almost 50,000 new jobs were created in Utah during World War II as military installations were built or expanded and war-related industries boomed. Operations at Hill Field, for example, required 15,000 civilian workers, and the Remington Small Arms Plant in Salt Lake City employed 10,000. Besides these new jobs, the war found many established businesses and industries looking for workers to replace employees who enlisted or were drafted. By the end of 1942, the worker shortage was acute.⁷⁵

The canning industry and the public schools—traditional employers of women—reported staffing problems in September 1942. Gus P. Backman, vice-chairman of the Utah Council of Defense, urged school boards and other community organizations to respond to the canning plant emergency in northern Utah where 450 workers were needed to process tomatoes before the crop spoiled. The problem arose because “some students, mothers and teachers quit jobs at the factories” when the new school year started. The Salt Lake City School District reported a shortage of schoolteachers and clerical workers as government and industry attracted school personnel with high wartime wages. Students replaced clerical workers in some school offices.⁷⁶

The increased wartime need for processed foods created a demand for women workers at other factories in Utah. One young Mexican American widow with a child to support began working for the Purity Biscuit Company during World War II. With overtime and double shifts, she sometimes earned as much as \$100 a week, which enabled her to help her family make the down payment on a home in Salt Lake City. Although she later remarried, this energetic woman



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Women working in the parachute factory located in Manti, during World War II.

continued to contribute to her family's income by working as a candy dipper, making—with the help of her children—as many as 100 dozen tortillas a week for local Mexican restaurants, quilting, and doing other needlework.⁷⁷

Classified advertising reflected the new labor needs by soliciting both men and women for traditional male jobs like drill press operator and bus driver. From the number of newspaper advertisements for female laundry workers, chocolate dippers, and waitresses, it seems apparent that many women left those low-paying jobs to work in defense plants.⁷⁸

The job market changed dramatically for women in 1942. One nineteen-year-old woman who had spent many months looking for work and felt lucky when she found a half-day job in a department store tea room suddenly found Salt Lake City full of job opportunities. When Remington began taking applications, she tried for a position and was hired. The lure, of course, was full-time work and much higher pay. She worked rotating shifts as a final inspector of small cartridges for about \$30 a week. All her co-workers were women, except for the supervisors and machine repairmen. The work called for good hand-eye coordination in machine-checking cartridges for quality control. The routine sounds monotonous and the rotating shifts were hard on one's biological clock, but this young woman enjoyed the work and was able to widen her circle of acquaintances because the plant attracted workers from



Courtesy of Kennecott Utah Copper.

Women workers at the Kennecott Mine/Smelter during World War II.

many outlying towns. She and her co-workers enjoyed the new freedom of stopping for a late evening meal at a downtown Chinese restaurant when they worked the swing shift and sharing a variety of social activities such as dancing at Saltair on their days off.⁷⁹

This young Remington worker was one among thousands who contributed to the “marked increase in the number of women workers in private industry between January 15 and October 15, 1942.” During this nine-month period, the number of women in manufacturing rose by almost 7,000, while wholesale and retail trade posted a gain of 1,000; transportation, communications, and utilities 700; and construction 500. Most of the women in Utah’s booming construction business held clerical or secretarial positions. Although the new jobs were concentrated in the Wasatch Front counties of Salt Lake, Weber, Utah, and Davis, most outlying counties noted some gains. The number of women in manufacturing in Sanpete County, for example, almost tripled when a parachute factory opened. Tooele women gained 125 new jobs in construction; and spurred by the building of Bushnell Hospital near Brigham City, several hundred women in Box Elder County found work in construction, manufacturing, and trade. Only Uintah, Summit, and Rich counties showed losses in jobs for women during this period.⁸⁰

Employment prospects were brighter than they had ever been for women in Utah; but the job market fluctuated, reflecting seasonal employment in food processing and retail trade and, in 1943, heavy losses in manufacturing as Remington phased out its Salt Lake City operation. However, some industrial

occupations barred to women were so shorthanded in late 1943 and early 1944 that “legal barriers were set aside” and over a thousand women “worked in these occupations during the last two years of the war.” A special order permitting women to work in what were considered hazardous jobs enabled steel plants and rolling mills to hire 669 women, copper mines to place 452 women “in jobs ordinarily held by men,” and copper and lead smelters to engage 87 women.⁸¹

The Utah Department of Employment Security estimated total female employment during the wartime peak at 64,510 in June 1943 and 66,334 in September 1943. By December 1946 the number of employed women had dropped to an estimated 50,852 and three months later to 45,972.⁸²

New jobs poured money into the economy. The 1942 payroll for business and industry in Utah eclipsed by \$100 million the largest payroll of the late 1920s and by \$80 million the record payroll of 1941. These figures do not include the payrolls of federal, state, and local governments, farms, or domestic service.⁸³

Some households that had struggled through the 1930s on less than one full-time worker’s paycheck sent father, mother, and older children off to jobs in the 1940s. Large installations like the Clearfield Naval Supply Depot encouraged the employment of several members of one family by opening a nursery for employees’ children in May 1944. Higher family income, changing family lifestyles, and some boomtown conditions brought prosperity and opportunity to many homes, but some suffered the consequences of divorce, juvenile delinquency, and other social problems.⁸⁴

Some companies like Remington paid workers in Utah less than their workers received in other parts of the country; nevertheless, local manufacturers protested, apparently fruitlessly, that wages were still above the level they were used to paying. Women with typing and shorthand skills found themselves in a seller’s market. Local businesses that complained about the salaries paid office workers by the military and defense industries were told the pay was civil service standard.⁸⁵

Although the Remington plant filled its urgent wartime mission in less than two years and closed, some historians feel it exercised a “powerful effect on the labor market and industrial potential of Utah” by training thousands of workers in assembly-line procedures and other mechanical, industrial, and technological skills.⁸⁶ No doubt the training programs at Remington, Hill Field, and other installations offered Utah workers, especially women, unusual opportunities to train for industrial jobs; and the postwar growth of Utah’s manufacturing sector enabled some women to transfer their wartime skills to other jobs.

If World War II led women to new work opportunities, it also exposed them to familiar types of harassment and condescension. At the Ogden Arsenal, for example, employees were chastised for jeopardiz[ing] “the safety of their fellow employees by indulging in playful pranks that are definitely childish

in nature and extremely dangerous.” Women were the victims and men the perpetrators of all the “pranks” cited, which ranged from threatening a woman with a dead snake to taking a “playful swing” at a woman. Three of the incidents required hospitalization, and two appear to have had sexual overtones. On a more positive note, the arsenal newsletter, the *Bombshell*, featured stories on outstanding women workers. One forelady was commended for her success in conducting a blood drive, and three “girls” who cleaned gun barrels were praised for performing a dirty job well. The writer nevertheless felt obliged to assure readers that however “dirty” the women gun cleaners looked in the accompanying photograph, they were all “pretty” after they washed up.⁸⁷

During World War II, long-term trends in the number, age, and marital status of working women in Utah were greatly accelerated. While the population of females age fourteen and over increased 22 percent between 1940 and 1950, the number of employed females over age fourteen rose by 68 percent. In 1940 women ages twenty to twenty-four accounted for one in every four female workers. By 1950, the swing to older women that had begun earlier found those ages thirty-five to forty-four dominating the work force. With the shift to an older work force, it is not surprising that the census found that more than half of the women employed in Utah in 1950 were married and living with their husbands.⁸⁸

White females made up the vast majority of Utah working women, with only 277 black women and 845 women of other races listed as employed in the 1950 census. These numbers reflect the general population of Utah, still overwhelmingly Caucasian in 1950. Black working women were clustered in the service occupations. Only twelve were clerical workers—the largest single female job category in Utah—and one suspects that most of them were employed in black-owned businesses. There were actually more black women managers, officials, and proprietors (twenty) than black clerical workers, and only twenty-one held jobs in industry, including manufacturing. Women of other races found jobs primarily in industry, service occupations, offices, and as farm workers in that order. The role of Mexican women in migrant farm workers’ families in Utah has been largely ignored. It is an area ripe for historical research.⁸⁹

THE POSTWAR RETURN TO TYPE

When the war ended, women could take pride in the many contributions they had made toward winning the war. Their willingness to fill a wide variety of job assignments was as essential to the successful prosecution of the war as the enlistment of men in the armed forces. But pride and patriotism were not enough to sustain women and men who found themselves out of work at the end of World War II. The Department of Employment Security handled thousands of applications for unemployment benefits beginning in late 1945. In January 1946, a record 10,566 claims for unemployment insurance were filed in Utah. Many of the unemployed quickly found new jobs. However,

some workers insisted on jobs identical to ones they had lost, even when the prospective availability of such jobs was almost nil. Workers unprepared to face the new realities of the postwar economy, including lower wages, were often disqualified from receiving unemployment benefits. Those denied benefits included, for example, a former female platen press operator who refused other work in a print shop and an unskilled female war industry employee who refused unskilled work in a candy factory. This unskilled woman was one of thousands of “marginal workers” who found employment during the war because of the high demand for workers of any kind.⁹⁰

By 1950 the Utah economy had attained “a measure of stability” with its basic sectors of mining, manufacturing, and agriculture providing diversity in employment. Interstate transportation, communications, utilities, finance, trade, tourism, government, and nonprofit organizations added strength to the basic triad.⁹¹ Although many female workers left the ranks of the gainfully employed after World War II, many did not. The number of Utah women in the work force in 1950 stood at 57,294, with 54,018 actually employed and 3,239 looking for work. Only 82 of the unemployed were new workers.⁹² Census data show the kinds of jobs women held after the war boom, compared with 1940 statistics. (See Table 3.)

The tremendous rise in the number of clerical workers—the only category other than private household workers that women rather than men dominated numerically—demonstrates more graphically than any other statistic that World War II did not create major changes in the job patterns of women. After the war, most working women still filled jobs typically associated with females: stenographer, typist, waitress, laundress, nurse, teacher, food processor, and textile or clothing factory worker.

The number of women at work in 1950 represents an astonishing leap of more than 87 percent over the 1940 figure. But the 1940 economy was still depressed; only 17.6 percent of the women age fourteen or older were employed, the same percentage as in 1930. Had the economy posted even a modest growth rate in the thirties, more jobs would have been created, and the 1950 employment figure would not look so impressive.

Except for the depression and other lesser setbacks, Utah’s economy generally grew and diversified during the fifty-five years following statehood. As a result, the female work force grew and diversified, for women have almost always accepted whatever jobs and economic opportunities were available. World War II refueled a stagnant economy and increased job diversity, but the major trends for working women ran as deep as wagon ruts on an old trail. The war diverted attention from the main path that women were traveling to such passing sights as women cleaning gun barrels or helping to roll steel. Women proved they could do it, but the necessity of their doing it was short-lived. Women who held typically male jobs during the war did not attempt in any significant number to breach other male bastions after the war or remain

Table 3*Major Occupation Groups of Employed Women in Utah, 1950 and 1940*

Employment Sector	1950	1940
Total employed	54,018	28,077
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	8,043	5,500
Farmers and farm managers	277	221
Managers, officials, proprietors except farm	2,673	1,454
Clerical and kindred workers	17,812	7,858
Sales workers	5,864	3,077
Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers	787	280
Operatives and kindred workers	5,307	2,803
Private household workers	2,671	2,628
Service workers except private householders	8,522	4,193
Farm laborers, unpaid workers	505	99
Farm laborers, except unpaid and foreman	267	44
Laborers except farm and mine	324	146
Occupation not reported	966	474

Source: Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1950 . . . Utah, Table 29, pp. 33–44.

in the steel mills.⁹³ Rather, they kept by and large to their well-worn trail until the civil rights and feminist movements of later decades led them to challenge, among other things, professional school enrollment policies, career ladders that advanced only males, and unequal pay.

Over the years, women worked in many occupational categories, but by far the greatest number were employed in sex-stereotyped jobs that offered few opportunities for advancement. Some lived out their working years as poorly paid domestic servants; other were physicians and artists, and some ran their own businesses. Most worked on farms or in offices, factories, hotels, hospitals, schools, restaurants, and stores. They entered and left the work force primarily out of economic necessity but also to fill other personal, family, or career goals. Education, marriage, the birth of children, the growing up of children, divorce, widowhood, spinsterhood, race and ethnicity, patriotism, and probably even boredom affected their need to work or their choice to do so.

The number of women at work grew from 11.2 percent of the females age ten and older in 1900 to 24.4 percent of the females age fourteen and older in 1950. By 1950 almost one out of every four workers in Utah was a woman, and in Salt Lake City 30 percent of the work force was female. But for some these women remained as mysteriously unseen as if they were in purdah. An economist and bank vice-president writing a 1956 textbook would note “the extremely small percentage of women who are gainfully employed” in Utah.⁹⁴ Men ran the working world and that was the important and visible thing. That they could never have run it without the labor of women did not occur to most men or women in the 1950s.

POSTSCRIPT: FAST FORWARD TO A NEW CENTURY

The civil rights and feminist movements, as well as changing national and world economic conditions, affected women workers and the workplace environment in many ways during the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. These changes lie beyond the scope of this essay; nevertheless, noting a few trends and changes may help to place the working women discussed in this article in a broader historical context.

It is important to note that data currently available show that certain long-term trends in the employment of women are expected to continue. According to a Utah Department of Employment Security forecast issued in 1987, some 62 percent of women over age sixteen would be employed by the year 2000.⁹⁵ This prediction proved fairly accurate. Census data compiled by the state in July 2003 indicate that 60.9 percent of Utah females were employed, compared to 68.7 percent of males.⁹⁶ These data from the 2000 census show that, at the beginning of the new millennium, gainful employment had become almost as important to Utah women as to men.

The state's largest employers now include local, state, and federal government agencies, including Hill Air Force Base; educational institutions both public and private (e.g., Brigham Young University), Intermountain Health Care, Wal-Mart Associates, Convergys, and Kroger Group. Mining, once a keystone of the Utah economy and a male-dominated industry, now employs fewer than 7,000 workers, while fields associated with women as well as men—education and health—produced more than 22,000 jobs between 1998 and 2002. Utah's population, close to 2.5 million in 2002, requires such steady job growth.⁹⁷

Perhaps the most significant population figure in the new millennium will prove to be the continuing rise in the number of non-white residents. One in ten Utahns is now identified as of "Hispanic" ancestry, and the number of Utahns with Asian or Pacific Island ancestry has grown in recent decades.

Two other trends, both significant to women, are wage parity and entrepreneurship. According to the AFL-CIO, "working women in Utah are not as far along the road to equal pay as women in most states," earning only 71.1 percent as much per hour as men. Nationwide the figure is 77.6 percent. In fact, Utah ranks dead last among the fifty states in equal pay. "At the current rate of change, working women in Utah—as well as . . . nationwide—won't have equal pay until after 2050."⁹⁸ For minority women the road will most likely be even longer.

The issue of equal pay for equal or similar work is not the same as actual wages paid. Statistics compiled by the prestigious Institute for Women's Policy Research show that Utah ranked thirty-fifth among the states in women's median annual earnings in 1997. Other significant findings in this report show that Utah women ranked fifteenth in labor force participation in 1998.⁹⁹ This

ranking corrects the popular stereotype that Utah (i.e., Mormon) women are not as likely to work outside the home as other women. Without attempting to challenge that stereotype, one might assert that the number of Utah women at work may also demonstrate the changing nature of gainful employment. In the twenty-first century (as during World War II) employers appear willing to make work schedules for women and men more flexible and accommodating for working parents and to make commuting easier. Moreover, changing technology has made the home itself a potential work site for many workers, including women, both nationally and in Utah.

Finally, one should acknowledge that in 2004 Utah was ranked number one nationwide in the growth of female-owned businesses. Utah had 102,194 such businesses employing 217,260 workers, with sales of almost \$22.8 million.¹⁰⁰ “Female-owned” is defined as owning 50 percent or more of a business. These female entrepreneurs have followed in the pioneering footsteps of the industrious Utah women who opened every kind of business from millinery shops, to motels and restaurants, to building supply stores in the early decades of the twentieth century. It is possible that entrepreneurship may prove to be one of the hallmarks of Utah women. That’s for future historians to decide.

NOTES

1. Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 7, 5. This is an excellent general history of working women in the United States. Other useful works include Barbara Mayer Wertheimer, *We Were There: The Story of Working Women in America* (New York: Pantheon Books 1977) and Joseph A. Hill, *Women in Gainful Occupations, 1870 to 1920: A Study of the Trend of Recent Changes in the Numbers Occupational Distribution and Family Relationship of Women Reported in the Census as Following a Gainful Occupation* (1929; reprinted, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978). My introductory historical summary is based primarily on Kessler-Harris.
2. Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*, 22.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, 53, 59.
5. Although Mormon leaders orchestrated the settlement of Utah and introduced cooperative and communal institutions that flavored both economic and social life, census data show that the unique features of life in Utah did not affect income-earning women to any degree. The variety and number of jobs held in Utah, the West, and the United States as a whole ultimately depended on local resources and needs. The development of manufacturing and trade almost inevitably led to the employment of more women, whereas mining and heavy industry did not. Utah’s first large factory, the Provo Woolen Mills, opened in 1872 and employed many women, especially immigrants who had obtained their skills in the textile mills of England and Scotland. See article describing the “young lady operators” in “Provo Woolen Mills,” *Deseret News*, July 24, 1897, 23.

6. Mining and railroad towns developed along different lines. Many, like Corinne, existed for only a few years and had fewer female than male residents. Others endured and offered women a mix of business opportunities in lodging, food service, retailing, etc., early on in their development. See, for example, Aird G. Merkley, ed., *Monuments to Courage: A History of Beaver County* (Milford, Utah: Beaver County Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1948), 216–17, 242–46, 267–71, 272, 312–14, for notations on dozens of working women and female business owners in the mining and railroad towns of Beaver County. Ann Vest Lobb and Jill Mulvay Derr, “Women in Early Utah,” in *Utah’s History*, edited by Richard D. Poll, Thomas G. Alexander, Eugene E. Campbell, and David E. Miller (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), esp. 338–46, provide a good overview of women during the early settlement period and their economic roles.
7. Leonard J. Arrington and Thomas G. Alexander, *A Dependent Commonwealth: Utah’s Economy from Statehood to the Great Depression*, Charles Redd Monographs in Western History, No. 4. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1974), 41.
8. “Canning Factories in Utah,” *Payroll Builder* (publication of the Utah Manufacturers Association) 1 (August 1913): 6–8; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States . . . 1910*, Vol. 4, *Population 1910: Occupation Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914), occupational tables beginning on p. 138 (note: cannery workers are divided between laborers and semiskilled operatives); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States. State Compendium: Utah* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1924), 38.
9. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population 1910: Occupational Statistics*, Table 2, beginning p. 138; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States . . . 1920*, Vol. 4, *Population 1920: Occupations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), Table 15 beginning on p. 116; Arrington and Alexander, *A Dependent Commonwealth*, 39, 42; R W. Eardley, “James G. McDonald,” *Payroll Builder* 3 (June 1915): 16–20. City directories for Salt Lake City, Ogden, Provo, and Logan list candy manufacturers.
10. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States . . . 1900*, Vol. 2, *Population, Part 2* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Office, 1902), Table 93, pp. 540–59; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population 1910: Occupation Statistics*, Table II beginning on p. 138; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population 1920: Occupations*, Table 15 beginning on p. 116 (it is necessary to add several job categories together to arrive at totals); Arrington and Alexander, *A Dependent Commonwealth*, 41–42.
11. “The Overalls Industry,” *Payroll Builder* 5 (November 1917): 45.
12. “Industries of Utah: The Knitting Industry,” *Payroll Builder*, May 1915, 8.
13. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population 1920: Occupations*, Table 15, beginning on p. 116 (including laborers, semiskilled operatives, apprentices, linotype operators, engravers, editors, reporters); Miriam B. Murphy, “The Working Women of Salt Lake City: A Review of the *Utah Gazetteer*, 1892–93,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (Spring 1978): 135; J. Kenneth Davies, *Deseret’s Sons of Toil: A History of the Worker Movement in Territorial Utah* (Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing, 1977), 168–69, 174–75.

14. See census tables previously cited. The census categorized the individual dressmaker, seamstress, tailoress, and milliner as manufacturing workers. Hundreds of women left these independent occupations; however, the *total* number of women in manufacturing rose anyway because more women were at work in factories of various kinds.
15. Arrington and Alexander, *A Dependent Commonwealth*, 35–38, describe the 1910–20 agricultural economy. In 1920 there were 25,700 farms in Utah. If only one woman per farm contributed to the farm's production, that number (25,700) would exceed by almost 4,000 the total number of employed women in all occupations in Utah (21,783).
16. *Ibid.*, Table 2.1, p. 49. John S. McCormick, *The Historic Buildings of Downtown Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1983) lists building dates for most of the structures in the downtown area. My count is based on buildings included in this book.
17. Miriam B. Murphy, "The Telegraph Comes to Utah," *Beehive History* 8 (1982): 29–31. See also tables previously cited.
18. See census tables previously cited; Poll et al., *Utah's History*, Table D, 688; and Helen Z. Papanikolas, "The New Immigrants," *ibid.*, 447–49.
19. Kessler-Harris, *Out of Work*, 114, 116–17.
20. John Clifton Moffitt, *A Century of Service, 1860–1960: A History of the Utah Education Association* (Salt Lake City: Utah Education Association, 1960), 455–64.
21. Wertheimer, *We Were There*, 233. Some fifty women who worked in Utah responded to a two-page questionnaire on the conditions of their employment. These questionnaires are in my possession. For a summary of their responses pertaining to office employment, see Miriam B. Murphy, "Women in the Utah Work Force from Statehood to World War II," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 50 (Spring 1982): 152–54.
22. See census tables previously cited. Arrington and Alexander, *A Dependent Commonwealth*, 54, 57–60; Lois Scharf, *To Work and to Wed: Female Employment, Feminism, and the Great Depression* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 13.
23. See census tables previously cited. Considered a step above domestic servants, women laundry, hotel, and restaurant workers performed their tasks under some of the most grueling conditions of any laborers. See Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*, 236; Wertheimer, *We Were There*, 214–17.
24. Arrington and Alexander, *A Dependent Commonwealth*, 84.
25. Karl Alwin Elling, "The History of Organized Labor in Utah (1900–1920)" (M.S. thesis, University of Utah, 1962), 98–99. In addition to the laundry workers and other workers cited below, Elling notes that Bessie S. Seabolt organized the Utah Association of Public Multigraph Operators in February 1914 (81). The organizing of telegraphers in April 1918 cost seven women their jobs (87–88). The union activities of women in industry contrast sharply with organizations like the Capitol Girls Club, founded in 1921 to provide social activity for women employed in various state offices. See Capitol Girls Club Records, 1937–44, Utah State Historical Society Library, Salt Lake City.
26. *Ibid.*, 95–96; "Chocolate Girls Organize Union," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 23, 1910, 32.

27. Elling, "The History of Organized Labor," 105–6; *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 2, 1919; Thomas G. Alexander, "From War to Depression," in Poll et al., *Utah's History*, 471.
28. Dr. Caroline Hedger, "Making Good on the Job," *Young Woman's Journal* 33 (March 1922): 163–67.
29. "Her Business Life," Lesson 7 of Latter-day Saint Women, Senior Course of Study, *Young Woman's Journal* 33 (October 1922): 623–26.
30. Quoted in Scharf, *To Work and to Wed*, 17. Scharf calls combining a career and marriage "the dominant feminist issue of the 1920s" (20).
31. Susan Ware, *Holding Their Own: American Women of the 1930s* (Boston: Twayne Publisher, 1982), 199.
32. Lela Horn Richards, *The Growth of Neighborhood House* (Salt Lake City: Neighborhood House, 1929).
33. *Ibid.*, 10–11.
34. *Ibid.*, 12. Almost 24,000 women volunteered to aid the war effort doing thirty-five different kinds of work. In addition to volunteering, women also took paid employment. A committee chaired by Mrs. E. F. Morris "helped many patriotic girls and women to secure and hold places made vacant by the enlistment of men for military service." Noble Warrum, *Utah in the First World War* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Council of Defense, 1924), 122–23. It is difficult to document women's wartime work. The best guess is that Utah's booming factories provided many more jobs for women in food processing and the manufacturing of clothing. See 1917–18 issues of *Payroll Builder*. World War I may also have allowed women to increase their number in office jobs, an area that had been feminizing rapidly since the turn of the century.
35. Alexander, "From War to Depression," 469.
36. *Ibid.*, 467. Arrington and Alexander, *A Dependent Commonwealth*, 71.
37. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930; Occupational Statistics, Utah* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1931), Table 4, beginning p. 6. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population 1920: Occupations*, Table 15 beginning p. 116. All data cited for 1920 and 1930 hereinafter are drawn from these two tables unless otherwise noted.
38. Alexander, "From War to Depression," 469–71.
39. Ronald G. Coleman, "A History of Blacks in Utah, 1825–1910" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah of Utah, 1980), 70, 80. Black Latter-day Saints, for example, typically lived in "family units." See *ibid.*, App. B, pp. 226–28, for a listing of black workers from 1870 to 1910. For a thought-provoking comment on the stereotyping of black women, see Ware, *Holding Their Own*, 13. Black women were often employed at the bottom of the pay scale or in service jobs but not necessarily because they lacked education or skills. Mignon Richmond, who graduated from Utah State Agricultural College in 1921, failed "to find work as a teacher and for many years worked as a laboratory technician and school lunch supervisor." Ronald G. Coleman, "Blacks in Utah History: An Unknown Legacy," in *The Peoples of Utah*, edited by Helen Z. Papanikolas (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1976), 139.

40. Helen Z. Papanikolas, conversation with Miriam B. Murphy, May 1979.
41. Helen Z. Papanikolas and Alice Kasai, "Japanese Life in Utah," in *The Peoples of Utah*, describe a boardinghouse run by Suga Iwanoto in Latuda, Utah, and women's involvement in farming (338–39). Don C. Conley, "The Pioneer Chinese of Utah," *ibid.*, 268, notes a Chinese enterprise, the King Doll Hospital. One of the King daughters, Ruth M., became a physician.
42. Joseph Stipanovich, *The Southern Slavs in Utah: A Social History* (San Francisco: R. and E. Research Associates, 1975) 80, describes boardinghouses kept by Slavic women in Utah. These small operations may not have been tabulated in the census. Some Italian women also kept boardinghouses and worked as clerks in family-owned businesses like the Double Rock Store in Helper, Utah. Philip F. Notarianni, conversation with Miriam B. Murphy, May 1979.
43. Kessler-Harris, *Out of Work*, 252.
44. John Clifton Moffitt, *The History of Public Education in Utah* (Provo, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1946), 190–91.
45. U.S. Bureau of Census, *Population 1920: Census Occupations*, Table 16, 442–43; U.S. Bureau of Census, *Fifteenth Census . . . 1930: Occupational Statistics*, Table 11, 16.
46. U.S. Bureau of Census, *Fifteenth Census . . . 1930: Occupation Statistics, Utah*, Table 3, p. 5, Tables 13, 14, p. 20.
47. John F. Bluth and Wayne K. Hinton, "The Great Depression," in Poll et al., eds., *Utah's History*, 481–83.
48. *Ibid.*, 484–85.
49. FERA projects involving women are described in some detail in Federal Writer's Project, "Utah's Program of Work Relief under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, April 1, 1934 to July 1 1935," typescript, Utah State Historical Society Library: clothing, 24–25; canning, 25–28; household domestic goods, 28–29; public health, 31; recreation, 31–32; nursery schools and school lunch programs, 32–35. Ella B. Heim was director of the women's department and Mrs. V. M. Parmelee of social service. Larry H. Malmgren, "A History of the WPA in Utah" (M.S. thesis, Utah State University, 1965). See also LaVon B. Carroll, "Melba Judge Lehner and Child Care in the State of Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 61 (Winter 1993): 40–62, for a detailed look at the WPA and Lanham Act nursery schools and the women involved in them.
50. Malmgren, "A History of the WPA in Utah," 81–82.
51. *Ibid.*, 42–67.
52. *Ibid.*, 104.
53. *Ibid.*, 106.
54. *Ibid.*, 107–8.
55. *Ibid.*, 97, 98–100, 108–9.
56. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population, Second Series: Characteristics of the Population, Utah* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1941), Table 16, p. 28. Women seem to have been less vulnerable psychologically to the problems created by the depression, especially job loss. See Scharf, *To Work and to Wed*, 140–41, and

- John S. McCormick, "Women in Utah during the Great Depression," Utah Women's History Association Lecture in Midvale, January 24, 1984; photocopy of typescript in my possession, courtesy of McCormick.
57. Ware, *Holding Their Own*, 35.
 58. Scharf, *To Work and to Wed*, 55; O. N. Malmquist, "Utah House Head for Bills Record," *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 6, 1939, 1, 6.
 59. "Utah's Houses Resume Duties Today," *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 14, 1939, 7; "Working Wives Ban Doubtful," *Deseret News*, February 16, 1939, 6; Scharf, *To Work and to Wed*, 56, 58; State of Utah, *Senate Journal* (Salt Lake City: State of Utah, 1939), 597.
 60. Murphy, "Women in the Work Force," 146, 153; G. A. Done, Letter to Gov. Henry H. Blood, March 29, 1933, and Blood, Letter to Done, May 2, 1933, in Henry H. Blood, General Correspondence collection, Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City. Done complained about a married woman who worked for the state while her husband was employed in private business. The woman was probably fired, since she is not listed as employed in subsequent city directories. See also Scharf, *To Work and to Wed*, 104–5. Vicente V. Mayer, "After Escalante: The Spanish-Speaking People of Utah," in Papanikolas, ed., *The Peoples of Utah*, 447, describes the "harsh realities of migrant life."
 61. U.S. Bureau of Census, *Population, Second Series . . . Utah*, Table 18, p. 31, Table 16, p. 28.
 62. In city directories, look especially under listings of grocers, hotels, etc.
 63. Centennial Committee, eds., *Memory Book to Commemorate Gunnison Valley's Centennial, 1859–1959* (n.p., [ca. 1959]), 186–95.
 64. Maurine C. Jensen, ed., *Midvale History, 1851–1979* (Midvale, Utah: Midvale Historical Society, 1979), 129–59: Edna Irving, a milliner, built her own shop in 1910 (129); Sabrina Goff opened a mortuary in 1935 with two men (132); Mrs. Sherman Johnson Sr., with her son opened Utah Bit and Steel in 1930 (158). Madoline Edward Dixon, *Peteetmeet Town: A History of Payson, Utah* (Payson, Utah: Author, 1974), mentions a millinery establishment with sixteen employees and branch sales (132–33), and a flower shop and greenhouse (207–14). Pearl F. Jacobsen, ed., *Golden Sheaves from a Rich Field: A Centennial History of Richfield, Utah 1864–1964* (Richfield, Utah: Richfield Centennial Committee, 1964), 239–77, notes bakeries opened by a Dutch immigrant couple (290); an all-girl orchestra organized in 1929 (299); and store owner Lucy Sorensen Stucki (314).
 65. State of Utah, *Second Report of the State Bureau of Immigration, Labor, and Statistics . . . 1913–1914* (Salt Lake City: Arrow Press/Tribune Reporter Co., 1915), 10. These reports contain some of the best information available on employment conditions for women.
 66. State of Utah, *First Report of the State Bureau of Immigration, Labor and Statistics . . . 1911–1912* (Salt Lake City: State of Utah, 1913), 27.
 67. State of Utah, *Second Report . . . 1913–1914*, 13; State of Utah, *Bulletin of the Industrial Commission of Utah, July 1, 1930 to June 30, 1932*, 164–65; State of Utah, *Bulletin No. 5 of the Industrial Commission of Utah, July 1, 1926 to June 30, 1938*, 6.

68. State of Utah, *Bulletin No. 5 . . . 1938*, 7–9; State of Utah, *Bulletin No. 5 of the Industrial Commission of Utah, July 1, 1938 to June 30, 1940*, 6.
69. *Ibid.*, 8–9.
70. *Ibid.*, 16–17.
71. *Ibid.*, 16–18.
72. *Ibid.*, 20.
73. “Utah Benefits Far below National Average,” *Utah Employment Security Digest*, May 12, 1948, 6.
74. Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*, 295–99.
75. John E. Christensen, “The Impact of World War II,” in Poll et al., eds. *Utah’s History*, 498, 500–501.
76. “School Head to Seek Aid in Coast Meet,” *Deseret News*, September 10, 1942; “S. L. Schools Lack Teachers,” *ibid.*, October 27, 1942, 13.
77. See Rebecca Phillips Guevara, “Guadalupe Otanez Guevara,” MSS A-4316, Utah State Historical Society Library, Salt Lake City. In an unusual look at the working environment of women, Guevara states that for Lupe, employment was “a pleasant social experience as well as a means for an income. . . . She . . . traded stories while working with the other employees and through the years they watched . . . each other’s children grow.”
78. “Help Wanted—Women,” *Deseret News*, September 11, 1942, 19; “Help Wanted—Women,” *ibid.*, November 10, 1942, 15.
79. Laura Byrne, conversation with Miriam B. Murphy, July 1984. Laura is my sister.
80. *Utah Employment Security Digest*, October 1942, 1–4.
81. *Ibid.*, June 15, 1947, 1, 3.
82. *Ibid.*, 3. These figures are all undoubtedly low because the number of women in industries not covered by unemployment insurance is projected as a constant based on the 1940 census figure. Taken as is, the figures could mean that women had to find 11,000 new jobs between March 1947 and 1950 to achieve the figure of 57,294 employed shown in the 1950 census.
83. *Ibid.*, March 15, 1943, 1.
84. “Mrs. Noorda Takes Seagull Spotlight as ‘Featured’ Civilian,” *Seagull* (publication of the Clearfield Naval Supply Depot), March 18, 1944, 3, for example, has an article by Mrs. Alice Noorda, a job interviewer, whose husband and daughter also worked at the depot. Mrs. Noorda had left a job at Purity Biscuit Company for what was probably higher pay at Clearfield. “Nursery Opens at Anchorage,” *Seagull*, May 2, 1944, 1, announced the nursery opening. For a study of social problems during the war, see Thomas G. Alexander, “Utah War Industry during World War II: A Human Impact Analysis,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 51 (Winter 1983): 72–92.
85. Thomas G. Alexander and Leonard J. Arrington, “Utah’s Small Arms Ammunition Plant during World War II,” *Pacific Historical Review* 34 (1965): 189–90.
86. *Ibid.*, 189.
87. “The Safety Hazard of the Month—Horseplay,” *Bombshell* (publication of the Ogden Arsenal), January 20, 1945, 4; “Here’s the Latest Dirt,” *ibid.*, February 25, 1945, 12, 13.

88. I computed these percentages from figures in U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1950*, Vol. 2, *Characteristics of the Population*, Part 44: *Utah* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), Table 26, pp. 44–31. The work force's age is detailed in Table 69, pp. 44–95. The number of women ages thirty-five to forty-four and forty-five to fifty-four who were working had more than doubled in ten years. The marital status of the employed is in Table 70, pp. 44–96, which shows 30,305 married women employed out of the 57,145 total. Information in the following paragraph comes from Table 77, pp. 44–119.
89. See, for example, Magdalena Mora and Adelaida Del Castillo, eds., *Mexican Women in the United States: Struggles Past and Present* (Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, University of California, 1980).
90. "January Job Insurance Claims Break Records," *Utah Employment Security Digest*, February 15, 1946, 1; "Problems of Suitability," *ibid.*, December 29, 1945, 1–2.
91. "Unemployment Insurance and the Utah Economy," *ibid.*, January 15, 1951, 6.
92. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1950 . . . Utah*, Table 25, pp. 44–30. The sum of those employed and those looking for work do not total 57,294. Evidently 37 female military personnel stationed in Utah were included in the total work force but not with employed civilians.
93. *Ibid.*, Table 74, pp. 44–106, shows seven women still employed as operatives in steel mills and a total of forty-three in all metal manufacturing industries.
94. El Roy Nelson, *Utah's Economic Patterns* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1956), 13.
95. Leicia L. Parks, ed., *The Next Millennium—Utah Workforce 2000* (Salt Lake City: Utah Department of Employment Security, 1987), 23. This remarkably well-written bulletin contains a wealth of information on the state's workers, with special emphasis on changing demographics in relation to employment.
96. Mark Knold, Utah Department of Workforce Services fact sheets, July 1, 2003, retrieved July 2004 from mknold@utah.gov and jobs.utah.gov/wi.
97. *Ibid.*
98. Rachna Choudhry, "The Long and Winding Road to Equal Pay," retrieved in July 2004 from rchoudhr@afcio.org. See also www.afcio.org/women.
99. Institute for Women's Policy Research, "The Status of Women in Utah: Highlights," retrieved in July 2004 from www.iwpr.org.
100. Jennifer K. Nii, "Women's Firms Booming in Utah," *Deseret Morning News*, April 29, 2004.