

Blue-Collar Women: You've Come A Long Way, Baby?

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fifth in a series of 15 articles exploring "Working: Changes and Choices." In this article, historian Thomas Dublin of the University of California, San Diego, argues that women have made some gains in the world of work, but that inequality persists. This series was written for "Courses by Newspaper," a program of University Extension, University of California, San Diego, with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Fifth in a series

their subordination and dependence in a world in which the predominant values remain firmly masculine.

American women first began to work in large numbers outside of their own homes in the second quarter of the 19th century, when the cotton textile mills offered cash wages to tens of thousands of daughters of New England farmers. By the eve of the Civil War, sewing and shoemaking came to challenge the leading role of textile manufacturing as occupations for women.

Domestic servants, however, probably outnumbered female factory workers throughout the 19th century, although reliable early employment statistics for women are rare. By 1890 domestic service employed 1.2 million women, and factory work, 1.0 million.

All other major occupations lagged far behind: in 1890 there were only about 250,000 women teachers, 100,000 in retail sales, and a mere 75,000 office workers. Blue-collar work clearly

dominated women's paid employment as the 19th century drew to a close.

Who were these blue-collar working women at the turn of the century? Almost all were young, single immigrant women supporting themselves, or daughters of immigrants helping to support their families. Only about one in eight working women was married. Even among immigrant women, few expected to continue working after marriage.

A study of working mothers in New York City in 1910, for example, found that the absence or illness of husbands was the prime factor that led these women to seek paid employment. Black married women were the main exception to this pattern, for the precarious economic position of southern black families led a high proportion of black women to continue in agricultural or domestic labor after marriage.

THE 20TH CENTURY
These patterns changed dramatically in the 20th century. Between 1890 and 1978 the number of working women -- defined here as wage earners -- increased from about four million to more than 38 million. At the same time the proportion of females over 16 in the paid labor force increased from 20 percent to more than 50 percent.

Although men continue to work in greater numbers than do women, females now constitute about 40 percent of the overall labor force, a figure that is steadily inching upward. The greatest share in this increase is the result of married women entering paid employment. In 1890 less than five percent of married women worked outside their homes; by 1978 this figure stood at 44 percent. In 1890 married women composed about 12 percent of working women; today they are fully 60 percent.

Equally significant has been the shift in the nature of the occupations women hold in the economy. Almost two-thirds of employed women were in blue-collar occupations in 1900, with almost 29 percent in domestic work, and 24 percent in factories. By 1978, less than three percent of women were employed in domestic services and only 11 percent worked as factory operatives.



George Godwin (left), former Chairman of the Board of Motion, Inc. and President of Godwin Associates, an architectural firm here in the city, passes on the reins of leadership to newly elected Chairman Robert L. Davis Jr., principal of Spough Junior High School, and Chairman of the Mecklenburg County Democratic Party. Mr. Davis says, "Motion has been in existence for 12 years, and

has provided nearly \$8 million worth of necessary housing for low to moderate income families through the City of Charlotte's Community Development department. My hopes for the future, in my role as chairman of Motion, and with the cooperation of the other Board members, is to see that Motion continues to provide another 12 years of community service."

Local Students Complete Degree Requirements

GREENSBORO Five Mecklenburg County students were among 39 persons who completed their degree requirements during the first semester at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

The students are being invited back to the campus May 15-16 to participate in UNC-G's 90th annual commencement exercises.

Among the first semester graduates were 148 who completed graduate degrees. These included 129 at the master's degree level, 17 who finished their doctorates, and two students who completed the specialist in education degree.

Those students completing graduate degrees are: Karen M. Davis Dixon, a psychology major, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John A. Davis of 1900 Crestdale Drive, a master of arts degree; Cynthia C. O'Reilly, a studio arts major, daughter of John P. O'Reilly of 1346 St. Julien St., a master of fine arts degree; and Denise K. Pennartz, a speech pathology and audiology major, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Phillip L. Pennartz of 3025 Rustic Lane, a master of education degree, all of Charlotte.

Completing undergraduate degrees are: Kristian C. Conrad, a business administration major, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. D. F. Conrad of 1840 Wensley

Drive, a bachelor of science degree, and Ronald O. Snyder, a music major, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Snyder of 2118 Windsor Drive, a bachelor of music degree, both of Charlotte. Also, Fleeta M. Wilkinson, formerly of Charlotte, an inter-departmental studies major with a concentration in international studies, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Howard C. Wilkinson of 4818 Hardwicke Road, Charlotte, a bachelor of arts degree, magna cum laude.

Local Realtors Agree

Continued from Page 1
advised. HUD (Housing and Urban Development) has an office set up and will send someone out to counsel you HUD provides guaranteed loans. What that means is that whenever the payment isn't made HUD will make your payment," he added.

W. G. Nelson, owner of Professional Realty and Management explained further. "HUD will pay off the loan to the mortgage company. Then will repossess the house. They will put the house back on the market and try to resell it."

However, if you didn't go

this route and have experienced the agony of foreclosure don't despair completely. Pettis says that it is possible to re-establish your credibility. Nelson commented that if a person had a house foreclosed on him and can demonstrate to the lender the reason for foreclosure was due to extenuating circumstances, then HUD will take that into consideration when applying for the loan the second time around.

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By Thomas Dublin
Special To The Post
Even a casual glance at U.S. labor statistics reveals incredible changes over the past century in both the composition of the female labor force and the nature of the jobs women perform.

Equally striking, the number of women working has shot up so dramatically that one might argue that this quantitative change has been so great as to constitute a qualitative change in social roles.

Coulwood Juniors Capture

Cheerleading Championship

The Coulwood Junior High School Varsity Cheerleaders were the winners in the junior high division of the WBCY-Cheerwine Cheer-off For Cystic Fibrosis.

In the competition held at Eastland Mall, the Braves coached by Bessie Wilbon and James Cuthbertson emerged victorious over runner-up Alexander Graham.

Elated, Mrs. Wilbon said, "I am very excited for the girls. They work so hard at cheerleading."

Mr. Cuthbertson said that he was happy because the competition was so keen.

"We were competing against real fine groups," Cuthbertson said. "The cheerleaders from Alexander Graham, Ranson, Randolph, Spough and Wilson were all so good."

Cold Start

From a cold start, approximately \$1 is spent driving four miles to pick up a quart of milk.

Cheerwine Cheer-off's junior high division, the Braves received a check for \$250.

The members of the squad are Ann Sigmon (head), Angie McKnight, (co-head), Marion Miller, Michelle Plummer, Angela Glenn, Angie Parmer, Kim Blankenship, Ardella Malone, Tracy Savage, Leah Smith, Dawn Williams, Wanda Pegues, Freda Green, Monica Little, Heidi Humanik, and Rene Sigmon.

The principal at Coulwood is Mr. William M. Blakeney. Wayne Laughter is the athletic director.

In the high school division, the winner was Myers Park. Independence was the runner-up. East Mecklenburg's junior varsity, West Charlotte's junior varsity, Catholic's varsity, Olympic's varsity and West Charlotte's varsity participated.

Alexander Graham won the victory bell for raising the most money for Cystic Fibrosis.

BLACK BLOOD ON BLACK HANDS

Today, 9 out of 10 rapes, robberies, and assaults on Black people are committed by Black offenders.

Last year, more Blacks were killed on the street by other Blacks than were killed in the entire nine-year Viet Nam war.

Why do Blacks victimize each other through crime? What are the causes? What can be done?

Find out when Tony Brown's Journal takes an in-depth look at the social phenomenon of Black crime in "Crisis: Blacks Killing Each Other." This week on your local PBS station.

Next week, on a special edition of Tony Brown's Journal, Tony talks with President Ronald Reagan about the status of Black Americans.

Later in February, Tony Brown's Journal will present "Malcolm and Elijah," a commentary on the historical confrontation of these powerful men, and "The Other Battle," a filmed history of the heroic exploits of Black soldiers in American Wars.

This February, keep informed. Keep tuned to Tony Brown's Journal.

Sponsored by Pepsi-Cola Company.



For an issue of the Tony Brown's Journal magazine, containing copies of program transcripts and information, please enclose \$1.50 and send to: Tony Brown Productions, 1501 Broadway, Suite 2014, New York, NY 10036

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WUNG-TV: Channel 58, Feb 9, 7:30 p.m.

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