STATISTICS OF WOMEN AT WORK

BASED ON UNPUBLISHED INFORMATION DERIVED FROM
THE SCHEDULES OF THE TWELFTH CENSUS: 1900

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CONTENTS.

General statistics .................................................. 9
   Introduction .................................................. 9
   Proportion of women at work .................................. 9
      Race and nativity .......................................... 9
      Age .......................................................... 10
      Marital condition ......................................... 13
      Marital condition and age ................................ 16
      City and country .......................................... 17
      Comparison with earlier censuses ....................... 29
      Adoption and abandonment of occupations ............... 22
Family relationship ................................................ 24
Other breadwinners in the family .............................. 29
Occupations .......................................................... 31
      Leading occupations .................................... 32
      Race and nativity ....................................... 32
      Age ......................................................... 33
      Marital condition ....................................... 36
      Increase, 1890 to 1900 .................................. 37
Statistics of selected occupations ......................... 38
      Servants and waitresses ................................ 40
         Importance as an occupation for women .......... 40
         Race and nativity .................................. 41
         Parentage .............................................. 47
         Age ..................................................... 48
         Marital condition .................................. 49
         Comparison with census of 1890 .................. 50
         Family relationship ................................ 54
      Laundresses .................................................. 56
         Race and nativity .................................. 56
         Parentage .............................................. 58
         Age ..................................................... 58
         Marital condition .................................. 59
         Comparison with census of 1890 .................. 59
         Family relationship ................................ 60
         Other breadwinners in the family ................. 61
      Seamstresses ................................................ 62
         Race and nativity .................................. 62
         Parentage .............................................. 64
         Age ..................................................... 65
         Marital condition .................................. 66
         Comparison with census of 1890 .................. 67
         Family relationship ................................ 68
         Other breadwinners in the family ................. 69
      Dressmakers .................................................. 70
         Geographic distribution ............................ 70
         Race and nativity .................................. 70
         Parentage .............................................. 71
         Age ..................................................... 71
         Marital condition .................................. 72
         Comparison with census of 1890 .................. 72
         Family relationship ................................ 73
         Other breadwinners in the family ................. 74
      Milliners ......................................................... 75
         Geographic distribution ............................ 75
         Race and nativity .................................. 76
         Importance as an occupation for women .......... 76
         Parentage .............................................. 77
CONTENTS.

Statistics of selected occupations—Continued.
Milliners—Continued. ................................................................. 77
Age ............................................................... 78
Marital condition ................................................................. 78
Comparison with census of 1890. ............................................... 79
Family relationship ................................................................. 80
Other breadwinners in the family .................................................. 80
Textile mill operatives............................................................... 81
Importance as an occupation for women ........................................ 81
Race and nativity ................................................................. 82
Parentage .................................................................. 84
Age .................................................................. 85
Marital condition ................................................................. 87
Comparison with census of 1890. ............................................... 87
Family relationship ................................................................. 88
Other breadwinners in the family .................................................. 89
Saleswomen ................................................................. 91
Race and nativity ................................................................. 92
Parentage .................................................................. 93
Age .................................................................. 94
Marital condition ................................................................. 95
Comparison with previous censuses ........................................... 95
Family relationship ................................................................. 96
Other breadwinners in the family .................................................. 96
Clerks and copyists ................................................................. 97
Race and nativity ................................................................. 97
Parentage .................................................................. 98
Age .................................................................. 99
Marital condition ................................................................. 100
Comparison with census of 1890. ............................................... 100
Family relationship ................................................................. 101
Other breadwinners in the family .................................................. 101
Stenographers and typewriters ..................................................... 102
Geographic distribution ............................................................. 103
Race and nativity ................................................................. 103
Parentage .................................................................. 104
Age .................................................................. 105
Marital condition ................................................................. 106
Comparison with census of 1890. ............................................... 106
Family relationship ................................................................. 107
Other breadwinners in the family .................................................. 108
Teachers ................................................................. 109
Importance as an occupation for women ....................................... 109
Race and nativity ................................................................. 109
Parentage .................................................................. 114
Age .................................................................. 115
Marital condition ................................................................. 117
Comparison with previous censuses ........................................... 118
Family relationship ................................................................. 121
Other breadwinners in the family .................................................. 122
Farmers ................................................................. 122
Race and nativity ................................................................. 123
Parentage .................................................................. 124
Age .................................................................. 125
Marital condition ................................................................. 126
Comparison with census of 1890. ............................................... 127

GENERAL TABLES.

Table 1.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the female population 16 years of age and over, for states and territories: 1900, 1890, and 1880. .............................................................. 131
Table 2.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the female population 16 years of age and over, classified by race and nativity, for states and territories: 1900. .............................................................. 132
Table 3.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the female population 16 years of age and over, classified by age periods, for states and territories: 1900. .............................................................. 134
Table 4.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the native white female population of native parentage 16 years of age and over, classified by age periods, for states and territories: 1900. .............................................................. 136
CONTENTS.

Table 5.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the native white female population of foreign parents 16 years of age and over, classified by age periods, for states and territories: 1900. .......................................................... 138

Table 6.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the foreign born white female population 16 years of age and over, classified by age periods, for states and territories: 1900. .......................................................... 140

Table 7.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the negro, Indian, and Mongolian female population 16 years of age and over, classified by age periods, for states and territories: 1900. .......................................................... 142

Table 8.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the negro female population 16 years of age and over, classified by age periods, for states and territories: 1900. .......................................................... 144

Table 9.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the female population 16 years of age and over, classified by race and nativity, for cities having at least 50,000 inhabitants: 1900. .......................................................... 146

Table 10.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the female population 16 years of age and over, classified by age, race, and nativity, for cities having at least 50,000 inhabitants: 1900. .......................................................... 147

Table 11.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the female population 16 years of age and over living in cities having at least 50,000 inhabitants and in smaller cities and country districts, classified by race and nativity, for states and territories: 1900. .......................................................... 152

Table 12.—Number and percentage of breadwinners in the female population 16 years of age and over living in cities having at least 50,000 inhabitants and in smaller cities and country districts, classified by age, race, and nativity, for geographic divisions: 1900. .......................................................... 154

Table 13.—Distribution, by race and nativity, of female breadwinners 16 years of age and over, classified by occupation, for continental United States: 1900. .......................................................... 158

Table 14.—Total number of female breadwinners 15 years of age and over, classified by race, nativity, and occupation, for the United States (area of enumeration): 1900 and 1900. .......................................................... 159

Table 15.—Per cent distribution, by race and nativity, of female breadwinners 15 years of age and over, classified by occupation, for the United States (area of enumeration): 1900 and 1900. .......................................................... 160

Table 16.—Per cent distribution, by occupation, of female breadwinners 15 years of age and over, classified by race and nativity, for the United States (area of enumeration): 1900 and 1900. .......................................................... 161

Table 17.—Distribution, by age periods, of female breadwinners 16 years of age and over, classified by race, nativity, and occupation, for the United States (area of enumeration): 1900. .......................................................... 162

Table 18.—Female breadwinners 15 years of age and over, classified by age and occupation, for the United States (area of enumeration): 1900 and 1900. .......................................................... 162

Table 19.—Per cent distribution, by age periods, of female breadwinners 15 years of age and over, classified by occupation, for the United States (area of enumeration): 1900 and 1900. .......................................................... 163

Table 20.—Per cent distribution, by occupation, of female breadwinners 15 years of age and over, classified by age periods, for the United States (area of enumeration): 1900 and 1900. .......................................................... 164

Table 21.—Distribution, by marital condition, of female breadwinners 16 years of age and over, classified by race, nativity, and occupation, for the United States (area of enumeration): 1900 and 1900. .......................................................... 165

Table 22.—Increase in the number of female breadwinners 15 years of age and over, classified by race, nativity, and occupation, for the United States (area of enumeration): 1900 to 1900. .......................................................... 166

Table 23.—Female breadwinners 16 years of age and over living in cities having at least 50,000 inhabitants and in smaller cities and country districts, classified by occupation, for continental United States: 1900. .......................................................... 167

Table 24.—Female breadwinners 16 years of age and over in selected occupations, classified by race and nativity, for states and territories: 1900. .......................................................... 170

Table 25.—Per cent distribution, by geographic divisions, of female breadwinners 16 years of age and over in selected occupations, for continental United States: 1900. .......................................................... 171

Table 26.—Distribution, by family relationship, of female breadwinners 16 years of age and over living in selected cities and employed in selected occupations, classified by race, nativity, and marital condition: 1900. .......................................................... 173

Table 27.—Distribution, by number of other breadwinners in the family, of female breadwinners 16 years of age and over living in selected cities and employed in selected occupations, classified by race, nativity, and marital condition: 1900. .......................................................... 174

Table 28.—Female breadwinners 16 years of age and over, classified by family relationship, and by race, nativity, marital condition, and occupation, for selected cities: 1900. .......................................................... 175

Table 29.—Female breadwinners 16 years of age and over living at home, classified by number of other breadwinners in the family, and by race, nativity, marital condition, and occupation, for selected cities: 1900. .......................................................... 176
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR,
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS,
Washington, D. C., May 20, 1907.

Sir:

I have the honor to transmit herewith a report on Women at Work, presenting statistics of the women 16 years of age and over reported at the Twelfth Census as having a gainful occupation. This report was prepared under the supervision of Dr. Joseph A. Hill, chief of the division of revision and results. It is based mainly upon unpublished data compiled from the Census schedules, and its preparation was undertaken in the belief that these data, already in the possession of the Census Office and only partially exploited in the previous Census reports, contained information of great importance, which could be secured in equal completeness only through another census covering the entire population of the United States.

The importance of the subject with which the report deals has been emphasized in the annual messages of the President of the United States and also by the passage at the recent session of Congress of an act providing for a special investigation of the industrial, social, moral, educational, and physical condition of women and child workers in the United States. It was evident, however, that the scope of this proposed investigation would be quite distinct from that of the statistical inquiries conducted by the Census. Among the topics to be covered by that investigation the act referred to specifies the hours of labor, term of employment, health, sanitary and other conditions surrounding the occupations in which the women and child workers are engaged, and the means employed for the protection of their health, person, and morals. These are topics on which the Census possesses no data. But on the other hand the Census ascertains the age, marital condition, race, nativity, parent nativity, illiteracy, and occupation not only of each woman at work but likewise of each member of the family or household in which she lives. While the two classes of data are entirely distinct, the one supplements the other. Indeed, a primary object in preparing the report herewith submitted was that the data obtained by the Census might contribute to the special investigation authorized by Congress.

It might be said that the information supplied by the Census is in answer to the question of who and how many are the women engaged in gainful occupations rather than the question of the influence and conditions of their employment. This distinction was more clearly perceived as the work approached completion. When projected it was referred to as a report on the "occupations of women;" but when the work was completed it was felt that this would hardly be an appropriate title, since the data related not so much to the occupations of women as to the women employed in occupations. Accordingly the title "statistics of women at work" was finally selected as being more descriptive of the character of the report.

In this report women at work are classified by age, race and nativity, nativity of parents, marital condition, and occupation. Statistics of this general character have been presented in more or less detail in the reports of each Census since and including that of 1870. But the present report, making a fuller use of the information found on the Census schedules, presents also statistics in regard to the family relationship of the women at work, classifying them with respect to their relationship to the head of the family and with respect to the number of other breadwinners in the family.

It was my intention at one time to present in this report statistics of the wages paid to women employed in the manufacturing establishments included in the scope of the Census of Manufactures taken in the year 1905, but as another report is in preparation which will present the wage statistics compiled by that census for women as well as for men and children, it was thought inadvisable to repeat the figures in the present publication.

Very respectfully,

[Signature]
Director.

Hon. Oscar S. Straus,
Secretary of Commerce and Labor.