

# OREGON WOMEN'S LABOR HISTORY

*A Historic Context Statement: 1903–1990*

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office



*Prepared by Northwest Vernacular, Inc. and SJM Cultural Resources*

*Cover image: Women in overalls at Thomas Kay Woolen Mill in Salem during World War II.  
Courtesy Oregon State Historic Preservation Office.*

**2024**

Historic Context Statement & Report prepared for:

**Oregon State Historic Preservation Office**

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## Project Team

The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) contracted with **Northwest Vernacular, Inc.**, (NWV) to prepare this historic context statement. NWV partnered with **SJM Cultural Resource Services LLC** (SJM) to work on the project as a team. Both NWV and SJM are woman-owned businesses. Niki Stojnic was brought on as the project's copyeditor.

**Katie Pratt** of NWV served as the project manager and one of the lead authors. **Sarah Martin** of SJM worked alongside Katie as a lead author. **Spencer Howard** of NWV provided project support, internal review, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis of historic property types. **Niki Stojnic** edited all content included in this report.

## Acknowledgments

The project team wishes to thank the staff at the **Oregon SHPO** for their guidance, advice, and thoughtful review throughout the project. To Kuri Gill and Robert Olguin, thank you for your collaboration on this project, from working with us to establish our methodology and project approach and providing overarching guidance. To Chrissy Curran and Ian Johnson, thank you for your thoughtful and thorough review of the draft and final text.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the following individuals, organizations, and archives for their knowledge about Oregon women's history and maintaining vital collections that illustrate and document this history: Carol Palmer; Clatsop Historical Society; University of Oregon; Oregon Historical Society, Oregon State Archives, Southern Oregon Historical Society, and Oregon State University.





# INTRODUCTION

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

In fall 2023, the project team—led by Katie Pratt of Northwest Vernacular—was selected by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to complete Phases 1 and 2 of the Oregon Women’s History Project. These phases will develop the concept and approach for the project and provide the historic context for an MPD (Multiple Property Document) that will follow. The approaches utilized in preparing the historic context are critical to ensuring the resulting MPD and individual National Register of Historic Places nominations reflect the breadth of women’s history in the state of Oregon. The next two phases of this project are to complete survey work in support of the creation of the MPD, which will include the property types and registration requirements for the MPD, and successful nomination of the full MPS (Multiple Property Submission) to the National Register of Historic Places.

Cultural and historic resources are as varied as the people they represent, and a one-size-fits-all approach has so far resulted in the underrepresentation of women in National Register of Historic Places listings. This underrepresentation is further imbalanced among women of color<sup>1</sup> and those within the LGBTQ+ community. To address these inequities, it is important to undertake a thoughtful path toward historical research and survey of the cultural and built environments, as well as to spotlight challenges and limitations in approaches, to guide future work in telling the full story of women in Oregon.

In determining potential approaches to documenting and designating Oregon women’s history, the project team conducted an initial literature search. As part of this search, the project team identified previous women’s history projects throughout the nation. The methodology sections of those projects were reviewed. A key project that helped establish potential approaches was the 2006 draft study prepared for the Georgia Historic Preservation Division, Department of Natural Resources—“Georgia: A Woman’s Place: A Historic Context.” The methodology for Georgia’s women’s historic context is an important starting point, as Georgia was one of the first states in the country that implemented a SHPO-led initiative for women’s history (1995) and the historic context, although it’s a draft, is thorough. The Georgia document also demonstrates the challenges with developing such a broad

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1. In this instance, the term people of color refers to those who are not White and is used to emphasize the common experiences related to systemic racism. The term acknowledges the broad and unspecific nature of historical census data that erased racial and ethnic nuance from the American story. Therefore, it is important to be as specific as possible in this context when discussing the many varied experiences of people of color.

# BULLETIN

## OREGON LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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### STATE NEWS

#### Klamath Falls Conducts Survey

In keeping with the National and Oregon Leagues' concern about the dismissal of married women from public employment, the Klamath Falls League of Women Voters has made a comprehensive survey of women employed in the city of Klamath Falls. The survey was made by questionnaires and the percentage of single and married women employed, number of dependents, number who own homes, kind of occupation, and number of taxpayers were carefully compiled.

At the League's January meeting Bishop Remington spoke on "Woman Faces a New Day."

Several of the Portland Study Groups are serving luncheon to their members at a nominal price the day of their meetings and making a gift to the League of the money collected.

historic context; documenting and designating Oregon women's history will require a multi-faceted and multi-pronged approach. Just four states have completed a statewide Multiple Property Document (MPD) related to women's history: Illinois, Florida, New Mexico, and New Jersey. These focus exclusively on the story of women who belonged to clubs, likely since women's clubs are well documented, and clubhouses are an easily identifiable property type.

## Traditional Approach

The traditional approach to documenting and designating Oregon women's history relies on a standard literature search of published secondary materials (books and articles) on women's history in Oregon and the greater Pacific Northwest. All the sources the project team identified are listed in this project's annotated bibliography. In addition to previous studies related to women's history within the field of historic preservation, research has included work related to historiography and how the field of women's history has advanced over time, particularly in recent years.

In general, what may appear to be a lack of historical accounts reflecting specific underrepresented communities may not—and often doesn't—necessarily mean an absence of these populations, which is why themed and specialized research and community input are so important. Recent and emerging scholarship, however, is beginning to address inequities within the field of women's history across time periods.

## Themes and Specialized Research

While unpacking the potential themes for this project, it became clear that there were two broad and interconnected themes that underscore any discussion of women's history: work and community/kinship. Women have always worked; from the unpaid labor they do in their homes to the jobs they have taken outside the home for wages. And women have been largely defined by their kinship networks, with the type and number of these communities changing over the years to reflect women's ever-evolving role in society. As research progresses, the project team will seek to note the role of these themes of work and kinship throughout.

Four related sub-themes create additional avenues for documenting and understanding women's history in Oregon:

transforming the landscape, labor and industry, social reform, and culture and leisure. These are explained in more depth in the theme outline.

Unlike traditional historical research, investigation for historic preservation efforts requires identifying a connection between lives of significant women and the built environment. In looking at the four sub-themes (e.g., transforming the landscape, labor and industry, social reform, and culture and leisure), areas of significance for the National Register of Historic Places provided a starting point for beginning to look at built environment properties related to women's history. Certain property types (e.g., schools, hospitals, clubhouses, boardinghouses, farmsteads) naturally lend themselves to one or more areas of significance. Listed and previously identified properties related to women's history in Oregon are largely civic club buildings, schools, libraries, and YWCAs, but the themes indicate that there are far more property types associated with women's history to be identified as part of this project. Specialized research related to these themes and potential historic properties will expand the narrative about Oregon women's history.

Like the secondary materials within the traditional approach, all the sources the project team identified related to themes and specialized research are listed in this project's annotated bibliography.

## Community Input

Community input will be an important part of this project, particularly as the SHPO and project team encourage key organizations and individuals to think about historic properties related to women's history in their own communities and even reexamine properties already identified as significant but not clearly acknowledged for a relationship to women's history. Outreach to recognized organizations and institutions can facilitate a more thorough record of women's history and add to the list of important individuals and properties worth further investigation for National Register listing.



*Swimming at Bingham Springs pool, 1907. Photographed by Lee Morehouse. Courtesy Lee Moorhouse (1850–1926) photographs, 1888–1916, University of Oregon.*





*Scenes from the show, 'Old Maids' Matrimonial Convention, Opera House, Pendleton, Oregon, 1907. Photographed by Lee Moorhouse. Courtesy Lee Moorhouse (1850–1926) photographs, 1888–1916, University of Oregon.*

## At-Risk Topics and Research Challenges

Women's history and significance have not been the focus of previous historic resource surveys in Oregon, so there is much to be learned as it relates to the cultural and built environments. Given the breadth of women's contributions across space and time, future surveys will no doubt find considerable variation among property types and geographic region and that not all representative women are reflected equally on the landscape.

For example, by virtue of their age, resources that reflect the history of women in pre-contact and early contact periods have been considerably impacted by later settlement, transportation development, community building, and industry. As a result, there are fewer documented resources remaining from those earliest periods to convey significant themes in women's history. However, additional focused research and field survey by specialists of these periods, including archaeologists and anthropologists, could reveal archaeological sites, traditional cultural properties, cultural landscapes, ruins, and other resources that reflect significant contributions of women.

Additionally, underrepresented communities, including racial and ethnic groups as well as members of the LGBTQ+ community, deserve focused, place-based study that accounts for nuance and variation in culture, kinship, and economic, legal, and social status. This is not to suggest that women from these groups be left out of or downplayed in a statewide history of women, but rather to call out the need for focused attention when surveying historic resources and assessing integrity. It is important to note that women from underrepresented communities operated within the dominant mainstream society, albeit often as inferior, disadvantaged women, and therefore should also be reflected in the histories of mainstream places. In part, this could be achieved in a targeted reassessment of properties that are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

# POTENTIAL APPROACHES

According to National Register Bulletin 15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation:

*A theme is a means of organizing properties into coherent patterns based on elements such as environment, social/ethnic groups, transportation networks, technology, or political developments that have influenced the development of an area during one or more periods of prehistory or history. A theme is considered significant if it can be demonstrated, through scholarly research, to be important in American history.<sup>2</sup>*

This is the definition of “theme” that we will use for the purposes of this project. The themes and sub-themes selected here are broad and intended to provide an organizational structure for the historic context and future National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nominations. Themes can cross multiple periods of history and are meant to connect stories across time. NRHP areas of significance are identified within each overarching theme (outlined in National Register Bulletin 15). This is necessary to make it easier for anyone to use the resulting Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) for Oregon Women’s History to nominate properties for listing in the NRHP.

## Themes

In researching women’s history in the Pacific Northwest and referencing previous work, notably Sue Armitage’s *Shaping the Public Good* and Karen Blair’s *Women in Pacific Northwest History*, it became clear that there are many themes that connect with women’s history. However, there were two clear threads that seemed to underscore any discussion of women’s history: work and community/kinship. Historian Sue Armitage, in a chapter within Blair’s *Women in Pacific Northwest History* states, “Women’s history has taught us that for most women work and kinship have been intimately related.”



*Mabel Mack with sign, ca. 1943.  
Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.*

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2. National Register Branch, Interagency Resources Division, National Park Service, “National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” Bulletin 15 (U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Cultural Resources, revised 1995), 8.

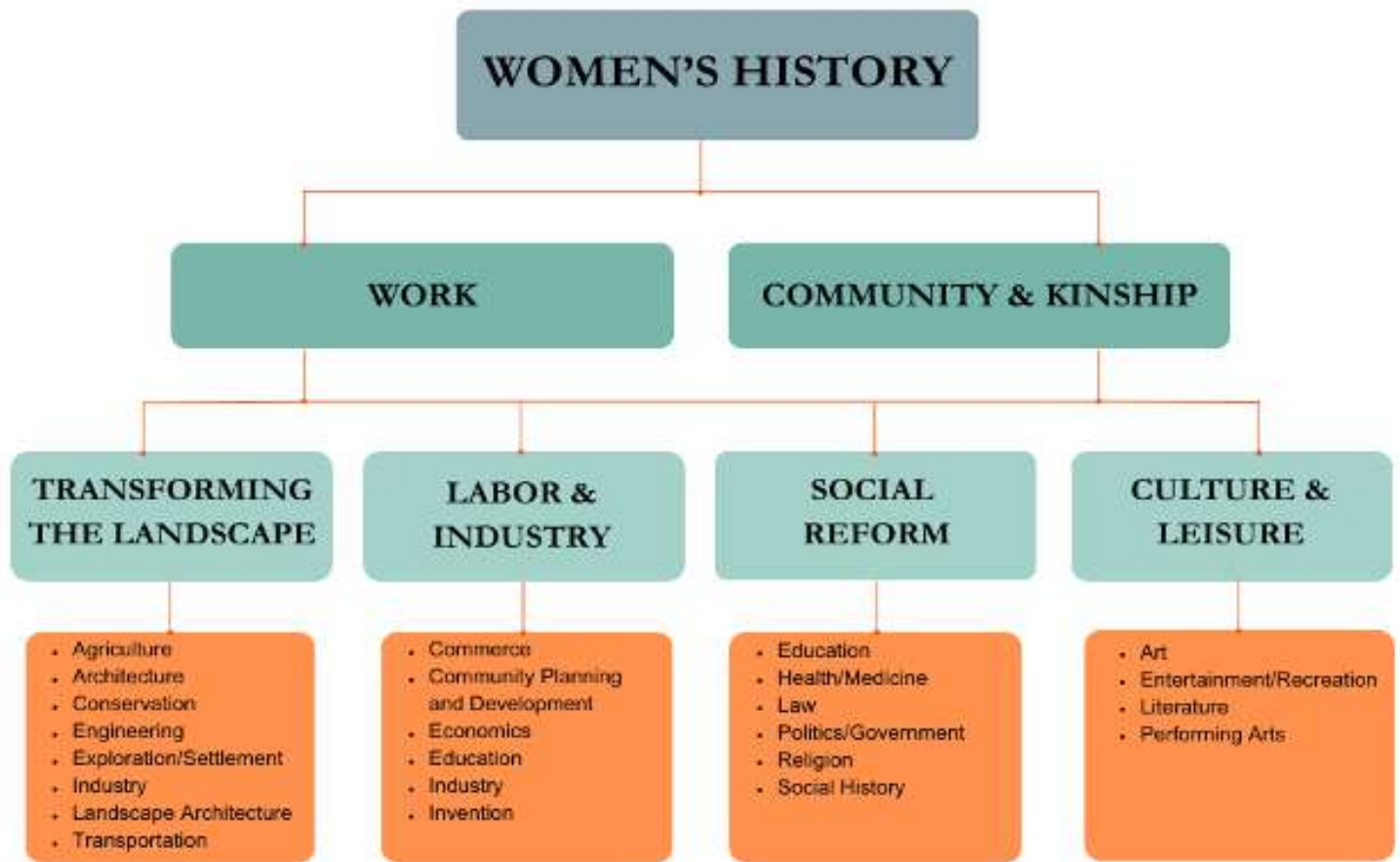


Figure 1. Theme Hierarchy.



Women with card punch machines  
Portland General Electric Company.  
Portland General Electric Photograph  
Collection; Org. Lot 151; Box 24; PGE  
51-726. Oregon Historical Society.

The themes for this historic context statement attempt to recognize this intrinsic link, organizing all themes under one or both concepts. While the historic context statement is written chronologically with key periods (identified from the work of previous histories, like those of Armitage and Blair), the two main themes of work and kinship undergird every period.

### Work

A consistent thread running through many of the sources documenting women's history is one of work or labor. Women have always been at work in Oregon—unpaid and paid, inside and outside the home. This includes the Native American women who processed the game and fish from successful hunting and fishing parties or those who dug roots and gathered berries as they all managed seasonal migrations with complex planning and oversight; the Western immigrants women whose own household or farm labor was unpaid; immigrant and working-class women who performed domestic or skilled labor for wages or room and board; and the women who hired and organized other women.



## Community and Kinship Building

This theme covers the ways women have consciously and subconsciously formed community for many reasons, including survival and advancement or betterment. This includes extended family networks as well as racial/ethnic groups, religious groups, neighborhood groups, and clubs or societies.

### Sub-themes

Under the broad themes of work and kinship, four sub-themes were identified: transforming the landscape; labor and industry; social reform; and culture and leisure. These carry over all the chronological periods, reflecting the progression not only in the roles women have played in Oregon throughout history but also the advancement of women in the public realm. As women have transformed the landscape, their work has often extended beyond the home. And as women have gained more financial and political independence through activism efforts, they have had more time and access to pursue recreational activities.

### Transforming the Landscape

Human habitation has continually transformed the Oregon landscape, impacting it in both positive and negative ways. Native Americans in the Willamette Valley used deliberate and controlled fires—sometimes called “cultural burns”—to clear underbrush to stimulate root, nut, and berry production, managing the valley’s oak savanna landscape long before the arrival of White Western immigrants. When Euro-American immigrants arrived in the greater Pacific Northwest in the early 19th century, they too played a role in transforming the landscape, while also controlling and monetizing it through resource extraction (e.g., timber and mining) and cultivation (e.g., irrigation and agriculture). White settlement displaced Native Americans—interrupting and even obliterating traditional lifeways. These efforts evolved into regional and local industries that became the economic backbone of Oregon in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The long-term impacts of resource extraction and cultivation, in turn, nurtured a conservation movement. This theme focuses on the often overlooked role women have played in transforming what they saw as an empty landscape into farms and communities, and carries forward the overarching thread of work as women participated in the efforts to transform the landscape.



*Mothers' Union, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church 1960. Photographed by Oliver Booker Williams. Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church collection, 1940–2015.; Coll 189; box 1 folder 9. Oregon Historical Society.*



*Man and woman with grain binder, Silverton, Oregon, ca. 1910. Photographed by June D. Drake. June D. Drake photographs, 1863–2001, Org. Lot 678, Box 44, 1497. Oregon Historical Society.*



*Green beans, Santiam Cannery, Stayton, women workers (1915/1955). Gifford Photographic Collection, Oregon State University via Oregon Digital.*



*Suffragists in 1913, photographed by Charles Leon Robinson. OSU Special Collections & Archives Research Center, Oregon State University. "Suffragettes Oregon Digital."*

## Areas of Significance:

- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Conservation
- Engineering
- Exploration/Settlement
- Industry
- Landscape Architecture
- Transportation

## Labor and Industry

While “work” is one of the two broad themes for this project, this sub-theme addresses specifically the labor of women that was paid and typically took place outside of the home. By identifying this as a sub-theme, this project can better define the spaces within which women have operated and address the impacts on women and their income-earning ability. This theme covers the range of women’s labor through time, including domestic work, teaching, sex work, healthcare, wartime industrial work, and childcare outside the home,<sup>3</sup> as well as the expansion of jobs open to women.

## Areas of Significance:

- Commerce
- Community Planning and Development
- Economics
- Education
- Health/Medicine
- Industry
- Invention

## Social Reform

Women have been impacted by public policy and government actions long before they won the right to vote. Public policy and activism go hand-in-hand, as women have long advocated for themselves and others. This sub-theme covers how women have worked to bridge the gap between the vital role they play in their families and the public, and the

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<sup>3</sup>. The first daycares outside of the home were established during WWII.

long-standing barriers held up to deny them access to formal decisionmaking roles and seats of power. This includes activism for women's rights as well as other critical issues like environmental advocacy.

**Areas of Significance:**

- Education
- Health/Medicine
- Law
- Politics/Government
- Religion
- Social History (and sub-categories: Disability History, Labor History, LGBTQ History, Traditional Cultural History, Women's History, Civil Rights)



*Women's golf class next to the Women's Memorial Hall taken around 1920. UO Athletics, University of Oregon. Oregon Digital.*

**Culture and Leisure**

Like other areas of life, leisure and cultural pursuits have largely been defined and considered from the male perspective. Labor is a throughline here too. Many women were responsible for the creation and support of cultural, leisure, and recreational activities. Community and kinship are also key elements of this sub-theme, as cultural pursuits, leisure activities, and sports drew women together and created connection outside of the traditional family network.

**Areas of Significance:**

- Art
- Entertainment/Recreation
- Literature
- Performing Arts

# PROJECT APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

As the project team examined potential approaches for this historic context and the associated Multiple Property Documentation, concern emerged that this project runs the risk of attempting to tackle too much and be incomplete. The broader the scope of the project, the less specificity can be included in the final document. There is simply too much history to tell within the scope of this kind of project with the limitations of the MPD structure. In the project team's review of other states, most that have women's history-related MPDs have either limited the geographic scope or narrowed the thematic scope. Additionally, resources that have already received plenty of attention (e.g., women's clubs, schools) may detract from identifying less well-known and documented resources.

As a result of this analysis and the development of themes related to women's history, the project team recommended the following approach for the Oregon Women's History Project historic context:

First, the project team built out a comprehensive annotated bibliography covering all the themes identified in "Project Background." This bibliography demonstrates not only the breadth of women's history but serves as a reference tool for future research and starting point for future targeted studies.

Second, the team focused the historic context on one theme: labor. This allowed the historic context to touch on all women across all time periods. The project team tried to focus on lesser known or documented stories, while acknowledging the well-documented stories with targeted footnote citations showing the scholarship and NRHP listings.

To sharpen the research and discussion focus on working women in Oregon, this historic context addresses specifically the paid, typically outside of the home, labor of women. We've highlighted activism efforts, although frequently unpaid, when they led to reform impacting women workers. The contexts begin in 1903, with the passage by the Oregon Legislature of a law limiting women workers in certain industries to 10-hour days, and ends in 1990 with the election of Barbara Roberts as Governor of Oregon, the first woman elected to Oregon's highest executive office. Agricultural and timber products remained the top industries in Oregon well into the 20th





century, in contrast to other industrialized states in the nation. These economic conditions limited the number of women in the paid workforce prior to the 1900s, although women were still present in many of these industries, either as direct or support workers.

By narrowing this study to paid labor and this time frame, the authors hope to better define the spaces within which women have operated and address the impacts on women and their ability to earn income. This study covers the range of women's labor during this period, including domestic work, teaching, healthcare, and wartime industrial work, as well as the expansion of jobs open to women.

*Students posing in front of the Woman's Memorial during the 1920s. UO Athletics, University of Oregon. Oregon Digital.*

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# OREGON WOMEN'S LABOR HISTORY

*There never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers.*

– Susan B. Anthony

As the title of labor historian Alice Kessler-Harris' classic publication proclaims, "women have always worked." Work is the consistent thread woven into the stories of women throughout time and place, whether their labor was paid or unpaid, within or outside the home. Women who have worked include, for example, Native Americans who organized seasonal migrations and managed food processing and storage; Western immigrants who oversaw family farms and households; Black women who formed businesses and organizations when the dominant White community refused them; immigrants and working-class women who worked in physically demanding jobs for wages or room-and-board; and even women who hired and organized other women

At the dawn of the 20th century, an emerging commercial and industrial economy was rapidly reshaping traditional gender roles in America, which had long restricted most women largely to domestic spheres, including wage-earning women, who largely worked in households as servants, cooks, and laundresses. Increasingly, however, women took jobs in the emerging service and manufacturing sectors where they could earn higher wages and social status, depending on the work. In 1900, one-quarter of the five million women earning wages in the United States worked in manufacturing, in places such as commercial laundries, canneries, and textile and garment shops.<sup>1</sup>

Stepping outside the domestic sphere put women in direct labor and wage competition with working-class men, particularly immigrant men and men of color. However, the work remained highly gendered: Women usually received less pay than men, and they were also kept on the periphery of organized, male-dominated trade unions in the early part of the 20th century. As a result, reformers sought change on different fronts. For example, the National Women's Trade Union League worked to organize women's labor groups; meanwhile, the National Consumers' League (NCL) sought change through lawmaking, and between 1900 and 1930, protective legislation addressing women-only minimum hours and wages would come to dominate labor politics.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Nancy Woloch, *A Class By Herself: Protective Laws for Women Workers, 1890s–1990s* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), 18.

2. Janice Dilg, "For Working Women in Oregon": Caroline Gleason/Sister Miriam Theresa and Oregon's Minimum Wage Law," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 110, no. 1 (2009): 104.



*Workers in an onion field in Silverton, Oregon ca. 1930. Courtesy June D. Drake photographs, 1863–2001, Org. Lot 678, Box 27, 116, Oregon Historical Society.*

Women who encountered gender inequities and discrimination in workplace settings adapted in various ways. Professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, or realtors, created workplaces within their homes or worked in female-dominated settings that lessened their exposure to discrimination. When they were excluded from professional organizations, they formed women-only groups for networking and development. Working-class women showed similar patterns of adapting to gender discrimination, especially in the formation of all-female unions.

Shifting social and economic roles resulted in differences between, on one hand, working-class women experiencing “the awkwardness of their new social identity” and, on the other hand, middle- and upper-class women who emerged as consumers.<sup>3</sup> Janice Dilg, an independent historian specializing

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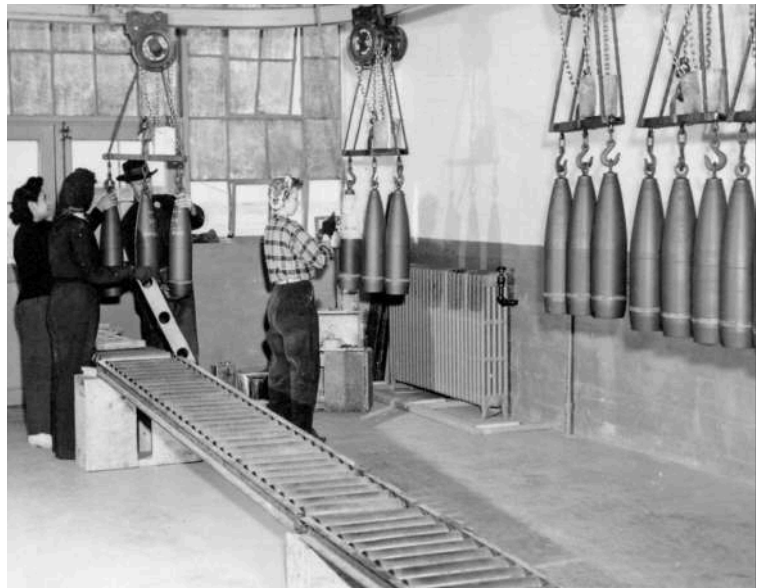
3. Lara Vapnek, *Breadwinners: Working Women and Economic Independence, 1865–1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 78, 101.

in women and labor history in the Pacific Northwest, says that the NCL and others used the term “consumers” for the emerging middle- and upper-class women who had gained economic power as purchasers of goods and services.<sup>4</sup> In addition to class, race and ethnicity factored in to the differences among women, and reformers usually focused efforts on protecting White working women.

During World War II—and the call for all hands on deck in the nation’s defense efforts—the number of women in the workforce dramatically increased. Many of these jobs, in shipyards and manufacturing plants, were previously only held by men and entirely new to women. However, as the war ended, men returned home and to their jobs. Women were encouraged, or outright forced, to return home and there was a period when the number of women in the workforce dropped below the wartime peak.

Although women in the workforce, both nationally and in Oregon, immediately decreased following the end of World War II, their numbers quickly returned to the wartime peak by 1950. While a few women were able to forge a path in the new career opportunities they experienced during the war, most women continued to work in the jobs within which they had historically worked—service, clerical, healthcare, and teaching. By the mid-20th century, the majority of all teaching and clerical jobs in the United States were held by women. In addition to many women remaining in these limited professions, they continued to be limited in wages and access to advancement.

Women’s activism in the early 20th century produced new and increased opportunities during the latter half of the century, with many “first” women in professions and levels of achievement during the post-war era and beyond. There are clear examples in Oregon’s history of women being inspired by women from the previous generation, and also seeking to set standards and remove barriers for future generations. The series of bipartisan feminist bills pushed by 11 Oregon state legislators in the 1970s is a prime example of women working together to ensure a better future for other working women in Oregon.



*Workers at the Umatilla Ordnance Depot, 1943. Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.*

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4. Dilg, “For Working Women in Oregon,” 104.





*Women workers, Pacific Coast Biscuit Company, between 1900 and 1905.  
Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.*

The period covered by the four historic contexts begins in 1903 with the Oregon Legislature's passage of a law limiting women workers in certain industries to 10-hour days and ends in 1990 with the election of Barbara Roberts as Governor of Oregon, the first woman elected to Oregon's highest executive office. Agricultural and timber products remained the top industries in the state well into the 20th century, which was in contrast to other industrialized states in the nation. For example, New York led the nation in manufacturing—from clothing and textiles to printing; factory work, despite poor wages and unsafe working conditions, provided employment for many

women. Although Oregon women were present in many of the male-dominated industries of timber and agriculture, either as direct or support workers, it was in limited numbers. Women living and working in other states that led with other industries had higher numbers of women in the workforce.

A 1907 study, "Women at Work" by the U.S. Census Bureau, identified that 20.6 percent of women aged 16 and over were "breadwinners" or engaged in gainful occupations.<sup>5</sup> "Domestic and personal service" was the highest occupation category for women nationally at the dawn of the 20th century, closely followed by manufacturing. With the lack of manufacturing in Oregon at the turn of the century, only 15 percent of women were at work in the state, compared to 25 percent in New York or 27 percent in New England.<sup>6</sup>

Many women in Oregon gained access to new employment fields after work or even entire careers in other more traditionally accepted jobs, such as teaching or clerical work. Other women launched careers or shifted into new ones after raising children.

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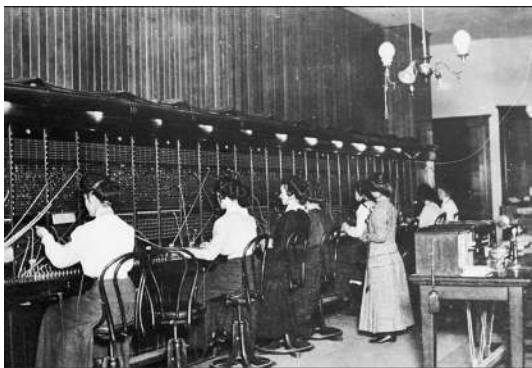
5. Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, "Statistics of Women at Work" (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1907), 9, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1907/dec/women-at-work.html>.

6. Southern states had the highest percentages of women in the workforce, with South Carolina and Mississippi having the highest at 37.9 and 33.4, respectively. "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" on page 131 in Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, "Statistics of Women at Work."

By narrowing this study to paid labor and within this time frame, the authors hope to better define the spaces within which women have operated and address the impacts on women and their ability to earn income.



*Women with dry salmon at Celilo Village, mid-1950s. Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.*



*Baker City telephone operators, ca. 1910. Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.*

## ERA OF PROTECTIONISM FOR WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE: 1903–1919

Most working women during this period performed manual industrial labor or domestic services, but they began to enter semi-professional and professional jobs in growing numbers. Working conditions for industrial women laborers, in particular, was the focus of social reformers' investigations and lobbying efforts, and they notched their first major victory in 1903 when the Oregon Legislature passed a law (Session Laws 1903) making it illegal for employers to require women to work more than 10 hours per day in certain industries. This law, upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1908 *Muller v. Oregon* decision, rippled nationwide and ushered in an era of protectionism towards women in the workforce. While Oregon's legislation and the subsequent landmark court decision won women laborers within certain industries shorter workdays, the paternalistic and gender-stereotypical language within the Court's decision prioritized the child-bearing capacity of women over their rights as workers and differentiated them from men who worked.

As this and other protectionist laws led to a regulatory framework aimed at protecting women workers, more women continued to enter the workforce. A clear hierarchy emerged, and where a woman found herself was largely determined by her level of education, marital status, and race. If advances toward equality for women were incremental, they happened at an even slower pace for women of color. Their numbers in the workforce were small and their roles primarily as manual industrial laborers or domestic service workers.

### Oregon's Female Population and Workforce

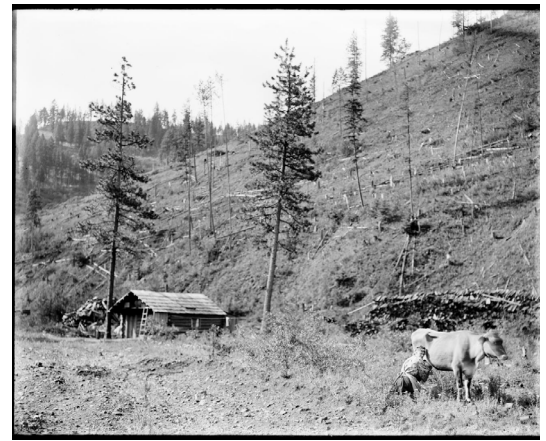
Historical labor data is challenged by inconsistencies and changing definitions, particularly when it comes to women and people of color. In the early 20th century, the federal government, via the census, tracked numbers of "gainful workers," or those over age 10 who worked outside the home for wages, but this was supplanted in 1940 with different workforce definitions that tracked workers over age 14. Occupational classifications also changed over time as the economy evolved. Further, historical statistics do not account for the contributions of married women's work within their



households, rearing children or as part of family businesses, nor does the data fully reflect the contributions of people of color who often worked in higher turnover or seasonal jobs and thus went undercounted. Nevertheless, the data can illuminate certain trends, especially when referenced in context with other sources of information like personal accounts.

In 1900, Oregon was a rural state with agriculture, lumber, and railroads dominating the economy. Evolving transportation systems and mechanized technology brought rapid change, growing the state's industrial and manufacturing sectors against a backdrop of booming population growth and Progressive Era reform movements. In the first two decades of the 20th century, Oregon's population grew 89 percent, from 413,536 in 1900 to 783,389 in 1920. During this same period, the state's female population more than doubled to 367,055 in 1920.<sup>7</sup>

Women faced limited employment options because of the highly gendered nature of the wage-labor economy, which economic historian and labor economist Claudia Goldin suggests was “less a reflection of inherent differences in ability than... a byproduct of segregation by method of payment and the specialized nature of work.”<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, increasing numbers of Oregon women and girls entered this rapidly changing economy as wage laborers, rising from 18,437 or 10.2 percent of the total female population in 1900 to 40,473 or 14.0 percent in 1910. Single women, including those divorced and widowed, dominated the female labor force throughout this period, accounting for 84.7 percent of the female workforce in 1900 and 72.1 percent in 1920.<sup>9</sup>



*Black and white image of a woman milking a cow outside of a woodcutter's cabin, 1888/1916. Photographed by Lee Moorhouse. Lee Moorhouse (1850-1926) photographs, 1888–1916, University of Oregon.*

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7. U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Vol. 4” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1923), tbl. 14, p. 55, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1923/dec/vol-04-occupations.html>.

8. Claudia Goldin, “The Work and Wages of Single Women, 1870-1920,” *The Journal of Economic History* 40, no. 1 (March 1980): 87.

9. U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900, Special Report: Occupations at the Twelfth Census,” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), tbl. 41, p. 370, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1904/dec/occupations.html>; U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Vol. 4,” tbl. 17, p. 741.



*Old Boarding House, Dallas. Courtesy Building Oregon, University of Oregon.*

The percentage of married women joining them was climbing as well.<sup>10</sup>

At the beginning of the 20th century, Oregon's working women were clustered into a few occupational groups. Forty percent worked in domestic and personal services (e.g., household servants, laundresses, boardinghouse keepers, hairdressers, bar/restaurant keepers), a sector dominated by women and the primary employment option for women of color in towns and cities. About 20 percent worked in manufacturing (e.g., woolen mill workers, food processors, seamstresses) and 8.5 percent in agriculture. These percentages would decline over the next two decades, giving way to slightly more women in professional positions (e.g., teachers, nurses, librarians) and significantly more in clerical jobs (e.g., bookkeepers, stenographers, clerks). In 1920, 26.7 percent of working women were in domestic and personal service jobs, with 19.7 percent and 19.6 percent in clerical and professional positions, respectively. Also, U.S. Census data shows that by 1920, a growing percentage of women worked in trade (e.g., retail dealers, saleswomen).

White women represented an overwhelming majority of Oregon's female population (more than 98 percent) and thus dominated the female workforce during this period. Among White women, those who were immigrants or had foreign-born parents were more likely to be working for wages than those born in the U.S. with U.S.-born parents. Oregon had small but significant populations of Native, African American, Japanese, and Chinese women who worked for wage labor. Although their overall numbers were small within the workforce, more women of color worked than White women. They also had fewer employment opportunities than White women, with systemic racial discrimination contributing to lower wages and less opportunity for advancement.

Black women consistently worked in the labor force in higher numbers than any demographic of women throughout the first half of the 20th century, "in part because [B]lack household incomes were lower, making the income earned

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10. For more on single women in the labor force during this period, see Goldin, "The Work and Wages of Single Women, 1870–1920."

by women more important.”<sup>11</sup> In 1910, for example, 521 Black women were living in Oregon, most of them in Portland. Forty-four percent of them were earning wages, most of them performing domestic and household work.<sup>12</sup> This percentage would remain high, hovering around 40 percent, through 1940.

Oregon’s female Asian population, which included primarily Japanese and Chinese women, was small due in part to restrictive immigration laws in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The 1900 U.S. Census recorded 365 Chinese women and 96 Japanese women living in all of Oregon, far fewer than Chinese and Japanese men, which created a significant gender imbalance. By 1920, Oregon’s Asian female population numbered fewer than 2,000. Oregon’s discriminatory citizenship and land laws targeting Asians considerably slowed the growth and advancement of Asian communities in Oregon. Less statistical data is available for Japanese and Chinese women workers, although census population numbers suggest trends. Personal accounts are particularly useful in bolstering gaps in labor statistics. Similar to Black women, they had less access to job advancement and primarily worked as domestic laborers, cooks in restaurants, as fruit and vegetable pickers, and in canneries.<sup>13</sup>

Most of Oregon’s Native population lived on reservations at this time, and the loss of millions of acres of their ancestral lands had significantly impacted Native women’s ability to feed and care for their families. Among the tribes was—and still is—an incredible diversity of history, culture, and self-governance that is rooted in the traditions of the Coastal, Plateau, and Great Basin regions. Having been cut off or restricted from their traditional hunting, gathering, and fishing territories by the federal government, industry, and settlers, Native women



*Clara Elizabeth Chan voting, 1911.  
Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.*

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11. Dora L. Costa, “From Mill Town to Board Room: The Rise of Women’s Paid Labor,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 104.

12. U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910, Vol. 4” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1914), tbl. 24, p. 67, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1914/dec/vol-4-occupations.html>.

13. Peggy Nagae, “Asian Women: Immigration and Citizenship in Oregon,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2012): 339, <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.113.3.0334>; Linda Tamura, *The Hood River Issei: An Oral History of Japanese Settlers in Oregon’s Hood River Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 101.





*Abigail Scott Duniway. The Sunday Oregonian, September 9, 1906, part 3, page 33.*



*Caroline Gleason. The Oregon Daily Journal, March 8, 1914, section 5, page 7.*

adapted by finding alternative food and income sources, like seasonal agricultural or food processing work.<sup>14</sup>

## Legal and Labor Framework

### *Threads of the Women's Rights Movement*

By 1900, the women's rights movement in the United States was a half-century old and included women from across the country who had settled into various alliances. Some were most passionate about citizenship and the right to vote. Others challenged coverture laws and sought equality in property ownership and marriage laws. Still others pursued gender equality by advocating for public education and workplace laws. They did not always agree and sometimes even worked against each other. Historian Dorothy Sue Cobble describes the movement as having "multiple and competing visions of how to achieve women's equality," with issues of the day, such as temperance, immigration, education, industrialization, and labor, influencing women's opinions on gender equality.<sup>15</sup>

Women's rights advocates in Oregon were no different, representing the range of passions and viewpoints found elsewhere. Many today are familiar with the decades of activism of Abigail Scott Duniway, an equal rights advocate who pushed for a woman's right to vote. Perhaps less familiar, though, is Caroline Gleason (later known as Sister Miriam Theresa), who sought to protect Oregon's wage-earning women through laws and regulations. Indeed, reformers like Gleason saw a need to protect all workers—not just women. However, their maternalistic ideology, that a woman's primary role was as a mother and wife, drove them to seek protections for women that viewed women workers as different than men. This often put protectionist reformers at odds with equal rights advocates.

Scholars have called reformers like Gleason "social feminists," who believed in women's rights but prioritized

14. Kay Reid, "Multilayered Loyalties: Oregon Indian Women as Citizens of the Land, Their Tribal Nations, and the United States," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2012): 394.

15. Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 3.

certain social reforms ahead of broader gender equality.<sup>16</sup> Aided and encouraged by national labor reformers like Florence Kelley, Secretary of the National Consumers' League (NCL), Gleason, along with the Consumers' League of Oregon (CLO), the NCL's partner labor advocacy network, the NCL's partner labor advocacy network Consumers' League of Oregon (CLO) gained support from the Oregon Legislature in the early 1900s. The timing of Oregon's industrial growth coincided with a rising labor rights movement and a sympathetic political climate that made it an ideal place for Progressive Era labor advocates to advance reforms. They were wildly successful and would influence the debate around women's issues well into the 20th century.<sup>17</sup>

### *Emergence of Women's Labor Movement in Oregon*

Oregon women's contributions to the important national story of labor in the 20th century are significant and worthy of study. Labor rights advocacy in Oregon influenced the trajectory of debates around women's issues for much of this period, beginning with *Muller v. Oregon*: In 1908, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of protective legislation.

The roots of that case are in Portland's turn-of-the-century commercial steam laundries that employed hundreds of working-class women. While the decision won women laborers within certain industries shorter workdays, it emphasized a paternalistic view of women as child-bearers and prioritized their domestic role as mothers over their rights as workers. Legal historian Emily Prifogle argues that the decision was "part of a broader labor struggle that tangled together women's rights advocacy, union activism, and anti-Chinese discrimination," underscoring the fact that the history of women's labor in Oregon goes beyond issues of gender and class to include race.<sup>18</sup>

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16. Cobble, 56–58; Nancy Woloch, *A Class By Herself: Protective Laws for Women Workers, 1890s-1990s* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), 22.

17. Janice Dilg, "For Working Women in Oregon": Caroline Gleason/ Sister Miriam Theresa and Oregon's Minimum Wage Law," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 110, no. 1 (2009): 96–99.

18. Emily A. Prifogle, "Law & Laundry: White Laundresses, Chinese Laundrymen, and the Origins of *Muller v. Oregon*," *Stud. L. Pol. & Soc'y* 83 (2020): 3. For another perspective on the interconnectedness of labor and race, see Johanna Ogden, "White Right and Labor Organizing in Oregon's 'Hindu' City," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, no. 4 (2019): 488–517.



*Women's Suffrage Handbill, 1912.  
Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.*





*Working staff of Domestic Laundry in Pendleton, Oregon (ca. 1905). Lee Moorhouse (1850–1926) photographs, 1888–1916, University of Oregon.*

Efforts to organize Oregon's working women saw limited success in the early 20th century due partly to the male-dominated union structure and partly to women's labor advocates' focus on legislation. This activity also coincided with the statewide suffrage movement. Most women finally earned the right to vote in Oregon in 1912 and in federal elections in 1920, with the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Even then, Native women in Oregon did not have full enfranchisement until 1924, and full enfranchisement for Asians and Asian Americans did not come until well after World War II. Further alienating women of color was the broader backlash against Progressive Era reforms in the early 20th century, which resulted in restrictive and racist land laws and citizenship laws that would impact them for the next 25 years.

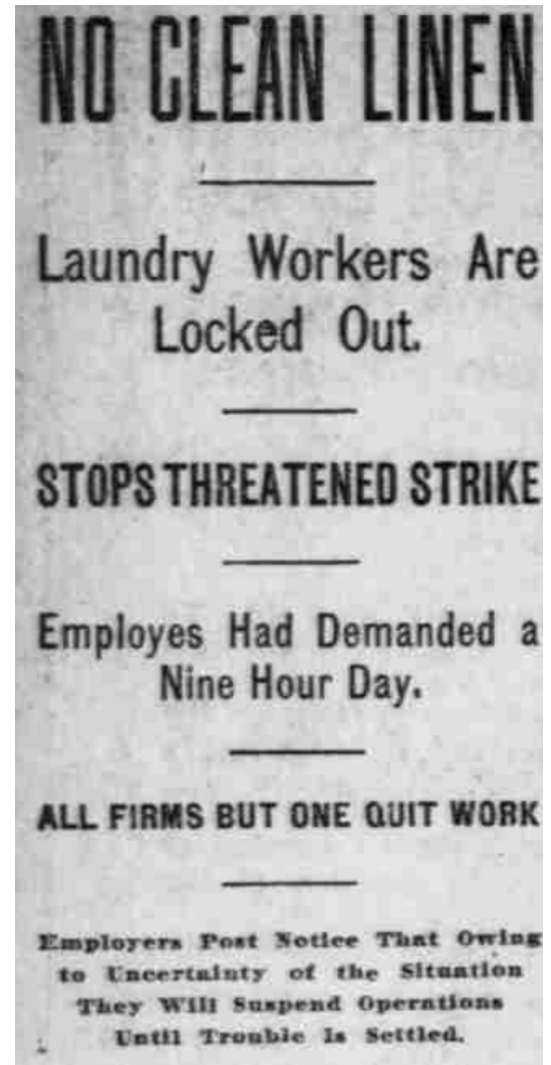
Women's labor reformers of the early 20th century focused their investigations and lobbying efforts on the physically demanding work of textile mills, canneries, and laundries.



Portland was the center of Oregon's growing commercial laundry industry, and that growth coincided with a wave of unionization efforts—locally and across the country.

In 1900, the *Portland Labor Press* became the official publication of the Federated Trades Council (and later the Central Labor Council of Portland and the Oregon State Federation of Labor).<sup>19</sup> With content targeting wage-earning White men, it aimed to spread awareness of the trade unions, share labor-related news, and endorse union-backed political candidates. It was quite gendered, patriarchal, and racially biased in its coverage during this time, but it contributed to the growing fervor around the White- and male-dominated labor unionization movement in Portland, which monopolized statewide activity.

The *Portland Labor Press* covered rising tensions between employers and laundrymen. In 1902, the Oregon State Federation of Labor was formed. It was the state's major labor organization supporting workers, and it backed strikes and unionization as a way for workers to win rights. That same year there were 17 labor strikes in Portland, four of them within the laundry industry. At its first convention in May 1902—the same month laundry workers from Local 90 of the Shirt, Waist, and Laundry Workers' Union waged a successful strike—the organization voted to support proposed labor laws, including one that called for a 10-hour day for women workers.<sup>20</sup> Following the strike, as many as three-fifths of female laundry workers joined the union by 1903.<sup>21</sup> Within months, the Oregon Legislature passed the 10-hour workday law, making it illegal for employers to require women to work for more than that daily in factories and laundries.<sup>22</sup> It also required employers of women across occupational groups “to provide suitable seats for them and to permit them to use such seats when not



The Sunday Oregonian, May 3, 1903, page 10.

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19. Kristin Peasley, “Labor Press Project – Portland Labor Press,” in Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project (Civil Rights and Labor History Consortium, University of Washington, 2001), <https://depts.washington.edu/labhist/laborpress/PortlandLabor.htm>.

20. Woloch, *A Class By Herself: Protective Laws for Women Workers, 1890s–1990s*, 57.

21. Prifogle, “Law & Laundry: White Laundresses, Chinese Laundrymen, and the Origins of *Muller v. Oregon*,” 14.

22. National and state reformers saw this as an “entering wedge” strategy, with an ultimate goal of achieving maximum work hours for all workers. Woloch, *A Class By Herself*, 71, 82–83.



*Mary Strong Kinney, ca. 1925. Kinney was an important suffragist in Oregon who served as president of the Astoria Women's Suffrage Club in 1912, the year that women in Oregon gained the right to vote. She later served in both the Oregon House and Senate, and was a member of the Oregon Agricultural College Board of Regents. Historical Images of Oregon State University, Oregon State University.*

engaged in the active duties of employment.”<sup>23</sup> This law set Oregon’s women workers apart from working men.

During the same 1903 session, the legislature created the Bureau of Labor Statistics to collect and compile data on labor, industry, and employment laws. In its early years, the bureau worked to enforce three laws—“the Child Labor law, the 10-hour day for females, and the Factory Inspection law.”<sup>24</sup> The Bureau’s chief inspector of child labor, and a longtime reformer advocating on behalf of women and children in the workforce, was Millie Reid Trumbull, appointed nearly a full decade before she had the right to vote in Oregon.<sup>25</sup>

Covering fewer than 20 percent of Oregon’s female wage earners, the 10-hour workday law had a modest impact on workers.<sup>26</sup> Most scholars agree that its greater impact came within the legal and labor rights spheres following its challenge to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1908.<sup>27</sup> At the heart of *Muller v. Oregon* were women—named in the legal records as Mrs. E. Gotcher, Helen Peterson, Bell Gotcher, Esther Brookes, Eunice McLeod, and Bertha Gehrke—employed by the Grand Laundry in Portland. Owner Curt Muller had required them to work longer than the 10-hour limit on September 4, 1905—Labor Day.<sup>28</sup>

Attorney Louis D. Brandeis, assisted by his sister-in-law Josephine Goldmark and Florence Kelley with the National Consumers’ League, defended Oregon’s 10-hour workday

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23. Caroline J. Gleason, “Oregon Legislation for Women in Industry,” Bulletin of the Women’s Bureau No. 90 (Washington, DC: United States Department of Labor, 1931), 17, <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/oregon-legislation-women-industry-5398>.

24. Oregon Bureau of Labor, “Biennial Report: 50 Years of Progress” (Salem, OR: Oregon Bureau of Labor, 1952), 7, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015076469454?urlappend=%3Bseq=1>.

25. Trumbull had advocated for the 10-hour workday law in her role as a member and officer of the Consumers’ League of Oregon. For more about Trumbull see Dilg, “For Working Women in Oregon,” 105, 113.

26. Woloch, *A Class By Herself: Protective Laws for Women Workers, 1890s-1990s*, 57.

27. Emily Prifogle, Nancy Woloch, and Janice Dilg, for example, explain that the decision was legally groundbreaking because attorney Louis Brandeis cited non-legal social science data, a strategy that became commonplace.

28. Prifogle, “Law & Laundry: White Laundresses, Chinese Laundrymen, and the Origins of *Muller v. Oregon*,” 22.

law. The court sided with the state, upholding the law as a “reasonable form of class legislation.”<sup>29</sup> According to historian Janice Dilg, the court’s decision “elevated the argument that women were ‘different’ and warranted legislative protection,” and that “the ‘difference’ versus ‘equal’ distinction is critically important to the legislative remedies that social reformers sought.”<sup>30</sup>

Emboldened by the legal victory, Oregon women continued to push for rights beyond labor. In 1912, voters considered women’s suffrage for the sixth time since 1884, finally approving it with 52 percent of the vote.<sup>31</sup> Although a handful of women already held key decisionmaking positions in public offices and on public boards and commissions, such as Portland’s city market inspector Lillian Tingle, police officer and so-called “municipal mother” Lola Green Baldwin, health officer Esther Pohl Lovejoy, and child labor inspector Millie Reid Trumbull, a wave of women were elected to public office following the 1912 suffrage vote. In 1914, Jackson County Democrat Marian B. Towne was the first woman elected to the Oregon House of Representatives. In 1915, Douglas County Republican Kathryn Clarke was the first woman elected to the Oregon Senate.

There are many examples of women winning local elections, including school board and city council positions. Service on a local school board offered women a familiar arena in which to develop political skills that could springboard them to other public offices. The newspapers of the time offered various viewpoints on whether school boards should include women, with proponents often pointing out that women’s traditional role as nurturers and educators gave them a uniquely qualified perspective on education matters.<sup>32</sup> In one well-documented election in 1916, for Umatilla City Council, women candidates swept all seven seats. This was due in part to Umatilla’s voting process that did not require candidates



*Marian B. Towne, ca. 1915. Courtesy Oregon Historical Society Research Library, 009369.*



*City of Umatilla Mayor Laura J. Starcher. Oregon Daily Journal, December 17, 1916, page 14.*

29. Dilg, “For Working Women in Oregon,” 105.

30. Dilg, 105.

31. Kimberly Jensen, “Significant Events in the History of Oregon Women and Citizenship,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2012): 501, <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.113.3.0500>.

32. See for example, “Elect a Woman to the School Board,” *Medford Mail Tribune*, June 7, 1912, 4; “An Important Question,” *Semi-Weekly Bandon Recorder*, June 6, 1913, 3; “Woman’s Place on School Board Issue Discussed,” *The Oregon Daily Journal*, June 13, 1913, 3; “Local Politics,” *The Evening News*, September 30, 1913, 1.





*City of Yoncalla Mayor Mary Burt [center] led an all-woman city council after the 1920 election. Morning Oregonian, November 10, 1920, page 4.*

to announce their intention to run, and several women had organized out of dissatisfaction with the existing council. Voters wrote in their choices and elected Laura J. Starcher, mayor; Bertha Cherry, recorder; Lola Merrick, treasurer; and council members Stella Paulu, Gladys Spinning, Anna Means, and Mrs. C.G. Brownell. By 1920 the local council returned to the familiar all-male representations; however, subsequent generations of Oregon women followed the paths forged by these women and others into public life to reach even higher offices.<sup>33</sup>

Meanwhile, on the labor front, the “difference argument gained traction with the social reform community, which viewed legislative remedies as the most expedient way to help women workers,”<sup>34</sup> according to historian Dilg. Following the Muller decision in 1908 and the statewide suffrage vote in 1912, reform momentum was strong. At the urging of Florence Kelley of the NCL, the CLO organized a study on women’s wages, hours, job conditions, and living standards.

33. Jensen, “Significant Events in the History of Oregon Women and Citizenship,” 501–2; Melinda Jetté, “Laura Stockton Starcher,” in Oregon History Project (Oregon Historical Society, 2003), <https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/laura-stockton-starcher/>.

34. Dilg, “For Working Women in Oregon,” 106.

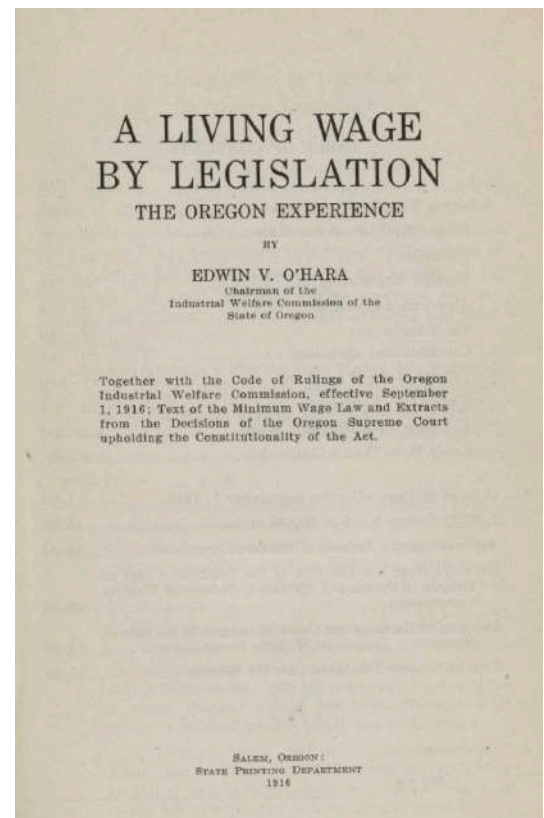


Led by Caroline Gleason, the CLO's Social Survey Committee surveyed working women and conducted workplace site visits throughout 1912. The study demonstrated that many women relied on wages to support their families. The Report of the Social Survey was distributed statewide in early 1913 and served as the basis for legislation for a state law on a minimum wage for women.<sup>35</sup> It was the country's first compulsory minimum wage law for women workers.

The law established the Industrial Welfare Commission (IWC), which would set working hours and standards for workplace conditions, lead investigations into complaints, and assess penalties. Gleason served as the IWC's first executive secretary. The commission was often in the middle of workplace disputes between women, unions, and employers. Each of these groups had their own agendas, including the protectionist-leaning IWC.

Ultimately, working women were mixed in how they received the minimum hours and wage laws. The IWC heard from women working in various sectors who challenged the notion of protectionism, illustrating that not all workers supported the efforts of labor advocates to shorten workdays and implement minimum wages. For example, in 1916, women workers at the Thomas Kay Woolen Mills in Salem, who comprised 40 of its 125 employees, protested the efforts of the IWC to reduce their work hours. They argued that if women who are employed by piece work—meaning they were paid based on the number of units they produced—were not allowed to work more than eight hours per day, as was being suggested, they would be discharged and men put in their places.<sup>36</sup>

Dilg provides additional examples from the IWC's First Biennial Report: Female telephone and telegraph operators and hotel workers were unhappy with the IWC's rule against night work, and according to the report, "questioned why 'working hours should be limited to one certain part of the twenty-four' available in one day."<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the issue of night work was not unique to Oregon labor activists; however, far fewer states had regulations addressing it. As historian Nancy Woloach argues, the night work laws "marked a tipping point



*A Living Wage by Edwin V. O'Hara (title page).*

35. Dilg, 115–16.

36. "Women at Woolen Mill Object to Efforts of Welfare Commission," *Daily Capital Journal*, March 6, 1916, 7.

37. Dilg, "For Working Women in Oregon," 120.

## STUDENTS HAVE CHANCE TO DO WORK OVERSEAS

477 University Men and Women Needed  
for Various Positions in Gov-  
ernment Service.

Four hundred seventy-seven University students are wanted for foreign service by the Red Cross, according to the schedule of unfilled foreign personnel enrollments, received at the president's office. The opportunity for service is great, but in most cases salaries are not paid, and in those cases where individuals can pay their own expenses that is very much desired by the Red Cross.

Following is the list of unfilled positions, giving the number of people desired: journalists, 4; social workers, 8; secretaries to bureau heads, 10; architects, 2; cooks, child's exhibit, 2; accountants, canteen and rest stations, 5; office managers, 10; secretaries with stenographic training, 9; stenographers, 27; stock clerks, warehouse, 29; bookkeepers, civil affairs department, 9; accountants, bureau F. and A., 8; accountants, stores section, 6; drivers, transportation department, 349.

Oregon Emerald, April 16, 1918, page 1.

between protection and restriction" for many workers and foreshadowed the mounting challenges to protectionist laws in Oregon and across the country.<sup>38</sup>

Scholars have pointed to scenarios like these to show, not only that women had diverse opinions about protective reforms and flexibility in their working hours, but also that protectionist laws treated female workers differently than males. As labor historian Alice Kessler-Harris argues, they even "depriv[ed] women of opportunities they might otherwise have had."<sup>39</sup> This imbalance among workers would remain until protective reforms addressed all workers.

The passage of the minimum hours and wage laws for women within a single decade marked the heyday of protectionism in Oregon. That progress was disrupted by the United States entering World War I, which sent a jolt through Oregon's economy and workforce. Worldwide demand for wood and wheat sent significant ripples through the state's lumber and agricultural industries. The U.S. government's need for ships jumpstarted activity in the ports and shipyards on Oregon's coast and along the Columbia River. Wartime contract orders for blankets and clothing ramped up activity in Oregon's woolen mills, which would lead other parts of the country in the percentage of war work done.<sup>40</sup> With thousands of men leaving the workforce to serve in the military, coupled with the changing needs of a world at war, a range of work opportunities opened for women, as demonstrated by the classified ads pages of most Oregon newspapers at the time. Not only did positions vacated by men need to be filled, but there were new wartime jobs available at home and abroad as well. For example, the *Oregon Emerald* published a call from the U.S. government to university men and women who wanted foreign service experience as journalists, social workers, secretaries, architects, accountants, stenographers, clerks, bookkeepers, and cooks.<sup>41</sup> Even so, protective laws limited women's advancement in industrial and manufacturing

38. Woloch, *A Class By Herself: Protective Laws for Women Workers, 1890s-1990s*, 94.

39. Alice Kessler-Harris, *Gendering Labor History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 197.

40. "Oregon Woolen Mills Get Large War Orders," *Daily Capital Journal*, November 2, 1918, 8.

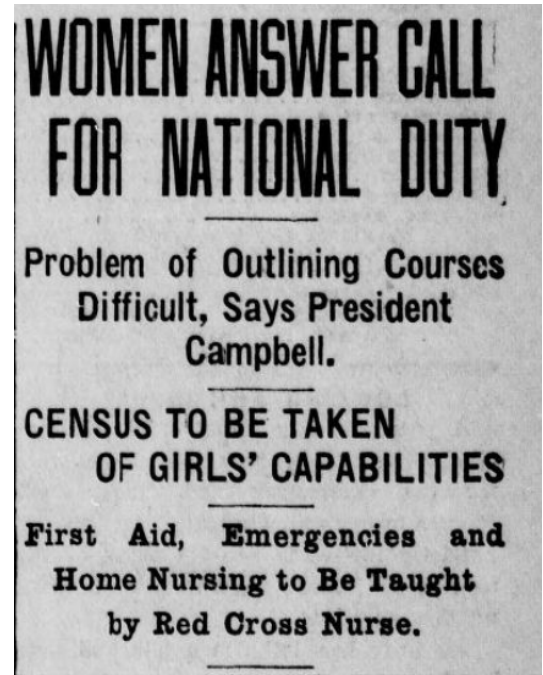
41. "Students Have Chance To Do Work Overseas," *Oregon Emerald*, April 16, 1918, 1.

settings during the war, and most employment opportunities for women were in “white-collar work.”<sup>42</sup>

Newspapers also tugged at women’s patriotic heartstrings, encouraging service to the country through new Red Cross chapters and other similar organizations.<sup>43</sup> Thousands of Oregon women participated in what historian Kimberly Jensen called “the visible civic pageantry of parades and Liberty Loan drives,” while immigrants and women of color grappled with racism and struggled to define their place as citizens.<sup>44</sup>

The considerable demand for labor during WWI spurred growth in unions and emboldened the mostly male logging, lumber mill, and shipyard workers to demand better wages and camp conditions. Concerned about the possible impact of strikes on wartime industrial output, the federal government created the National War Labor Board to mediate disputes. However, the armistice in November 1918 switched off the need for wartime labor like a light, leaving thousands of men and women looking for work. Women generally retreated to their traditional gendered roles in the domestic and service sectors.

The post-war economic fallout in the region eventually sparked the Seattle General Strike in February 1919, a multi-day work stoppage of 60,000 workers in solidarity with shipyard workers, which inspired worker strikes throughout other industries in the region and across the country over the next several months.<sup>45</sup> One example was a nationwide strike of telephone operators, most of whom were women. In June 1919, workers in several Oregon communities walked out of work to protest low wages, especially for experienced employees, and began organizing unions, including in Medford, Pendleton, and Albany. Eight hundred telephone



Oregon Emerald, April 21, 1917, 1.

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42. Woloch, *A Class By Herself: Protective Laws for Women Workers, 1890s–1990s*, 111.

43. See for example, “Women Answer Call For National Duty,” *Oregon Emerald*, April 21, 1917, 1; “Red Cross Provides an Excellent Avenue for Service,” *Halsey Enterprise*, May 17, 1917, 1; “Woman’s War Work,” *The Oregon Daily Journal*, August 1, 1917, 8.

44. Kimberly Jensen, “Women’s ‘Positive Patriotic Duty’ to Participate: The Practice of Female Citizenship in Oregon and the Expanding Surveillance State during the First World War and Its Aftermath,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 118, no. 2 (2017): 198, 200, <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregon-histq.118.2.0198>.

45. William G. Robbins, *Oregon: This Storied Land, Second Edition* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2020), 107–9.





*Dr. Mary Cooke Thompson. Morning Oregonian, February 14, 1914: 16,*



*Dr. Marie Equi. The Oregon Daily Journal, September 25, 1921: 5.*

operators walked out in Portland, returning to work about a month later.<sup>46</sup>

## Where Oregon Women Worked

The dominant societal view of women as nurturers and caretakers—what scholars have called the cult of domesticity or “true womanhood”—kept most women out of the workforce, especially middle- and upper-class White women who did not need the income. For the approximately 15 percent of women who were in the workforce, highly gendered societal norms limited their employment opportunities. Their roles extended from the domestic sphere, such as housework, cooking, laundry, producing textiles and garments, teaching, and nursing. Additionally, a woman’s demographic traits, such as her marital status, citizenship status, and education level, influenced her employment opportunities. As demonstrated by the aforementioned workforce data, working women of color had fewer employment options than White women due to widespread racial prejudices and discrimination. Across races and ethnicities, those who lacked education and family support were the most vulnerable to exploitation by employers.

Few women worked in professional positions requiring advanced education, such as physicians, dentists, lawyers, architects, and elected or appointed public service officials. They faced barriers of having limited or no access to advanced educational programs because of their gender, race, and financial circumstances. Moreover, professional working women cut against the grain of “true womanhood” by seeking a career that would occupy much of their time and plausibly take away from their family duties.

Women’s path-blazing presence in male-dominated arenas, however, is noteworthy. Some of Oregon’s women doctors during this period held no professional degree, were educated in another state, or were among the first to obtain degrees in Oregon. For example, Portland’s Dr. Mary Cooke Thompson trained under male physicians. Others, like Dr. Esther Pohl Lovejoy, Dr. Marie Equi, and Dr. Estella Ford Winter, all of whom graduated from the University of Oregon Medical Department, today’s Oregon Health Sciences University, would chart a course for future women in medicine and public health. Social scientists like Millie Trumbull (1866–

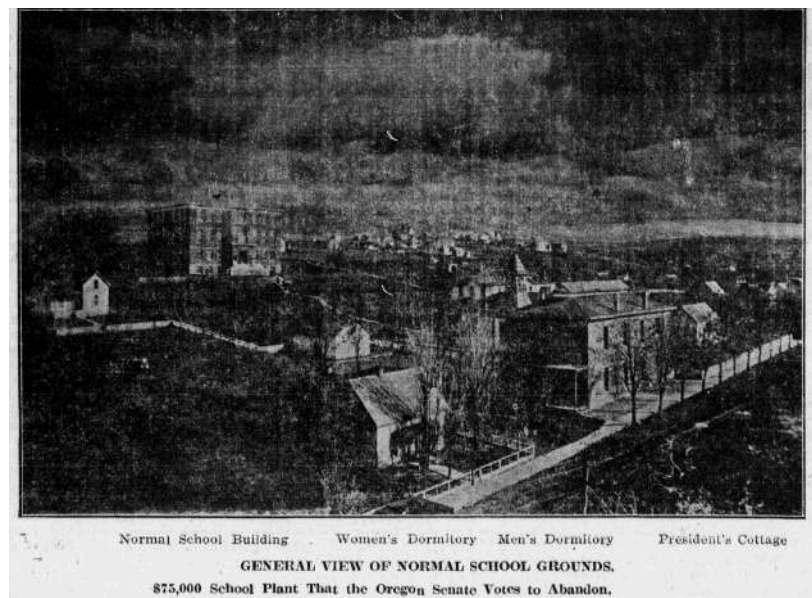
46. “Phone Settlement Fails,” *Morning Oregonian*, July 8, 1919, 2; “Return to Work After Walkout,” *The Evening Herald*, July 21, 1919, 1.



1940) and the aforementioned Gleason put their higher education degrees from other states to use in Oregon in public service, social work, and political advocacy.

Other professional and semi-professional women occupied increasingly gendered roles that sometimes required at least a high school diploma with some specialty training or even a college degree. Depending on their education level and degree of personal autonomy, these workers, such as teachers, nurses, telephone operators, secretaries, and saleswomen, sometimes had the opportunity for limited job advancement; for example, they could manage a group of women workers.

Public education provided a familiar path for many women into public life. Educating children had long been the responsibility of women, and teaching was a professional path available to women—usually those who were single and educated. Communities of all sizes needed teachers, and women came to overwhelmingly dominate this occupational group in the early 20th century. To meet the growing demand for a workforce of trained teachers, community leaders and Progressive Era reformers successfully pushed the State of Oregon to establish normal schools (teacher training institutions) at Monmouth and Ashland in 1882 and later at Weston (1885), Drain (1885), Wasco (1889), and La Grande (1925). Primary and secondary schools across Oregon, ranging from one- and two-room country schools to city elementary schools and junior and senior high schools, received trained teachers from these institutions.<sup>47</sup> The proportion of women to men teachers in Oregon public schools grew over time “from 328 women and 437 men employed in 1876–77 to 6,640 women and 1,300 men employed in 1927–28.”<sup>48</sup> School administration positions were slower to incorporate women, although Gleason (writing as Sister



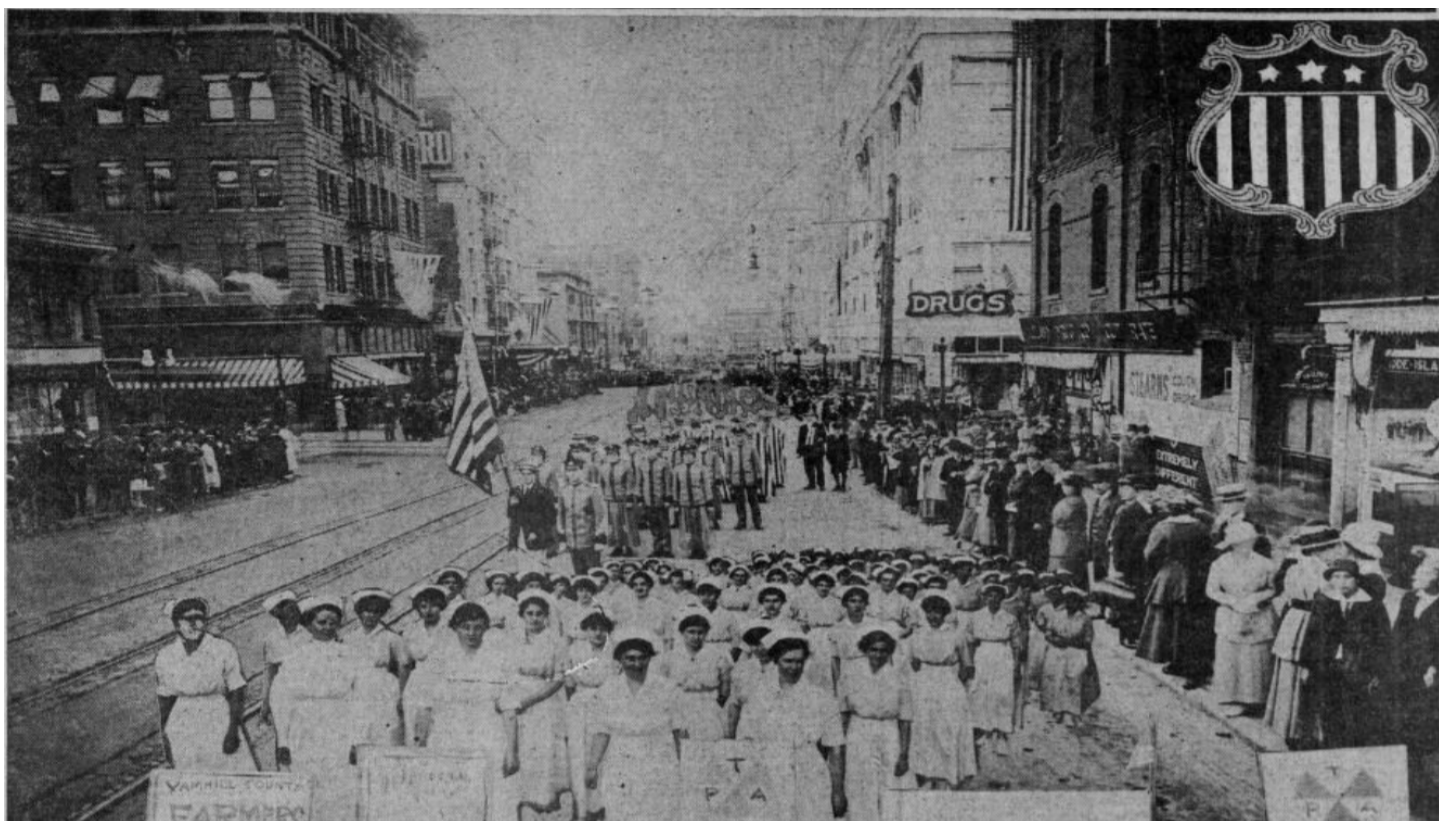
*Weston Normal School, The Athena Press, March 12, 1909, 3.*



*Marie H. Pottsmith preparing lessons, 1908. Marie Holst Pottsmith photographs, Org. Lot 460, Box 2 Neg. 041. Oregon Historical Society.*

47. For more on normal schools, see Karen J. Blair, “Normal Schools of the Pacific Northwest: The Lifelong Impact of Extracurricular Club Activities on Women Students at Teacher-Training Institutions, 1890-1917,” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 101, no. 1 (2009): 3–16.

48. Gleason, “Oregon Legislation for Women in Industry,” 36.



*Nurses from Portland hospitals marching in a preparedness parade held to encourage American participation in World War I. The Sunday Oregonian, June 4, 1916: 16.*

Miriam Theresa) suggests that “a large number was elected as county superintendents after equal suffrage was granted [in 1912].”<sup>49</sup> A similar pattern can be seen in newspaper coverage of school board elections during this period.

The sphere of education extended to women who trained other women and girls in domestic, vocational, and professional skills, which emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through networks of clubwomen and religious organizations to address community needs. Examples include: Portland’s Neighborhood House (NRHP-listed), run by the Portland Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, where women could take sewing and domestic-oriented classes;<sup>50</sup> Lake Oswego’s Christie School (extant), a Catholic-run institution that cared for and educated young orphaned girls; and hospitals like St. Elizabeth Hospital (NRHP-listed) in Baker City and St. Anthony Hospital (demolished) in Pendleton that were not only run by women—the Catholic Sisters of St. Francis—but had an important educational mission to train

49. Gleason, 37.

50. Ellen Eisenberg, *Embracing a Western Identity: Jewish Oregonians 1849–1950* (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 2015), 96–97 and 115–16. Neighborhood House, 3030 SW 2nd Avenue in Portland, was listed in the National Register in 1977.



nurses. St. Elizabeth, for example, produced 262 graduates between 1914 and 1949.<sup>51</sup> Nationwide, the nursing profession was becoming even more feminized in the early 20th century. In 1910, 92.6 percent of trained nurses were women and 96.3 percent in 1920. WWI and the 1918 influenza epidemic underscored the importance of well-trained nurses, leading community leaders and public health officials across Oregon to increase training and build hospitals. By 1920, much of the educational training of community and religious groups evolved into the public education system, in high schools, vocational programs, and specialty and college courses. By the 1920s, colleges and universities in the Pacific Northwest had established nursing programs, including at the University of Oregon.



*Cusiter grocery store, Silverton, Oregon, ca. 1900. June D. Drake photographs, 1863–2001, Org. Lot 678, Box 35, 735. Oregon Historical Society.*

Occupations in offices, department stores, and telephone companies emerged in greater numbers during this period and would eventually become reliable employment options for women—especially educated White women. As the number of commercial classes (e.g., typing, stenography, bookkeeping) in high schools and business colleges increased, so too did the number of women entering the workforce as telephone operators, clerical workers, and salespeople. Women in these professions needed to be literate and numerate. Expanded public education, vocational training, and professional programs were important undercurrents in women's advancement into these occupations. While most of the state's larger high schools offered commercial classes by 1915, this was not yet widespread until years later.<sup>52</sup> Bookkeeping and stenography jobs typically positioned women behind the scenes in secondary roles, usually subordinate to businessmen or occasionally senior women. However, telephone operators, office clerks, and department store salespeople were expected to interact with the public and do so in a friendly, helpful manner, which gave them some measure of independence while still bound to strict rules of behavior.

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51. Alan Mitchell, "St. Elizabeth Hospital (Old)," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Cultural Resources, 1989), sec. 8, page 1.

52. John S. Urlaub, "A History of Vocational Education in Oregon Since 1917" (Master's Thesis, Eugene, Oregon, University of Oregon, 1939), 11–12, <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/28321>.



Office building of Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co., with group of employees, Pendleton, ca. 1910. Photographed by Lee Moorhouse. University of Oregon, Oregon Digital.

Like the nurses and teachers, telephone operators were increasingly women, accounting for 95 percent of Oregon operators by 1920.<sup>53</sup> They sat at a switchboard connecting calls in communities across Oregon and were vital as the network of telephone exchanges grew, connecting rural and urban communities. Telephone companies relied on a large workforce to operate switchboards. Oregon's first telephone lines were installed in Portland in 1878, and by the mid-and late-1880s, local telephone exchanges opened in Astoria, Salem, Union, and Pendleton. Local exchanges eventually became regional, even connecting networks of farming communities. Rural exchanges sometimes consisted of only a small

handful of farmsteads managed by an operator out of her kitchen.<sup>54</sup>

With few other employment options, many women were willing to sign up for the long hours, strict discipline, and sometimes the fast pace of a switchboard job. Operators were nicknamed "Hello Girls," and required to act quickly, manage emergencies, and handle customers in a friendly and professional manner. Larger exchanges employed dozens of women, often managed by older, more experienced women. Some exchanges, like the Home Telephone Company in Portland, had so-called "Information Girls" who answered almost every imaginable question from customers, including sporting event scores, movie theater times, train arrival and departure times, and even about cooking recipes.<sup>55</sup>

Telephone operators nationwide walked out on strike in June 1919, protesting low wages, especially for experienced employees. Headlines in Oregon newspapers warned of strikes in New England spreading to the West Coast, which

53. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Vol. 4," tbl. 15, p. 103.

54. Frank Dillow, "Connecting Oregon: The Slow Road to Communications, 1843–2009," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 111, no. 2 (2010): 202–3.

55. "Portland's First Telephone Was Installed as Clever Mechanical Toy 35 Years Ago," *Oregon Journal*, April 6, 1913, 56; Dillow, "Connecting Oregon: The Slow Road to Communications, 1843–2009," 197, 201; Cain Allen, "Baker City Telephone Operators, c. 1910," in Oregon History Project (Oregon Historical Society, 2005), <https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/baker-city-telephone-operators-c-1910/>.



soon began in San Francisco. Workers in several Oregon communities walked out of work in protest in June and began organizing unions, including in Medford, Pendleton, and Albany. Eight hundred telephone operators walked out in Portland, returning to work about a month later.<sup>56</sup>

Like telephone operators, clerical workers could be found throughout Oregon, but most were concentrated in cities and towns. Labor historians Kim England and Kate Boyer argue that clerical work, in particular, illustrates important “cultural, social, and economic changes” in 20th-century America, “including the shift to a service-based economy powered by huge corporations, the decline of unionized blue-collar jobs, rapid technological change, and of course, the massive influx of women into paid work.”<sup>57</sup> Nationwide, just 7.3 percent of all women workers were in “clerical occupations” in 1910, but this percentage more than doubled to 16.7 percent in 1920.<sup>58</sup> In Oregon, the percentage was much higher (49 percent), but as the 1910 census report noted, enumerators “failed utterly” to properly and consistently classify clerical workers.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, the trend in Oregon favored more women working in clerical occupations, and the job itself was becoming more feminized. England and Boyer point out that “the feminization of clerical work was not a simple substitution of women for men clerks,” but “instead, new types of clerical work came to be associated with women,” such as typing and stenography.<sup>60</sup>

The rise of the department store in the early 20th century provided new employment opportunities for women as clerks and salespeople.<sup>61</sup> Well-known examples include the Seattle-based Nordstrom department store and the Portland-based



*Telephone operators want ad in Eastern Oregonian, July 17, 1919.*

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56. “Phone Settlement Fails,” 2; “Return to Work After Walkout,” 1.

57. Kim England and Kate Boyer, “Women’s Work: The Feminization and Shifting Meanings of Clerical Work,” *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 2 (2009): 307.

58. U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Vol. 4,” tbl. 2, p. 34.

59. U. S. Bureau of the Census, tbl. 15, p. 108; U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910, Vol. 4,” 22.

60. England and Boyer, “Women’s Work: The Feminization and Shifting Meanings of Clerical Work,” 312.

61. For more on the history of American department stores, see Jan Whitaker, *Service and Style: How the American Department Store Fashioned the Middle Class* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2006).



*Oregon City Woolen Mills want ad.*  
*Oregon City Courier, May 27, 1910, 6.*

Meier and Frank firm, while smaller one-of-a-kind department stores opened on the main streets of many Oregon towns, like S. L. Kline's store in Corvallis and Fisher's store in Roseburg. Attempting to "distance themselves from their bargain store roots," department stores of the early 20th century aimed to expand their services and promote quality-made and fashionable wares.<sup>62</sup> They especially catered to a growing middle- and upper-class female consumer in search of ready-to-wear clothing. Clerks and salespeople were tasked with assisting consumers and answering their questions. Women employees were quite literally the face of the department store and were crucial to the concept's success.

Although U.S. Census enumerators blurred definitions of clerical workers and salespeople, it is worth noting that in 1910, "Of all females engaged in trade in the United States, considerably more than one-half (53.5 percent) were saleswomen in stores; and saleswomen in stores, clerks in stores, and retail dealers combined formed over nine-tenths (91.7 percent) of the females engaged in trade."<sup>63</sup> By 1920, 33.6 percent of Oregon's salespeople were women, compared to 31.7 percent nationwide.<sup>64</sup>

Entrepreneurial women of this period thrived in the domestic sphere, earning income by renting rooms in their homes to boarders, managing boardinghouses and apartment buildings, and as hotel keepers. This line of work afforded women a considerable amount of autonomy while avoiding much of the gender discrimination that came with less autonomous wage work. More than half of the 93 boardinghouses listed in R. L. Polk's 1913 Portland City Directory were run by women. A similar pattern played out among the hundreds of furnished rooms for rent listed in the same directory. These numbers likely did not account for the women who rented out a room in their homes. Although more typically found in bigger cities like Portland, women in towns across Oregon rented rooms and managed boardinghouses. Well-known examples of boardinghouses in the early 20th century are within the immigrant Basque communities that

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62. Whitaker, 18.

63. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900, Special Report: Occupations at the Twelfth Census," 62.

64. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Vol. 4," tbl. 15, p. 105.

populated parts of Oregon, including Jordan Valley and Ontario.<sup>65</sup>

In stark contrast to those in professional and semi-professional occupations, most working women, including women of color, worked in gendered roles as manual and domestic laborers, for example, in laundries, textile mills, canneries, or as servants in private households. These were among the most physically demanding and dangerous jobs women had and were a focus of labor rights advocates in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These workers usually needed income to support their families and had little control over their day-to-day work or opportunity for job advancement. Many worked in manufacturing, industrial, and agricultural work, with large numbers represented in woolen mills and clothing manufacturing, commercial canneries, and laundries.

Textile and woolen mills were some of the oldest manufacturing facilities in Oregon, often employing tens or hundreds of women workers. An indication of the robustness of the industry was the fact that Oregon ranked seventh in the U.S. in the number of sheep to provide wool in 1900.<sup>66</sup> Of course, this came on the heels of the Klondike gold rush in the late 1890s, and “Oregon woolen goods, especially blankets, were achieving both a local and a national high quality reputation.”<sup>67</sup> Historian Alfred Lomax noted nine woolen mills of varying sizes in Oregon at the turn of the 20th century, located in Oregon City, Portland, Salem, Pendleton, Eugene, Union, Albany, Bandon, and Brownsville.<sup>68</sup> Throughout this period, the mills placed ads in newspapers statewide seeking women and girls for sewing, weaving, and other factory jobs. Plants employed anywhere from tens to as many as a few hundred women and girls. The work was physically demanding, with hours of standing amidst tremendous noise, heat, and lint, as well as dangerous, especially around the mechanized spools and looms. Employees typically worked long hours, especially during periods of high demand like wartime.



*Issei women hoeing strawberries, Hood River, ca. 1915. Courtesy Densho.*

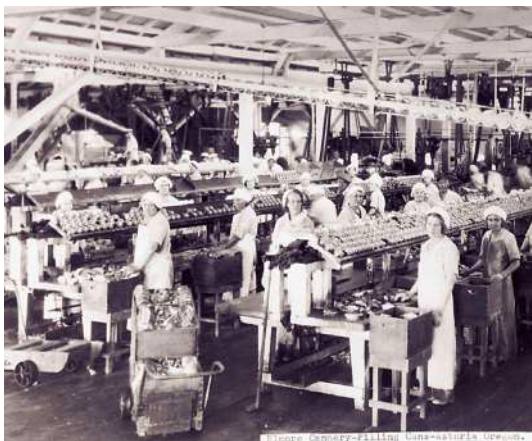
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65. Jeronima Echeverria, “Basque Boardinghouses in Oregon,” in Oregon Encyclopedia (Oregon Historical Society, September 7, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/basque\\_boardinghouses/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/basque_boardinghouses/).

66. Alfred L. Lomax, “The Portland Woolen Mills, Inc.,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (1966): 164.

67. Lomax, 167.

68. Lomax, 175.



Elmore Cannery workers, ca. 1920.  
Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.

Commercial canneries were among the top employers of women in Oregon during the early 20th century. Canneries developed from the growing agricultural and fishing industries as a method of packaging fruits, vegetables, and fish. Many factors contributed to the burgeoning canning and packaging industries, including evolving transportation systems, the development of export companies, and evolving refrigeration technology and pest control.<sup>69</sup> Fruit and vegetable canneries opened throughout Oregon in Salem, Eugene, The Dalles, Freewater, Monroe, Forest Grove, Ashland, Hood River, Medford, and elsewhere.<sup>70</sup> Fish canneries opened in coastal communities, such as Astoria and Warrenton, and along the Columbia River.

Cannery work was seasonal and cyclical, and employers needed workers who could fill temporary positions and work for long hours. Women and children were ideal for this, and in many plants, they outnumbered working men. Historian Greg Hall identified one such typical facility in Eugene and described its operation like this:

*The Eugene plant, like most canneries, processed a variety of crops. If the crop being canned was pears, for example, workers would first sort and then peel the fruit. Second, they would split and core the pears. Lastly, they filled the cans. A smaller number of workers directed the filled cans down a conveyer line that took the canned fruit to be sealed and then to the steamers where [sic] they would be cooked. Between one hundred and one hundred and twenty-five women and girls worked in the preparing and canning room, where they were supervised by a “forewoman.” The smaller number of men and boys—between fifteen and twenty—worked as helpers, receivers, clerks, and warehousemen and were supervised by a foreman.<sup>71</sup>*

The work in canneries was physically exhausting and dangerous, with repetitive tasks using sharp and mechanized tools for long periods. Despite the grueling work, women

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69. Greg Hall, “The Fruits of Her Labor: Women, Children, and Progressive Era Reformers in the Pacific Northwest Canning Industry,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 109, no. 2 (2008): 229–30.

70. Hall, 230.

71. Hall, “The Fruits of Her Labor,” 232–33.



sought employment in in these facilities to support their families. Because of this, canneries were of particular interest to labor rights advocates who sought to limit long work hours and improve conditions for workers. However, cannery owners, as well as employees, pushed back on these limitations. They argued that limiting their work hours during the busy seasons prevented them from earning extra wages. Owners added that limiting work hours for women hurt output in a market trying to meet competition from California.<sup>72</sup>

Like woolen mills and canneries, another top employer of women in Oregon was the commercial laundry sector, most of which was in Portland. By 1910, the number of women working in laundries nearly tripled from just 542 in 1900.<sup>73</sup> Technological advances made machine washing, drying, and ironing large quantities of soiled laundry economically profitable, especially with a cheap and plentiful workforce. As in the canning industry, employers saw women and girls as temporary laborers who could be paid lower wages. Laundries ranged from small shops to large factories and were usually owned by White men. Small laundries would sometimes contract out the washing and drying services but complete the more specialized finish work at their own shops. Shops and factories alike worked in direct competition with Chinese hand laundries run by men, which had long been a cornerstone of the industry in Oregon.

The laundering process at an operation like Portland's Grand Laundry or Yale Union Laundry (NRHP-listed) involved largely White male and female laborers working in specific, tiered roles. For most, working in the hot, humid steam environment was grueling, "back-breaking, ankle-swelling, and dangerous."<sup>74</sup> The highest-status men and women worked in the front of the house dealing with customers. From the lobby, soiled laundry was marked, sorted, and carried to the washer, usually in the basement. After washing and rinsing in chemical baths, strong men and sometimes women carried heavy, wet baskets of laundry to a spinner. A shaker, often a girl or young woman, then untwisted the knots of clothing. Operators then fed laundry into mangle machines, with rollers and presses



*Domestic laundry building, exterior. Photographed by Lee Moorhouse. Courtesy Lee Moorhouse (1850–1926) photographs, 1888–1916, University of Oregon.*



*Pendleton Steam Laundry, horse and bicycle-drawn delivery carts, ca. 1905. Photographed by Lee Moorhouse. Lee Moorhouse (1850–1926) photographs, 1888–1916, University of Oregon.*

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72. "Protest Against Women in Canneries," *Medford Mail Tribune*, January 21, 1915, 2nd edition, 2.

73. Woloch, *A Class By Herself: Protective Laws for Women Workers, 1890s–1990s*, 55.

74. Prifogle, "Law & Laundry: White Laundresses, Chinese Laundry-men, and the Origins of *Muller v. Oregon*," 13.



*Yale Laundry Building, 2006. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Oregon State Historic Preservation Office.*

that were heated by steam to press out wrinkles—a dangerous job during which fingers could get burned or crushed. The laundry was then moved to a starcher and onto horses in a drying closet. Next, laundry was ironed, a highly specialized task typically done by older, experienced women. The final tasks involved sorting, folding, stacking, and binding the finished laundered product.<sup>75</sup>

## Context-Associated Property Types

Resources significant for their association with this context, Era of Protectionism for Women in the Workforce: 1903–1919, may belong to any property type described in chapter 3 “Associated Property Types,” provided the resource maintains a significant association with a notable event, figure, or trend described in this context. For example, resources belonging to the Agriculture category of properties may be significant for their associations with notable women in Oregon’s workforce or for their association with groups of women who consistently worked in or operated businesses out of those resources. Examples may include:

- Union halls and meeting locations,
- Education-related buildings (e.g., schools),
- Commercial factories (e.g., woolen mills),
- Commercial canneries,
- Commercial laundries,
- Boarding houses,
- Hospitals and clinics, and
- Telephone buildings.

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75. Prifogle, 22–26 and; Kimberli Fitzgerald, “Yale Union Laundry Building,” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Cultural Resources, 2006), Sec. 8, 2-3, <https://yaleunionlaundrystrike.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/National-Register-of-Historic-Places-Registration-.pdf>.

# RISE OF LABOR FEMINISM AND WARTIME EMPLOYMENT: 1920–1945

The 1920 ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing women the right to vote, was among the last major achievements of first-wave feminist reformers.<sup>76</sup> In Oregon, Progressive Era and feminist reformers had notched many legislative victories between 1900 and 1920, including instituting the initiative and referendum process (1902), child labor law (1903) minimum hours and wages laws for working women (1903 and 1913), women's suffrage (1912), workers' compensation law (1913), and a statewide prohibition of alcohol (1914). However, WWI brought a shift in the political tenor of Oregon, "away from the vibrant reform spirit" toward a reactionary and repressive period, according to historian William Robbins, and "a very hard decade for the region's radicals and working-class women."<sup>77</sup>

The number and percentage of Oregon women in the workforce, particularly as clerical workers and saleswomen, continued to increase in the 1920s, thanks in large part to focus on education and job training during the Progressive Era. However, the benefits of the period rarely fully extended to women of color—especially African American women. On top of this, discriminatory laws targeting Americans of color and immigrants left many with few or no options for career advancement compared to White women.

The shortcomings of the earlier protectionist laws that, as some argued, limited women's employment freedoms,



*Actress Margaret Vale Howe, a participant in the suffrage parade in Washington, D.C., March 1913. Courtesy Library of Congress.*



*Campaign in Oregon, Margaret Fay Whittemore, Mary Gertrude Fendall, Pendleton, September 23, 1916. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

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76. First-wave feminism in the United States began with the gathering of women's rights reformers at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 and took place throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Reformers focused on the rights of women, focusing especially on property rights and suffrage. Their achievements inspired a second wave of feminism later in the twentieth century.

77. Robbins, *Oregon: This Storied Land*, 111; Susan H. Armitage, *Shaping the Public Good: Women Making History in the Pacific Northwest* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2015), 196.





*Sign, Hood River, September 1941.  
Photographed by Russell Lee. Courtesy  
Library of Congress.*

factored into a rise in women’s labor organizing during this period, especially after Congress passed the 1935 National Labor Relations Act that granted employees the right to form or join unions. The hardships of the Great Depression exacerbated employment problems. The Oregon Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 1932 that “unemployment and the destitute unemployed still constitute the major economic problem of the state.”<sup>78</sup> It attributed failures to a lack of adaptation and ingenuity in a rapidly changing economy as well as industries that had “simply cast out a large element of people whose services are no longer needed.”<sup>79</sup>

Once again, however, wartime brought Oregon’s economy roaring back in the 1940s and “revolutionized” the state’s population, as many newcomers arrived in Oregon and others left rural areas for opportunities in cities.<sup>80</sup> During WWII, there were significant labor shortages in Oregon’s industrial and agricultural sectors, brought on both by the federal government mobilizing workers for military service and also by its incarceration of Japanese Americans as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066. As a result, a rush of women entered the workforce to fill positions vacated by men. In addition, the federal government recruited foreign workers from Mexico and the Caribbean to Oregon’s farm fields, and industry recruited a similar number of African Americans to work in the shipyards in Portland.<sup>81</sup> Oregon emerged from war as a state with a population “increasingly skewed toward urban settings, especially towns and cities in the Willamette Valley.”<sup>82</sup>

## Oregon’s Female Population and Workforce

In 1920, Oregon was still reeling from the economic slowdown of the post-WWI period. The once-booming

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78. Oregon Bureau of Labor, “Fifteenth Biennial Report-1931-32” (Salem, OR: Oregon Bureau of Labor), 3, accessed March 5, 2024, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015076469819&seq=1>.

79. Oregon Bureau of Labor, 4.

80. Robbins, *Oregon: This Storied Land*, 124.

81. Erasmo Gamboa, “The Bracero Program,” ed. Erasmo Gamboa and Carolyn Buan (Portland, Oregon: Oregon Council for the Humanities, 1995), 41.

82. Robbins, *Oregon: This Storied Land*, 133.

shipyards and lumber mills received significantly fewer orders after the war ended, and many workers were left unemployed or underemployed. As Oregon readjusted to a peacetime economy, the state's population continued to grow, increasing from 783,389 in 1920 to 1,089,684 in 1940—nearly 72 percent. The female population grew 70 percent during this period, reaching 526,995 in 1940.

Steadily increasing numbers and percentages of Oregon women worked for wages during this period, rising from 54,492 (14.8 percent of the total female population) in 1920 to 81,142 (17.9 percent) in 1930 and to 86,244 (18.5 percent) in 1940.<sup>83</sup> The federal government reconfigured its labor data metrics for the 1940 census, so the data are not directly comparable with those of prior decades, but in 1940, women made up 23.1 percent of the total workforce population.<sup>84</sup> Increasingly more working women were married. In 1920, married women made up 27.9 percent of the state's female workforce; that went up to 36.7 percent in 1930 and 39.9 percent in 1940.<sup>85</sup> A greater percentage (31.3 percent) of Oregon's working women in 1940 were living in Portland than in previous decades.

Much like the first two decades of the 20th century, women consistently outnumbered men in jobs in key industries, demonstrating how the gendered nature of the workplace



*Tuna packing, Columbia River Packing Association, Astoria, 1941. Photographed by Russell Lee. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

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83. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Vol. 4," tbl. 8, p. 47; U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Vol 4" (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1933), tbl. 3, p. 1358, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1933/dec/1930a-vol-04-occupations.html>; U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Vol. 3, Part 4" (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), tbl. 10, p. 952, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1943/dec/population-vol-3.html>.

84. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Vol. 3, Part 4," tbl. 1, p. 943.

85. U. S. Bureau of the Census, tbl. 9, p. 949.



*Main street of Nyssa, Oregon. Saturday afternoon, October 1939. Photographed by Dorothea Lange. Courtesy Library of Congress.*



*Mrs. Cates signs chattel mortgage with "X." Malheur County, October 1939. Photographed by Dorothea Lange. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

persisted. Between 1920 and 1940, more women than men worked in jobs involving food products manufacturing, particularly related to fruits, vegetables, and fish processing; textile manufacturing; laundry and dye works; clerical work; telephone and telegraph operations; and retail sales. The number of women in clerical work steadily climbed after 1900, particularly in Portland where, in 1920, clerical workers made up 25 percent of the female workforce.<sup>86</sup> In professional positions, such as teaching and nursing, women outnumbered men. The majority of working women in both 1920 and 1930 were in domestic and personal service jobs, but, while there remained a high number of women working in these jobs in 1940, more women were working in clerical, sales, and similar jobs.<sup>87</sup> It is important to note, however, that while labor data suggests greater numbers of women worked these occupations, the gender imbalances remained generally constant until WWII.

The state's population remained overwhelmingly White (more than 98 percent through 1950), and as such, White women continued to dominate the female workforce. Although the number of African American women living in Oregon increased by fewer than 250 individuals between 1920 and 1940, their numbers grew nearly five times between 1940 and 1950, from 1,181 to 5,568, a reflection of the Great Migration out of the American South—that was still less than one percent of Oregon's total female population.<sup>88</sup> Systemic racism kept most Black women in Oregon from advancing beyond the domestic service industry through this period. In 1930, for example, 88.3 percent of Portland's Black women workers had domestic service jobs—a trend that was similar throughout<sup>89</sup>

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86. Armitage, *Shaping the Public Good*, 202.

87. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Vol. 4," tbl. 8, p. 47; U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Vol 4," tbl. 3, p. 1358; U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Vol. 3, Part 4," tbl. 10, p. 952.

88. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Seventeenth Census of the United States: 1950, Vol. 2" (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1953), tbl. 14, p. 33, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1953/dec/population-vol-02.html>. For more on the Great Migration, see Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West 1528-1990* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1998).

89. Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West 1528-1990*, 224.



Japanese- and Chinese-American women, who made up the largest numbers of Asian Americans in Oregon, accounted for even smaller percentages of the state's overall female population due largely to decades of violence, discrimination, and governmental exclusion, including the federal Chinese exclusion laws and Oregon's 1923 Alien Land Law, which prohibited Japanese and Chinese nationals from owning and leasing land in the state. The federal censuses recorded just 550 Chinese women in Oregon in 1930 and 627 in 1940. During this same stretch, the Japanese female population reached a high of 2,039 in 1930 before dropping to 1,800 in 1940.<sup>90</sup> Throughout this period, the greatest numbers of Japanese and Chinese women lived in Multnomah and Clatsop counties. Those in Multnomah County worked primarily in the commercial sector, while those in Clatsop County were mostly industrial laborers (primarily in canneries). A small community of Japanese Americans in Hood River County mainly worked in agriculture.<sup>91</sup>

Native women, whose population totaled a few thousand during this period, largely lived on reservations and had only received full U.S. citizenship in 1924. In 1934, Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), the so-called Indian New Deal, that was meant to reduce federal control and return autonomy to Native tribes. In Oregon, only the Warm Springs and Grand Ronde tribes accepted the terms of the IRA, which repealed allotment practices originating with the 1887 Dawes Act, returned land to tribes, provided funds for purchasing land, and required tribes to adopt self-governing systems with a constitution and bylaws.<sup>92</sup> Perhaps empowered by this autonomy, young Native women sought tribal leadership positions and livelihoods beyond the reservations in ways their parents and grandparents had been unable to do.

Education played an important role in shaping the workforce in Oregon. The state's larger high schools offered classes in vocational training and professional programs by 1915, but this was not widespread until state and federal funding became available. Congress passed the Vocational Act of 1917 to promote skills-based learning in agricultural and



*Japanese-American farm worker, July 1942, Nyssa. Photographed by Lee Russell. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

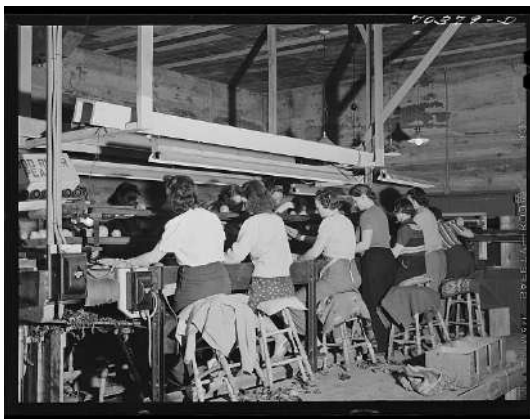


*Klamath woman, head-and-shoulders portrait, facing left, ca. 1923. Photographed by Edward S. Curtis. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

90. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Seventeenth Census of the United States: 1950, Vol. 2," tbl. 14, p. 33.

91. For more on the Japanese community in Hood River County, see Tamura, *The Hood River Issei: An Oral History of Japanese Settlers in Oregon's Hood River Valley*.

92. Robbins, *Oregon: This Storied Land*, 122.



*Graders in a pear packing plant, Hood River, 1941. Photographed by Lee Russell. Courtesy Library of Congress.*



*Students with their teacher at the Latham school in Lane County, 1912. Photographed by Roy C. Andrews. Courtesy Roy C. Andrews photographs, 1902–1955, University of Oregon.*

industrial subjects through the existing public school structure. Oregon provided matching funds, jumpstarting an expansion of vocational training options in the 1920s.<sup>93</sup> Classes were offered through public high schools for students and as part-time and evening classes for adults. They emphasized agricultural and industrial training for men and boys but also included home economics courses that taught women and girls how to run an efficient household. The latter classes were minimally funded and slow to take off, but by 1935, there were 3,974 women attending evening and part-time classes, and 3,062 high school girls enrolled in vocational home economics.<sup>94</sup> A 1933 state report on vocational education attributed the rise in participation to the worsening economy. A news summary of the report noted an increase in “homemakers classes for women,” and that “older daughters, out of school and unable to obtain employment in commercial fields, attended classes with their mothers.”<sup>95</sup>

Education leaders responded to the state’s shifting demographics. By 1927, 50 percent of Oregonians lived in towns and cities of 2,500 or more, and classes in auto mechanics and retail sales were in demand.<sup>96</sup> Oregon was among the first states to offer organized training in what was then called “distributive training,” or salesmanship. Education researcher John Urlaub explained that this program “reach[ed] the people who [were] not able to go to college but [were] employed at some form of salesmanship work.”<sup>97</sup> The program was offered mostly through evening classes in the state’s 15 larger towns and cities. More than half of its students (592 of 1,012) were women during its first year, 1937–38.<sup>98</sup> While these programs did not result in significant shifts in female labor trends by 1940, they likely played a role in preparing the female workforce for the coming war and post-war years.

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93. Urlaub, “A History of Vocational Education in Oregon Since 1917,” 19, 69.

94. Urlaub, 36.

95. “Home Study By Oregon Youths Pays Dividends,” *Medford Mail Tribune*, August 4, 1933, 4.

96. Urlaub, 11.

97. Urlaub, 65–66.

98. Urlaub, 69.

## Legal and Labor Framework

During and after WWI, the political winds were shifting away from the progressive traditions that shaped early 20th-century Oregon. In addition to the slowed economy readjusting to peacetime activity, nativism and distrust of radicals and foreigners gained traction among Oregon lawmakers and industry leaders, many of whom viewed immigrants and labor unions warily. Combined with a successful legal challenge in 1923 to minimum-wage laws for women at the U.S. Supreme Court, (*Adkins v. Children's Hospital*) and continued resistance from male-dominated unions, this marked a turbulent period for workers and women's labor advocates. In addition, scholars have argued that trade union organization among women was further hindered "by the very leaders of labor agencies who sought to aid women," and that working women were "caught between a trade-union movement that was hostile to women in the workforce and a women's movement that whose participants did not work for wages."<sup>99</sup>

Labor union membership had grown considerably during the booming war years, but this trend slowed in the 1920s. By the end of the decade, organized labor nationwide "represented only about five percent of American workers, most of them skilled White males."<sup>100</sup> Caroline Gleason's 1931 report on Oregon's working women for the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, supports this picture:

*Trade organization has not made great advance among women in Oregon. Only 1,667 women were members of unions in 1929. These were in 26 of the 75 groups organized in the State. The greatest number of women were in the waitresses' and cafeteria workers' union of Portland, 402. The culinary alliances registered a membership of 235, the garment workers 210, railway and steamship employees 153, musicians' associations 110, and the retail clerks' union 100. Several unions having small numbers of women used to enroll only men,*



*A nurse consults with a migrant mother whose small boy is ailing, 1939. Merrill FSA (Farm Security Administration) camp, Klamath County, Oregon. Photographed by Dorothea Lange. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

99. Hall, "The Fruits of Her Labor," 246–47; Kessler-Harris, *Gendering Labor History*, 38.

100. Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 67.





*Japanese Americans at a ballgame, July 1942, Nyssa. Photographed by Lee Russell. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

*such as the typographical union, which in 1929 had 558 men but only 15 women. However, the pressmen and assistants' unions had 81 women and 193 men, and the bookbinders and bindery women had 80 women and 40 men.*<sup>101</sup>

Women remained mostly on the sidelines of male-dominated union organizations and were largely reliant on labor laws and activists to advocate on their behalf.<sup>102</sup> This trajectory began to change in the 1930s with New Deal legislation concerning worker rights. For example, the 1935 National Labor Relations Act marked a sea change in American labor history, granting workers the right to join a labor union. Springing from this, the newly organized Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) helped Oregon women organize beyond the mostly gender-segregated groups that Gleason had noted in her report. In 1938, Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act, creating a minimum wage (then 25 cents per hour) and a maximum workweek of 40 hours for most workers in manufacturing. These two issues—minimum wage and maximum work hours—were long sought-after victories for the broader American labor movement.

During the 1940s and WWII, Oregon's overall population increased by nearly 40 percent to more than 1.5 million residents, with much of the growth happening in and around Portland. This was part of the largest migration of people within the United States, as people relocated for military service and to industrial centers for wartime work on the home front. This severely disrupted Oregon's rural areas, where labor shortages hampered agricultural production and logging.<sup>103</sup> On top of this, the federal government's forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans not only upended entire communities and destroyed livelihoods but

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101. Gleason, "Oregon Legislation for Women in Industry," 11.

102. One exception to this is Julia Godman Ruuttila, although she advocated for men working alongside her husband at a Linnton sawmill. She was a labor activist and reporter who established and led a ladies' auxiliary to the mill's woodworkers' union that later became the International Woodworkers of America. Ruuttila and the auxiliary were instrumental in sustaining the mill workers during an eight-and-a-half-month lockout in 1937. Sandy Polishuk, "Julia Ruuttila (1907–1991)," in Oregon Encyclopedia (Oregon Historical Society, May 5, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/ruuttila\\_julia\\_1907\\_1991/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/ruuttila_julia_1907_1991/).

103. Robbins, *Oregon: This Storied Land*, 124.

also strained an already tight agricultural labor sector in Oregon.

The intense labor demands of the World War II era brought persistent gender and racial inequities into clear focus. As it did with women workers, the CIO also helped organize workers of color who had been consistently excluded from unions like the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the AFL-affiliated Boilermakers. This was the case for Black shipyard workers during WWII, who were pushed into segregated auxiliary units within the unions. When Black workers challenged unions' discriminatory policies in 1943, hundreds were dismissed, including 350 at the three Kaiser shipyards in Portland. Even after courts outlawed the separate auxiliaries, discriminatory practices continued, including among workers themselves, as social researcher and California shipyard worker Katherine Archibald recalls in her memoir *Wartime Shipyard*.<sup>104</sup>

Facing similar dire labor shortages in Oregon's agricultural sector, wartime government officials and industry leaders again looked to women to fill labor gaps, under the auspices of Oregon's Emergency Farm Labor Service, which employed women, children, and older Americans on farms. Beyond the shipyards and the farm fields, the booming wartime economy presented women with opportunities to work in professional positions with authority and responsibility that, until then, had been almost exclusively held by men.<sup>105</sup> Women workers had made significant strides toward equality in the workplace, but major gaps remained, particularly when it came to wage imbalances, career advancement, and childcare. Thus began a rise in what scholars Dorothy Sue Cobble, Laurie Mercier, and others have termed labor feminism, a movement to address gender inequities in the workplace and economy that



*Photograph shows Japanese American women working in post office in 1942 at the Portland Assembly Center during the forced removal of Japanese Americans to concentration camps during World War II. Courtesy Library of Congress.*



*Telephone company sign, Klamath Falls, July 1942. Photographed by Lee Russell. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

104. Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West 1528-1990*, 259; Katherine Archibald, *Wartime Shipyard: A Study in Social Disunity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1947), 121, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=m-dp.39015014433091&seq=11.259>.

105. England and Boyer, "Women's Work: The Feminization and Shifting Meanings of Clerical Work," 318.



*Woman in laboratory, 1920.  
Photographed by Roy Norr. Wiggins  
family photographs, Org. Lot 19, Box 4,  
Negative 079 Oregon Historical Society.*



*Margaret Goodin Fritsch. Courtesy The  
Trident of Delta Delta Delta, Vol. 45, No.  
2, January 1936*

would gain considerable traction in the decades following World War II.<sup>106</sup>

## Where Oregon Women Worked

Highly gendered societal norms proved a strong headwind for women seeking broader workplace options and advancement. Although workforce data shows modest increases in the numbers and percentages of wage-earning women, barriers to advancement and wage imbalances remained well into the 20th century.

Professional women with advanced education remained a very small percentage of the overall female workforce in Oregon and throughout the U.S. For example, the 1930 U.S. Census noted that within Oregon's female workforce there were just two architects (1.1 percent of all Oregon architects), 14 dentists (1.6 percent), 27 lawyers and judges (1.7 percent), and 93 physicians and surgeons (7.0 percent).<sup>107</sup> No measurable gains were reflected in these numbers by 1940, with just six women architects (3.1 percent of all architects), 11 dentists (1.3 percent), 25 lawyers and judges (1.6 percent), and 72 physicians and surgeons (5.2 percent).<sup>108</sup>

106. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America*, 3; Laurie Mercier, "Breadwinning, Equity, and Solidarity: Labor Feminism in Oregon, 1945–1970," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, no. 1 (2019): 7–8, <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregon-histq.120.1.0006>.

107. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Vol 4," tbl. 3, pp. 1361–62.

108. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Vol. 3, Part 4," tbl. 11, p. 953.



The following are some examples of these select professional women:

- Margaret Goodin Fritsch, the state's first female licensed architect, who graduated from the University of Oregon School of Architecture in 1923<sup>109</sup>
- Elizabeth Lord and Edith Schryver, who formed Lord & Schryver in 1929, the first firm of women landscape architects in the Pacific Northwest<sup>110</sup>
- Mary J. Spurlin, who became Oregon's first woman judge in 1926, when Governor Walter Pierce appointed her to the district court bench in Multnomah County<sup>111</sup>
- Gladys Everett and Dorothy McCullough Lee, who opened Oregon's first all-female law practice in Portland in 1931<sup>112</sup>
- Dr. Jessie Laird Brodie, a physician who was "a birth controller in the 1930s, a marriage counselor and club woman in the 1940s and 1950s, and a family planning expert and medical matriarch and diplomat in the 1960s and 1970s."<sup>113</sup>



*Elizabeth Lord (left), Edith Schryver (right). Courtesy Willamette Heritage Center Collections 2011.037.1211*

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109. Oral history interview with Margaret G. Fritsch [Transcript], interview by Linda S. Brody, Tape Recording, March 29, 1982, Oregon Historical Society Library, <https://digitalcollections.ohs.org/oral-history-interview-with-margaret-g-fritsch-transcript> Among her many projects Newberg's 1936–37 Art Deco- and Moderne-style Cameo Theatre (extant, NRHP-listed).

110. Lord and Schryver do not appear to be included in the count of architects and may have been included in the census tallies of "Other Professional Pursuits." See also: Ross Sutherland, "Gaiety Hollow," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2014), 12, <https://heritagedata.prd.state.or.us/historic/> Their professional and personal stories are best documented in the National Register nomination for Gaiety Hollow, their home, studio, and gardens. Among their many projects are the landscape designs at Salem's Daniel B. Jarmon House (extant, NRHP-listed) and the Charles G. Robertson House (extant, NRHP-listed).

111. "Portland's Only Woman Judge," *The Advocate*, October 2, 1926, page 1.

112. Meryl Lipman, "Dorothy McCullough Lee (1902–1981)," in Oregon Encyclopedia (Oregon Historical Society, November 14, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/lee\\_dorothy\\_mccullough\\_1902\\_1981/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/lee_dorothy_mccullough_1902_1981/).

113. Sadie Anne Adams, "'We Were Privileged in Oregon': Jessie Laird Brodie and Reproductive Politics, Locally and Transnationally, 1915–1975" (Master's Thesis, Portland, Oregon, Portland State University, 2012), 9, [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open\\_access\\_etds/781/](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds/781/).



*Beatrice Morrow Cannady, undated. In 1922, she graduated from Northwestern College of Law in 1922, the first Black woman to graduate from law school in Oregon. Courtesy of Barbara J. Redwine via Oregon State Archives.*

These women navigated male-dominated workplace settings, but many professional women like Dr. Brodie and Lord and Schryver worked out of their home offices. In fact, the blending of home and work life for many driven professional women as well as volunteer clubwomen was not unusual. Historian Janice Dilg notes that “apparently, [Caroline] Gleason considered the house she shared with her sister an extension of the [Oregon Consumers’] League facilities,” bringing home people in need who had no home.<sup>114</sup> Other professional women like Everett and Lee established all-female or female-dominated workplaces to avoid or lessen gender discrimination. These examples underscore the important multi-faceted nature of women’s professional lives and how they are reflected within the historic built environment.

Other professional and semi-professional occupations that included higher percentages of women compared to men were editors/reporters/authors, with 33.2 percent in 1930 and 31.9 percent in 1940, and college professors and instructors, with 27.6 percent in 1930 and 25.4 percent in 1940.<sup>115</sup> There were many examples of journalists, including Beatrice Morrow Cannaday, a lawyer who also wrote for and edited *The Advocate*, Portland’s primary African American newspaper during this period;<sup>116</sup> and Julia Godman Ruuttila, a labor activist who wrote for the Seattle-based union newspaper *The Timber Worker*, as well as serving as its Oregon editor.<sup>117</sup> These two women’s public and professional lives extended beyond journalism into advocacy, education, and civil rights.

Regarding women in educational leadership positions, Caroline Gleason reported:

*In 1930, 13 of the 72 principals in the city of Portland were women; 1 of the 2 rural supervisors in the State was a woman, and there were 15 women among the 36 county superintendents. The State board for vocational training has one woman*

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114. Dilg, “For Working Women in Oregon,” 103.

115. U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Vol 4,” tbl. 3, p. 1361; U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Vol. 3, Part 4,” tbl. 11, p. 953.

116. Quintard Taylor, “Beatrice Morrow Cannady (1889–1974),” in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, September 7, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/cannady\\_beatrice\\_morrow/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/cannady_beatrice_morrow/).

117. Polishuk, “Julia Ruuttila (1907-1991).”

member. The State board of higher education, composed of nine persons, was established by an act of the legislature in 1929, in place of the boards of regents of the State institutions of higher learning. These include the State University, the Oregon State College, and three normal schools. In February, 1931, one woman, formerly State librarian [Cornelia Marvin Pierce], was appointed to the State board of higher education for a term of nine years.<sup>118</sup>



*Women working on office equipment in the School of Commerce laboratory, 1920. Historical Images of Oregon State University, Oregon Digital.*

While women made incremental advances in education leadership circles, they continued to make up the overwhelming number of primary and secondary teachers. This had been the case since the 19th century and remained so in 1930, when 83.3 percent of Oregon teachers were women, and in 1940 when 75 percent were women.<sup>119</sup> Importantly, these women were employed virtually everywhere in Oregon, from the smallest rural schoolhouses to the largest primary and secondary schools.

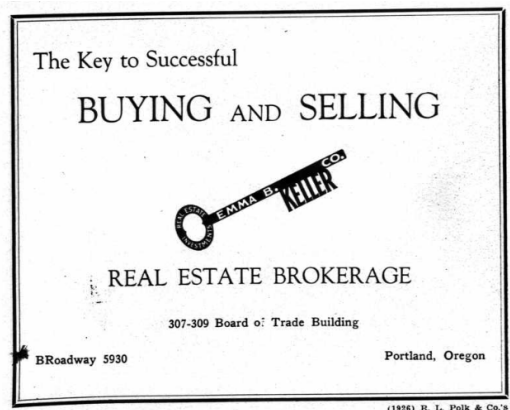
The aforementioned vocational education movement expanded considerably in Oregon in the 1920s and 1930s, although this did not translate to significant shifts in the female workforce at the time. For example, while the number of women clerical workers modestly increased, their percentages within the overall female workforce in 1930 and 1940 remained around 20 percent. The trends were similar for saleswomen during this period, whose overall numbers increased but remained less than 15 percent of the total female workforce. The number of women working as telephone operators actually declined slightly between 1930 and 1940, at least

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118. Gleason, "Oregon Legislation for Women in Industry," 37.

119. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Vol 4," tbl. 4, p. 1362; U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Vol. 3, Part 4," tbl. 11, p. 953.





*Emma B. Keller Co., advertisement in 1926 Portland City Directory, page 160.*

according to the U.S. Censuses, but the profession remained overwhelmingly female.<sup>120</sup>

Entrepreneurial women of this period were branching out in greater numbers into fields previously dominated by men, including the real estate sector and the legal field. Women entering these professions faced discrimination from male colleagues who blocked their participation in professional organizations. In response, women formed their own businesses and professional groups. For example, the Portland Realty Bureau excluded all but White men from its ranks, prompting the growing number of women realtors to form their own professional organization. The Portland Women's Realty Board was organized in 1921, and they built a demonstration house at 2805 SE Knapp Street to promote themselves. The city directories of the time are an excellent way to identify women working in this field. For example, R.L. Polk's 1926 Portland City Directory listed approximately 20 identifiable women real estate agents, including Emma B. Keller who advertised her business with a half-page ad in the directory. In the legal community, a group of women attorneys—including Manche Langley, Cecilia Gallagher Galey, Mary Jane Spurlin, Gladys Everett, Dorothy McCullough Lee, Dorothy Fones, Doris Rae Keeler, and Meva Elliot—began meeting regularly in the early 1920s and called themselves the Women Lawyers Association of Oregon. The group provided a supportive professional network that welcomed and encouraged new women entering the profession.

Working-class women in Oregon found increasing opportunities outside the home in jobs in the vein of domestic work. A growing number of women turned to waitressing during this period. Working in restaurants, cafés, and cafeterias was physically hard as women spent hours on their feet; but it enabled them to perform domestic tasks without the isolation of working in a private household.<sup>121</sup> Waitressing was a very viable option to get wages and independence outside the home. In 1920, 1,906 Oregon women worked as

120. This decline could be attributed to a number of factors including the Great Depression and the U.S. government's changing workforce definitions. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Vol 4," tbl. 3, pp. 1358–61; U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Vol. 3, Part 4," tbl. 10, p. 953.

121. Lara Vapnek, *Breadwinners: Working Women and Economic Independence, 1865-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 39, 110.

waitresses, increasing to 3,635 in 1930 and 4,723 in 1940. Approximately half of them waitresses worked in Portland. Their numbers also reflect an increasing feminization of the work, with women representing 75 percent of all waiters and waitresses in 1920, growing to 86 percent by 1940.<sup>122</sup> This coincided with tremendous growth in unionism in this profession. Portland Waitresses Local 305 split from the male waiters union in 1921 and blossomed under its first president, Gertrude Sweet, and Agnes Quinn, who had previously served as president of Seattle Waitresses Local 240.<sup>123</sup> The heyday of waitress unionism, however, came in the 1940s and 1950s with the rapid feminization of the overall workforce.<sup>124</sup>

Manufacturing, industrial, and agricultural work remained an important source of income for working-class women during this period, although their overall percentages in these labor-intensive jobs declined over time, particularly as industrial technology evolved and as other occupations became available. Nevertheless, demand for workers in textile and woolen mills jumped during WWI and carried into the 1920s. A 1920 headline in the *Oregon Daily Journal* exclaimed, “Demands Far in Excess of Supply of Woolen Goods,” in reference to the full capacity output of the Oregon Worsted Company in Portland. At the time, the plant was new and the only one of its kind in Oregon, turning or twisting wool into yarn for knitting, carpeting, or other textile production. It employed 150 workers then including two shifts of women.<sup>125</sup> The firm supplied yarn to manufacturers including Portland’s Jantzen Knitting Mills, which became a leading producer of



*Ruby Warren, employee of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, looking down the bridge over Bonneville fishway into the counting station at the Bonneville Dam. Photographed ca. 1943, she was one of four women employed as a fish recorder by the engineers at the time. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

122. U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Vol. 4” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1923), tbl. 15, p. 109, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1923/dec/vol-04-occupations.html>; U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Vol 4” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1933), tbl. 4, p. 1362, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1933/dec/1930a-vol-04-occupations.html>; U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Characteristics of Nonwhite Population by Race” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), tbl. 11, p. 955, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1943/dec/population-nonwhite.html>.

123. Dorothy Sue Cobble, *Dishing It Out : Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 65.

124. Cobble, *Dishing It Out*, 108.

125. “Demands Far In Excess Of Supply Of Woolen Goods,” *Oregon Journal*, March 7, 1920, 1.



*Labeling and packing canned salmon, September 1941, Astoria. Photographed by Lee Russell. Courtesy Library of Congress.*



*Wrapping and packing pears, Hood River, September 1941. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

swimwear in the U.S. The company's famous "Red Diving Girl" image first appeared in 1920 marketing pieces and was based on the likeness of Olympic diver Thelma Payne, the first Oregon woman to compete in the Olympics and to win a medal (bronze, in 1920).<sup>126</sup>

Caroline Gleason's 1931 survey of women in industry indicates that in 1929, woolen mills, knitting mills, and apparel manufacturers in Oregon employed approximately 1,200 women. She also reported that "a fairly stable condition existed in the woolen mills, but the numbers employed were small," between 200 and 250.<sup>127</sup> Demand again increased for woolen goods, especially socks and blankets, during WWII. The Thomas Kay Woolen Mill in Salem, for example, experienced its peak production at 160 employees during the war.<sup>128</sup>

There is not a lot of information available about the connection between Native women and the textile industry, but it deserves more study. For example, the Pendleton Woolen Mills built its reputation on selling blankets with Indigenous motifs to both Native and non-Native consumers. Its mill was located near the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and Umatilla people provided the company with a consumer market and advertising material in the form of testimonials and men and women modeling the blankets.<sup>129</sup>

Women working in commercial laundries had been at the center of the campaign for protective legislation in Oregon in the early 20th century. They continued to work in large numbers in laundries, but the overall number of women laundry workers was declining. This could be attributed to several factors, including changes in technology, the increasing availability of home washing machines, and

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126. Paulson, Sarah, "Jantzen Red Diving Girl," in Oregon History Project (Oregon Historical Society, 2007), <https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/jantzen-red-diving-girl/>.

127. Gleason, "Oregon Legislation for Women in Industry," 12.

128. Amy Vandergrift, "Thomas Kay Woolen Mill," in Oregon Encyclopedia (Oregon Historical Society, April 7, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/thomas\\_kay\\_woolen\\_mills/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/thomas_kay_woolen_mills/).

129. Sarah Paulson, "Indian Woman with Pendleton Blanket," in Oregon History Project (Oregon Historical Society, 2007), <https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/indian-woman-with-pendleton-blanket/>.

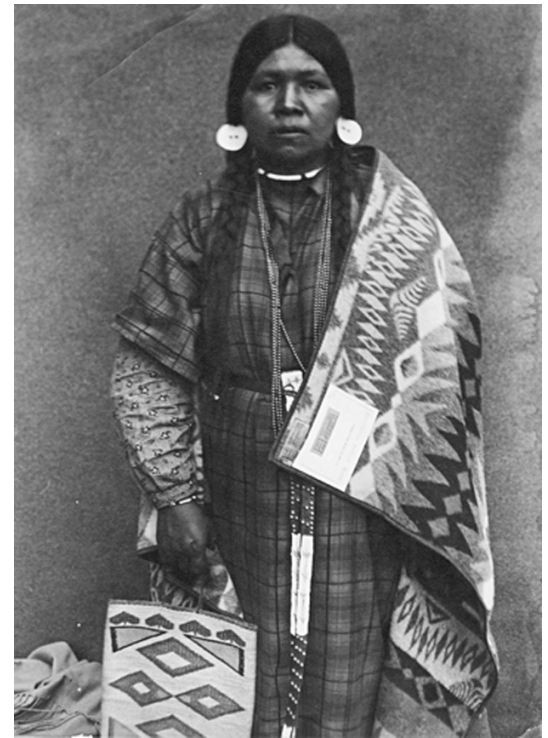


changes in the types of clothing people were wearing.<sup>130</sup> In 1930, 1,663 women were working as “laundry operatives,” representing 72.2 percent of all laundry workers. Their numbers dropped to 1,440 in 1940, but they comprised a much higher percentage (85) of total laundry workers, and more of them (nearly 80 percent) worked in urban parts of the state.<sup>131</sup>

Women working in canneries represented a wide range of ages and increasingly included those who were married. Canneries also employed Chinese and Japanese men and women, and sometimes they worked within the same facility as White workers. Historian Chris Friday identified one such plant, Elmore Cannery, in Astoria in the mid-1920s:

*[It] employed an average of seven Japanese women each month (five to eight depending on the point in the season)—too few for them to discriminate among themselves. Among the European American women the luxury of choosing workmates was more likely, since the number employed averaged eighteen (with a range from twelve to twenty-four). Assignment of workers to tables in the plant was based primarily on ethnicity, with other considerations secondary. Japanese women thus formed one unit, and European American women several others. The three Chinese women, Irene and Constance Wong and a Mrs. Chan, were too few in number to work at their own table.<sup>132</sup>*

Author Linda Tamura noted, “... among working Japanese women [in the Hood River valley], one-third, the highest proportion, were employed in agriculture between 1920 and 1930,” and that “almost 26 percent of Japanese women were employed,” compared with 18.5 percent of their White counterparts.<sup>133</sup> Tamura recounts many personal stories of



*Ca. 1910 photograph of a Plateau woman displaying a Pendleton blanket. Photographed by Lee Moorhouse. Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.*

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130. Gleason, “Oregon Legislation for Women in Industry,” 12.

131. U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Vol 4,” tbl. 4, p. 1362; U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Vol. 3, Part 4,” tpls. 10, 951.

132. Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor: The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon Industry, 1870–1942*, 119.

133. Tamura, *The Hood River Issei: An Oral History of Japanese Settlers in Oregon’s Hood River Valley*, 98.



*Packing tuna into cans, Columbia River Packing Association, Astoria, 1941. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

those living in Hood River County, revealing the richness of their work experiences that are not reflected in labor statistics. For example, strawberry farmer Masaji Kusachi told this story about his wife [her name is not provided], a second-generation Japanese immigrant who spoke English, and her role on their farm:

*My wife's job was to watch [supervise] the picking and packing of our fruit. She had to be sure the Indians [who were seasonal workers there from their reservation at Warm Springs] picked all the ripe fruit. If they overlooked some, the fruit would rot by the next picking.<sup>134</sup>*

Kusachi told of the need for seasonal berry pickers and that many Native families from the Warm Springs reservation returned every year, putting up tents next to their strawberry fields. He said they “worked not just for the money but for permission to gather and dry leftover berries.”<sup>135</sup> Kusachi’s brief account reveals not only the responsibility Japanese women had in family businesses but also offers a glimpse into the multicultural and social hierarchies in agricultural work.

In addition to the Hood River Valley, Native people worked as harvesters in and around Independence, Eugene, Wheatland Ferry, and Portland. The lush Willamette Valley drew workers from the Klamath and Warm Springs reservations for the summer harvest. Native peoples’ participation in seasonal harvests began to decline in the mid-1950s as more moved to towns and cities following the termination of western Oregon reservations.<sup>136</sup>

Oregon’s population grew tremendously during the 1940s and WWII when people nationwide relocated to industrial centers and for military service. Labor shortages in rural areas affected agricultural production and logging.<sup>137</sup> The 1943 Farm Labor Supply Appropriation Act and Oregon’s Emergency Farm Labor Service attempted to fill the labor gaps, first by employing women, children, and older Americans on farms.

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134. Tamura, 84–85.

135. Tamura, 85.

136. David Lewis, “Native American Agricultural Labor,” in Oregon Encyclopedia (Oregon Historical Society, June 2, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/native\\_american\\_agricultural\\_labor\\_in\\_the\\_willamette\\_valley/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/native_american_agricultural_labor_in_the_willamette_valley/).

137. Robbins, *Oregon: This Storied Land*, 124.

Mabel Mack led Oregon's branch of the Women's Land Army that recruited more than 15,000 women to work mostly as seasonal laborers, assisting farmers in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops.<sup>138</sup>

Approximately 140,000 defense workers lived in the greater Portland area at the peak of wartime production in 1944.<sup>139</sup> Kaiser Shipyards operated three yards in Portland and Vancouver, Washington, where as many as 125,000 workers—more than one-quarter of them women—built hundreds of ships, tankers, and aircraft carriers between 1941 and 1944.<sup>140</sup> The war transformed the workplace, and suddenly women had access to a broad range of well-paying jobs. The strong demand for women workers is reflected in government and industry ads recruiting women, such as those featuring the iconic Rosie the Riveter, and also by the availability of workplace childcare services. At the shipyards, women of all ages worked in roles traditionally held by men, like welders, electricians, and shipfitters. Assembly lines, where workers performed one or a few tasks, allowed for the swift training of large numbers of workers.

However, as historian Quintard Taylor argues, the same old stereotypes persisted within West Coast shipyards:

*Chinese women performed detail-oriented electrical work considered suitable for their skills. White women held welding jobs, considered the easiest position on the yards, while black women were relegated to scaling (cleaning), sweeping, and painting ship hulls.*<sup>141</sup>

This assessment is reinforced by a 1944 Women's Bureau report that said, "Though Negroes comprise a significant



*Photo of "Grandma Crew" at Oregon Shipbuilding, published in the Portland Journal in 1944.*



*United States Office of War Information Bureau of Public Inquiries flyer (1943) showing a woman working in an airplane factory. Courtesy of Library of Congress.*

138. Stephanie Ann Carpenter, "Regular Farm Girl: The Women's Land Army in World War II," *Agricultural History* 71, no. 2 (1997): 177–78.

139. Robbins, *Oregon: This Storied Land*, 133.

140. Karen Beck Skold, "The Job He Left Behind: Women in the Shipyards during World War II," in *Women in Pacific Northwest History*, ed. Karen J. Blair (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001), 158.

141. Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West 1528–1990*, 257.





*Bear Creek Orchards (Harry & David's Headquarters), built ca. 1930. Oregon Historic Sites Database.*

portion of the labor force in some of the large shipbuilding regions, comparatively few Negro women are employed in the shipyards except as laborers, sweepers, and cleaners.”<sup>142</sup> A clear hierarchy existed among shipyard workers that defined minorities by race, ethnicity, and gender, with White male workers at the top. Taylor concludes that “wartime labor demands guaranteed black women and men would work; they did not guarantee equitable treatment.”<sup>143</sup>

Those well-paying industrial jobs did not last long for Oregon women. While women in the Northeast and Midwest made advances in industrial workplaces following WWII, Oregon women either dropped out of the labor force or returned to traditional lower-wage jobs. Historian Laurie Mercier attributed this to Oregon’s major industries of mining, forestry, fishing, and shipping remaining exclusively male with high rates of union participation, and that “white male workers fiercely defended their control of industrial jobs by emphasizing their breadwinner privileges.”<sup>144</sup>

## Context-Associated Property Types

Resources significant for their association with this context, Rise of Labor Feminism and Wartime Employment: 1920–1945, may belong to any property type described in chapter 3 “Associated Property Types,” provided the resource maintains a significant association with a notable event, figure, or trend described in this context. For example, resources belonging to the Industry/Processing/Extraction category of properties may be significant for their associations with notable women in Oregon’s workforce or for their association with groups of women who consistently worked in or operated businesses out of those resources. Examples may include:

- Union halls and meeting locations,
- Education-related buildings (e.g., schools),
- Commercial canneries,

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142. Dorothy K. Newman, “Employing Women in Shipyards,” *Bulletin of the Women’s Bureau* (Washington, DC: United States Department of Labor, 1944), 16, <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/series-studies-employment-women-various-defense-industries-5465/employing-women-shipyards-539658>.

143. Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West 1528–1990*, 258.

144. Mercier, “Breadwinning, Equity, and Solidarity,” 6–8.

- Commercial laundries,
- Commercial factories (e.g., woolen mills),
- Restaurants (e.g., cafes, diners, cafeterias),
- Residences (i.e., when women worked from home),
- Public service buildings,
- Hospitals and clinics,
- Telephone buildings, and
- Shipyards.

# FIGHT FOR EQUALITY AND A PLACE IN THE WORKFORCE: 1946–1967

After World War II ended and veterans returned home to resume previous, or find new, employment, many women left the workforce. Some women returned to or started families, while other women were pushed out of positions. The economy shifted from wartime to consumer-driven production and many industrial workers were laid off, with women displaced at higher rates than men. Women did not disappear from the workforce, though, and some were able to hold strong in positions previously inaccessible to women. By 1950, the number of women in the workforce had returned to the high numbers during the war years. The Oregon Legislature passed the Fair Employment Practices Act in 1949 barring discrimination due to race, religion, color, or national origin by employers with more than five workers or by labor unions.

By the 1960s, women were starting to access some of the most powerful positions in Oregon politics, at both the state and federal levels, with Maurine Neuberger elected to represent Oregon in the U.S. Senate in 1960 and Betty Roberts, Vera Katz, Nancie Fadeley, Mary Rieke, Norma Paulus, and Gretchen Kefoury all serving in the Oregon Legislature. Many other firsts occurred during this period, including Helen Althaus becoming the first female federal law clerk in Oregon in 1947; Mercedes Diaz becoming the first Black woman admitted to the bar in Oregon in 1960; and Jean Lagerquist Lewis, a state representative (1954–1956), senator (1957–1961), and the first female Circuit Court judge in Oregon (1961). At the federal level, women's rights as workers were furthered with the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. This historic context begins in 1946, the year following the conclusion of World War II, and ends in 1967, the year Oregon Governor Tom McCall issued Executive Order No. 67-9 reestablishing the Governor's Committee on the Status of Women to study the legal, economic, social, and political standing of women in Oregon.

## Oregon's Female Population and Workforce

Women continued to enter the workforce in ever increasing numbers after the conclusion of World War II, according to



U.S. Census records from 1950, 1960, and 1970. The state-level results from the census provide an initial tool, albeit a blunt one, by which to measure women in the workforce, with divisions by urban and rural (further defined by whether rural means farm) and White and non-White. It is also important to note that the age of women in the workforce, both nationally and in Oregon, increased in the post-war era. In fact, the Oregon Bureau of Labor noted in 1962, that the age of working women rose steadily throughout the 20th century, with 42 percent of Oregon's working women over the age of 45 by 1962.<sup>145</sup>



*Women with card punch machines 1951. Courtesy Portland General Electric Photograph Collection; Org. Lot 151; Box 24; PGE 51-726, Oregon Historical Society.*

In 1950, there were 748,565 women living in the state of Oregon—737,525 of whom were White and 11,040 of whom were non-White.<sup>146</sup> According to data from the 1950 U.S. Census, 28.9 percent of women in Oregon were in the workforce, compared to 79.3 percent of men.<sup>147</sup> A clear divide existed between urban and rural areas as well: 33.9 percent of urban women, 22.7 percent of rural (non-farm) women, and 20.4 percent of rural (farm) women were in the workforce. The urban places with the highest percentage of women in the workforce in 1950 were Astoria (41.8 percent), Coos Bay (44 percent), Newport (36.8 percent), Portland (36.6 percent), and The Dalles (37 percent).<sup>148</sup> The 1950 U.S. Census also

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145. Oregon Bureau of Labor, “Biennial Report: 1962–1964” (Salem, OR: Oregon Bureau of Labor), accessed March 5, 2024, 4.

146. The top four non-White races living in Oregon in 1950, according to the Census were Black, Indian (i.e., Native American), Japanese, and Chinese (in that order). The census identified 5,568 Black (or Negro), 2,781 Indian, 751 Japanese, 751 Chinese women living in Oregon. 318 women did not fall within these narrow racial categories. “Table 14. Race by Sex, for the State, Urban and Rural, 1950, and and for the State, 1880 to 1940,” on page 37-33 and “Table 15. Age. By Color and Sex, for the State, Urban and Rural: 1950 and 1940,” on page 37-35 in U.S. Department of Commerce, “Volume II: General Characteristics of the Population, Part 37 - Oregon,” Census of Population: 1950 (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1952).

147. “Table 10. Summary of Population Characteristics, for the State (urban And Rural), Standard Metropolitan Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places of 10,000 or More: 1950” on page 37-31 in U.S. Department of Commerce, “Volume II: General Characteristics of the Population, Part 37 – Oregon.”

148. Table 11. Summary of Population Characteristics, For Urban Places: 1950,” on pages 37-31 and 37-32 in U.S. Department of Commerce, “Volume II: General Characteristics of the Population, Part 37 – Oregon.”



*Group of women standing next to an incomplete Rose Festival Float, 1951. Courtesy Portland General Electric Photograph Collection; Org. Lot 151; Box 24; PGE 51-872.*

tallies employment status by “color” (White and non-White) and by sex (male and female)—159,630 White women were in the work force in 1950 (21.6 percent of the White women living in Oregon) and 2,575 non-White women (23.3 percent of the non-White women living in Oregon).<sup>149</sup> According to the 1950 census, 70.97% of working Black women in Oregon were still limited to private domestic work or service sector work.<sup>150</sup> Although the sheer number of White women living and working in urban places outpaced non-White women, nearly 84 percent of non-White women were working in urban places compared to 70 percent of White women. Native American women, unlike women belonging to the other racial categories included in the census, lived predominately in rural (largely nonfarm) areas of Oregon, which likely limited their professional opportunities outside the home.

By 1960, there were 888,746 women living in Oregon and the percentage of women in the workforce in Oregon had increased to 34 percent—which included both civilian and military workers.<sup>151</sup> The U.S. Census continued to analyze employment status by “color” and sex (male and female) in 1960 and added breakdowns by age in five-year increments.<sup>152</sup> In 1960, 212,204 White women in Oregon were in the workforce (34 percent) and 4,163 non-White women (36.7

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149. Table 25. Employment Status by Color and Sex, For the State, Urban and Rural: 1950,” on pages 37-42 in U.S. Department of Commerce, “Volume II: General Characteristics of the Population, Part 37 – Oregon.”

150. Tessara Dudley compares post-war statistics on Black women in the Oregon workforce to other areas of the country, like Detroit and the East Bay area in California, where Black women had successfully persisted in finding jobs in clerical and retail work. Tessara Dudley and Portland State University, “Disfavored for the Color of Their Skin: Black Women Workers in the World War II Shipyards of Portland and Vancouver,” *PSU McNair Scholars Online Journal* 13, no. 1 (2019), 23-24, <https://doi.org/10.15760/mcnair.2019.13.1.9>.

151. The number of women working for the Armed Forces in Oregon was only 45 in 1960. Table 115.—Employment Status, By Age, Color, and Sex, for the State, Urban and Rural, and For Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Counties of 250,000 or More: 1960,” Table 37.—Age by Color and Sex, for the State, Urban and Rural: 1960.”

152. In 1960, the Census did not provide separate counts for White and non-White, just the total for the state and then specifically for non-White.

percent).<sup>153</sup> These numbers are supported by state-specific reporting: The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industry states the number of working women in Oregon increased by 32 percent between 1950 and 1960, from 162,000 to 214,500.<sup>154</sup>

The 1964 biennial report by the Oregon Bureau of Labor stated that three out of five working women were married.<sup>155</sup> By 1966, women comprised 38 percent of wage earners in Oregon, up from 32 percent in 1962.<sup>156</sup>



## Legal and Labor Framework

The United States was forever changed by its entry into World War II and when the war concluded in 1945, the nation's economy boomed. Public policies, such as the GI Bill of Rights passed in 1944, provided funds to veterans to pay for college and buy homes. And while many White Americans benefited from this economic boom and became more affluent, other Americans, along with immigrants, were

*Woman in an office with a typewriter, 1949. Portland General Electric Photograph Collection; Org. Lot 151; Box 22; PGE 49-87. Oregon Historical Society.*

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153. As the 1960 Census did not provide separate statistics for White employees, these numbers were found by subtracting the number of non-White female residents and employees from the State totals for females. Table 115.—Employment Status, By Age, Color, and Sex, for the State, Urban and Rural, and For Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Counties of 250,000 or More: 1960.”

154. Oregon Bureau of Labor, “Biennial Report: 50 Years of Progress” (Salem, OR: Oregon Bureau of Labor, 1952), 6 <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015076469454?urlappend=%3Bseq=1> (accessed March 5, 2024).

155. Oregon Bureau of Labor, “Biennial Report: 1962-1964” (Salem, OR: Oregon Bureau of Labor), 4.

156. Oregon Bureau of Labor, “32nd Biennial Report of the Oregon Bureau of Labor for the Period July 1, 1964 to July 1, 1966” (Salem, OR: Oregon Bureau of Labor, 1966), 24; Bob Bussel, “BOLI: 120 Years of Service to Working Oregonians” (Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industry, August 2023), 37.





*Constance Smith made president of the Portland General Electric 50-50 Club, 1956. Courtesy Portland General Electric Photograph Collection; Org. Lot 151; Box 32; PGE 56-155-3, Oregon Historical Society.*

not able to participate fully in this upward mobility. Black Americans, Latinx Americans, and women were largely excluded from these opportunities and, as a result, there were ever increasing and persistent efforts by these communities to push for acknowledgement of their rights as guaranteed by the Constitution. But working-class women in Oregon, according to historian Laurie Mercier, continued to make efforts “to convince reluctant male unions, employers, and the state to recognize their rights as breadwinners and their needs as caregivers.”<sup>157</sup>

As previously mentioned, Oregon differed from other more industrialized states with its economy remaining largely driven by timber, shipping, and fishing up until World War II. Even after industrial jobs had started to emerge in Oregon, particularly with defense-related work, mining, forestry, fishing, and shipping continued to prevail—and they were industries dominated by male workers. That meant that Oregon’s union membership numbers were also most likely predominately male.

Not all workers, let alone women workers, in Oregon were union members, but through advocacy in their labor unions, working women in Oregon pushed for greater recognition and protection in their work. Oregon women who lost their jobs after World War II, if they wanted or needed to remain in the workforce, had to return to lower-paying jobs typically classified as “women’s work” including laundry, food service, teaching, and service positions.<sup>158</sup> In the years immediately after World War II, Oregon women workers continued to, according to Mercier, “toil in low-wage domestic, service, and unskilled industrial sectors.”<sup>159</sup> Working women persisted, however, in working and finding positions within labor unions, and by 1947, women sat on almost every committee of the annual convention committees of the Oregon Labor

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157. Laurie Mercier, “Breadwinning, Equity, and Solidarity: Labor Feminism in Oregon, 1945–1970,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, no. 1 (2019): 8, <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.120.1.0006>.

158. In 1950, the major occupation groups with the most female workers were professional and technical workers; clerical workers; sales workers; operatives; and service workers. Table 29.—Class of Worker and Major Occupation Group of Employed Persons, By Sex, for the State: 1950 and 1940; 37–45. <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1950/population-volume-2/26434445v2p37ch2.pdf> (accessed March 4, 2024).

159. Mercier, “Breadwinning, Equity, and Solidarity: Labor Feminism in Oregon, 1945–1970,” 8.

Federation and comprised one quarter of the delegates. Their presence in leadership and on committees kept attention on issues of gender inequities in the workplace. Mildred Ripley Gianini, a representative from the Laundry, Dry Cleaning, and Dye House Workers Union, was elected as one of the two vice presidents of the Oregon Labor Federation. White women continued to reap the most benefits of progress in labor unions. Even though the Oregon AFL officially advocated for Black and Japanese workers, according to Mercier, “locals during and after the war fiercely resisted extending membership to workers of color.”<sup>160</sup> As a result, women of color were often excluded in union contracts utilized by White women.

As women strove to climb the labor union ladder into decision making positions, they also continued to work the picket lines. In April of 1947, Oregon’s telephone workers joined a nationwide strike against Pacific Telephone & Telegraph (a precursor to AT&T), the largest private employer in the country. These women, members of the National Federation of Telephone Workers (renamed Communication Workers of America after the strike), demanded higher wages, a union shop, and an improved pension plan. The national strike dissolved, but Oregon strikers (members of the United Telephone Employees of Oregon) held fast until May 16th—only agreeing to return to work after winning an end to discriminatory wage differentials and an employer promise to not retaliate against strikers.<sup>161</sup> In another example, nursing attendants, orderlies, maids, and kitchen aides—largely women—at Portland’s Emanuel Hospital (present-day Legacy Emanuel Medical Center) launched a 19-month-long campaign in August 1950 for union recognition. Three hundred Good Samaritan Hospital (present-day Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center) employees joined their informational picket in January 1951. Contracts were granted to Good Samaritan employees on December 7, 1950, and for Emanuel strikers on March 14, 1952. According to Mercier, “Both lengthy struggles revealed how the union organizers had marshaled community



*Two receptionists at desk, 1949. Courtesy Portland General Electric Photograph Collection; Org. Lot 151; Box 23; PGE 49-271, Oregon Historical Society.*



*Group of women standing around table wearing hats, 1949. Courtesy Portland General Electric Photograph Collection; Org. Lot 151; Box 23; PGE 49-279, Oregon Historical Society.*

160. Mercier, “Breadwinning, Equity, and Solidarity: Labor Feminism in Oregon, 1945–1970,” 12.

161. “Phone Strike Ends in Oregon; Workers Back,” *The Capital Journal*, May 16, 1947.



**Labor's Executive Council**—Fourteen members of the executive council of the Oregon State Federation of Labor meeting in Salem for a five day session will ponder problems and policies. From left (seated): Mildred Gianini, first vice president; J. T. Marr, executive secretary; J. D. McDonald, president, and Cecil W. Jones, second vice president, all of Portland. Back row, board members, (from left): John E. Cook, Coos Bay; Joseph L. Ross, Bend; C. E. Long, Klamath Falls; Don Stansell, Medford; Verna Coffinberry, Pendleton; Richard G. Hoer, Oregon City; Eli McConkey, Astoria; F.J. A. Boehringer, Salem; Ray A. McInnis, Eugene.

*Labor Executive Council, 1948, with two women on council, Mildred Gianini and Verna Coffinberry. Capital Journal, June 21, 1948, page 1.*

support to treat women's caregiving labors as work rather than 'service.'"<sup>162</sup>

Coinciding with increasing numbers of women returning to the work force in numbers rivaling WWII employment, the Oregon Legislature passed the Fair Employment Practices Act in 1949. This was the first statewide anti-discrimination legislation passed in the state—and Oregon was only the sixth state to pass such legislation. The Fair Employment Practices Act barred discrimination in hiring, promotion, and working conditions based on race, religion, or national origin. However, it did not ban sex discrimination by employers. A 1952 biennial report of the Oregon Bureau of Labor even stated that “few occupations are closed to women,” so women were working everywhere, but continued to face discrimination in wages and advancement opportunities.<sup>163</sup> The report also identified the top industries employing women—mercantile (retail), manufacturing, and public housekeeping had the highest numbers of women, followed by canneries, hospitals (health care), and laundries.<sup>164</sup>

Legislation beginning to address paternalistic regulations to protect women in the workforce was just a start, and there was still a lot of work ahead. Women cannery workers, for example, combated discrimination in the workplace as regulations in their industry continued to differentiate men from women. Unionized fish packing cannery workers in Astoria approved an agreement in 1952 for pay increases, with men receiving 6–10 cent hourly increases while women received a pay increase of only 4 cents an hour.<sup>165</sup> Proposals by the Oregon Cannery Council to the State Labor Commission in 1967 wanted to shorten the time between rest periods, but

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162. Mercier, “Breadwinning, Equity, and Solidarity: Labor Feminism in Oregon, 1945–1970,” 16.

163. Oregon Bureau of Labor, “Biennial Report: 50 Years of Progress,” page 53.

164. Mercantile was by far the industry with the greatest number of women employees in 1952 with 18,815, followed by public housekeeping (13,563), manufacturing (12,837), canneries (4,654), hospitals (4,110), and then laundries (3,937). Oregon Bureau of Labor, “Biennial Report: 50 Years of Progress,” 53.

165. “CIO Fish Cannery Men Accept Terms,” *The Capital Journal*, June 17, 1952.



also limit the amount of weight a female worker, but not a male worker, could carry.<sup>166</sup>

In 1955, Oregon passed the Equal Pay for Equal Work Law in 1955—eight years before Congress passed the federal U.S. Equal Pay Act of 1963. Both the state and federal laws required employers to pay men and women equal wages when doing equal work requiring equal skills, effort, and responsibility and under similar working conditions.<sup>167</sup> However, despite this significant state legislation, by 2018, a review of pay equity in Oregon upon the passage of the Oregon Pay Equity Act of 2017 (OPEA) found that the Oregon Bureau of Labor (later the Bureau of Labor and Industry) had only worked through a total of four reported pay disparity cases in the nearly 65-year history of the.<sup>168</sup> In addition, the 1955 law did not apply to the education field; it was also specific to wages, rather than an entire employee benefits package.<sup>169</sup>

The same year that Oregon passed the Equal Pay for Equal Work legislation, Edith Green (1910–1987) began serving the first of 10 terms representing Oregon in the U.S. House of Representatives (Oregon's Third congressional district), only the second woman to be elected to the House for Oregon. In her first year as a congresswoman, Green proposed the Equal Pay Act, which was not signed into law until eight years later. During her tenure, Green supported passage of the federal Equal Pay Act as well as equity in education and sports through Title IX legislation, passed in 1972. Maurine Neuberger was elected in November 1960 to represent Oregon in the U.S. Senate, winning the seat previously held by her husband, Richard Neuberger, until his death in March 1960.<sup>170</sup> She was the first—and as of this date,



*Employee in the SP&S Machine Section ca. 1952. Courtesy Spokane, Portland, and Seattle Railway photographs; Org. Lot 78; Box 4, Folder 8; 011, Oregon Historical Society.*

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166. "Cannery Rules for Women Under Study," *Statesman Journal*, May 2, 1967, sec. 1, 5.

167. Oregon Bureau of Labor, "Biennial Report: 1962–1964" (Salem, OR: Oregon Bureau of Labor), 4.

168. Jeff Jones and Tamara Jones, "The Oregon Pay Equity Act Is Here," *Lewis & Clark Law Review Online* 22, no. 1 (2018): 6, <https://doi.org/10.21f39/ssrn.3277617>.

169. Jones and Jones, "The Oregon Pay Equity Act Is Here," 7.

170. Kimberly Jensen, "Maurine Neuberger (1906–2000)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, June 2, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/neuberger\\_maurine\\_1907\\_2000\\_/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/neuberger_maurine_1907_2000_/).



**EDITH GREEN**

*Oregon Daily Emerald, October 17, 1952, page 6.*



*Maurine Neuberger and her husband, Senator Richard Neuberger. Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.*

the only—woman in Oregon’s history to represent in the state in the U.S. Senate.

At home in Oregon, more women were elected to local and statewide positions, furthering opportunities for women to add their voices and experiences to legislation impacting Oregonians. Portland voters elected Dorothy McCullough Lee—an attorney who opened the first all-female law practice with Gladys Everett in Oregon in 1931—as mayor in 1948, the first woman to hold the office in the city.<sup>171</sup> A few women were elected to the Oregon Legislature in the 1960s, including Betty Roberts.<sup>172</sup> There were only six other women in the legislature when Roberts first served. Roberts, a teacher, was in law school when she won her seat in the Oregon house; she completed school and passed the bar exam in 1967, all while serving her constituents with a focus on education, civil rights, and women’s issues.<sup>173</sup> She then won a seat in the Oregon State Senate in 1968. During Roberts’ tenure in the legislature, the Governor’s Commission on the Status of Women was established by Governor Mark O. Hartfield in 1964. Prior to the passage of Title IX of the Educational Act in 1972, colleges and universities in the United States could legally keep women from enrolling in selected degrees and many programs barred women from participating.<sup>174</sup> The result of this discrimination was that women struggled to access higher education for higher paying professions dominated by men and women continued to be funneled into traditionally female-dominated professions, such as teaching. The political platform of Betty Roberts, in particular, demonstrated the systemic issues at play for women in Oregon as she pushed for a focus on legislation related to education, civil rights, and women’s issues.

171. “Dorothy McCullough Lee (1902-1981),” accessed April 1, 2024, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/lee\\_dorothy\\_mccullough\\_1902\\_1981\\_/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/lee_dorothy_mccullough_1902_1981_/).

172. Betty Roberts served in the Oregon House from 1964–1968 and the Oregon Senate from 1968–1976.

173. Gail Wells, “Betty Roberts (1923-2011),” in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, September 7, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/roberts\\_betty\\_1923\\_2011\\_/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/roberts_betty_1923_2011_/).

174. “Why Are So Many Teachers Women?,” National Women’s History Museum, August 17, 2017, <https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/why-are-so-many-teachers-women>.

## Where Oregon Women Worked

Even though women were in the Oregon workforce in ever increasing numbers during this period, paid positions available to women, and particularly women of color, were limited. Many women who had worked in industrial jobs during WWII initially left the workforce or were forced to find jobs in other positions more traditionally held by women. Most women worked in clerical and service occupations, with race and economic status further limiting where individual women were accepted as employees. Black women workers after WWII, for example, faced difficulty finding work in the Portland area as few manufacturers would hire them, so they ultimately found work in garment manufacturing or domestic work.<sup>175</sup> Increased education opportunities allowed some women—predominately White women due to systemic racism and prejudice, as well as their sheer numbers in comparison to women of color in the state—to make some advancements in new or more specialized career paths. However, lower wages and restricted promotion potential limited advancement for many women.

Manufacturing jobs did continue for primarily White women in the post-war era. Nearly 10 percent of women working in Oregon were in manufacturing, primarily in lumber and wood products (2.1 percent) or food and kindred products (2.5 percent).<sup>176</sup>

In the state's many lumber mills, women continued the jobs they had gained access to in periods of limited male labor, like the whistlepunkers who relayed signals between the machine operators and workers in the log yards, a job previously held



*Betty Roberts, 1968. Courtesy Portland State University.*

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175. Tessara Dudley, "Disfavored for the Color of Their Skin: Black Women Workers in the World War II Shipyards of Portland and Vancouver," PSU McNair Scholars Online Journal 13, no. 1 (2019), 23, <https://doi.org/10.15760/mcnair.2019.13.1.9>.

176. "Table 30.—Industry Group," on page 37-46, in U.S. Department of Commerce, "Census of Population: 1950," Volume II: General Characteristics of the Population, Part 37 - Oregon (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1952), <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1950/population-volume-2/26434445v2p37ch2.pdf>.





LADY OF THE WOODS—LaVere Alexander, wife of O. D. Alexander, Bend, can claim the distinction of being the only woman driver of a man-sized logging rig in the Northwest. In the picture above, she is standing beside her 1952 logger with an eight wheel, dual axle trailer.

*LaVere Alexander, The Bend Bulletin, December 4, 1953, page 3.*



LADY OF THE ROAD—LaVere Alexander could stump the panel on "What's My Line." She's a log truck driver, and proud of her occupation. (Bend Bulletin Photo)

*LaVere Alexander, The Bend Bulletin, August 22, 1956, Forest Industries section, page 5.*

by teenage boys or men nearing retirement.<sup>177</sup> While men continued to dominate in these types of labor-intensive jobs, many women continued to work in the field once they gained access. For example, Ednabel Lee of Estacada worked alongside her father in the early 1940s as her father horse logged their property. Lee married another horse logger and worked alongside him in their family business, assisting in the woods and doing the bookkeeping for the business, all while raising their seven children.<sup>178</sup> LaVere Alexander (later Mrs. John B. Younce) ran her own log truck in Central and Eastern Oregon in the 1950s, hauling logs to Brooks Scanlon Mill and Simpson Mill in Bend; mills in Spray, Dallas, and Albany; and Boise Cascade Mills at Enterprise and Joseph.<sup>179</sup>

A key employer for working women with no or limited education in the late 1940s and into the 1960s continued to be canneries—fruits, vegetables, and seafood. A 1946 job posting in the *Capital Journal* in Salem stated there was increased demand for women workers in the city's canneries, with companies like California Packing, Paulus Brothers, Hunt Brothers, and California Pack and Blue Lake Producers seeking employees through the U.S. Employment Service.<sup>180</sup> Canners employed women as food processors, office workers, and in housework.<sup>181</sup>

The Emergency Farm Labor Service continued briefly after the end of WWII and disbanded in 1947. Minority groups, most notably Black or African Americans, Japanese Americans, and Native Americans participated in significant numbers. The number of Black workers increased when Portland's shipyards closed after the war, although racial tensions forced the creation of segregated platoons. Many Japanese Americans stayed in Eastern Oregon to continue to work in agriculture. Umatilla County farmers heavily recruited laborers from the Umatilla Tribe during the war and those numbers increased in

177. Robert E. Walls and Dora Zimpel, "Lady Loggers and Gyppo Wives: Women and Northwest Logging," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 103, no. 3 (2002): 366.

178. Walls and Zimpel, "Lady Loggers and Gyppo Wives," 375.

179. Mrs. John B. Younce, "Loggers World," November 1965, reprinted in Walls and Zimpel, "Lady Loggers and Gyppo Wives," 377.

180. "Need Women at Canners," *Capital Journal*, August 8, 1946.

181. "Many Jobs for Women Offered," *Capital Journal*, May 31, 1946.

the immediate post-war years.<sup>182</sup>

Food processing expanded as an industry in Oregon following the end of WWII, with 160 food processing plants operating around the state, employing approximately 2,500 workers; 60 percent were women.<sup>183</sup> In 1950, for example, the Paulus Brothers' cannery at 14th and Oxford streets in Salem employed 21 women and 86 men; it operated three shifts around the clock as workers packed.<sup>184</sup> Prior to and during the war, the state's food processing plants were largely concentrated in the Willamette Valley, but in the post-war years they began expanding into eastern and southern Oregon, with large plants opening in Umatilla, Malheur County, and Klamath County. Key seafood canneries along the coast included facilities at Astoria, Newport, and Coos Bay. By 1952, Oregon canneries employed over 4,600 women.<sup>185</sup> Salmon canneries were primarily along the Columbia River, but the industry declined in the post-war era as the salmon supply shrank.<sup>186</sup>



*Drawing of the new Paulus Brothers plant in Salem, The Oregon Statesman, June 13, 1946, page 1.*

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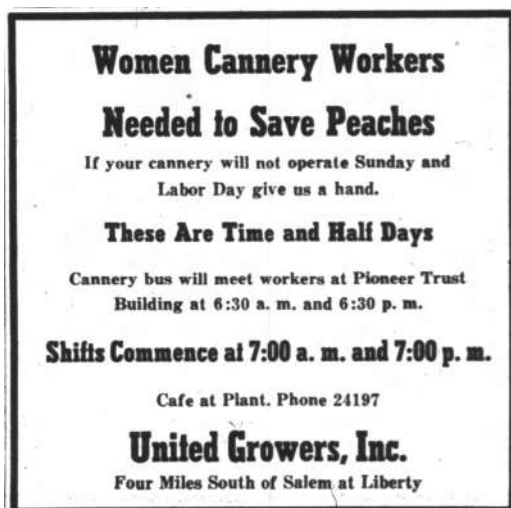
182. Oregon State University Archives. "Workers of Color." Fighters on the Farm Front - Special Collections & Archives Research Center. Accessed May 9, 2024. <https://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/fighters/topics/minorities>.

183. State of Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission, "Second Biennial Report: Covering 1945 and 1946" (Salem, OR, 1946), 40-41.

184. Joan Marie Meyering, "Canneries," Willamette Heritage Center (blog), August 19, 2005, <https://www.willametteheritage.org/canneries/>.

185. Oregon Bureau of Labor, "Biennial Report: 50 Years of Progress" (Salem, OR: Oregon Bureau of Labor, 1952), 53, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015076469454?urlappend=%3Bseq=1> (accessed March 5, 2024).

186. John Harrison, "Canneries," Northwest Power and Conservation Council, accessed March 30, 2024, <https://www.nwcouncil.org/reports/columbia-river-history/canneries/>.



*Women cannery workers want ad.*  
*Statesman Journal, August 31, 1947.*

In addition to working in the cannery aspect of agriculture, women also worked as paid farm laborers.<sup>187</sup> A surge in women agricultural workers occurred during WWII and the creation of the Women's Land Army to continue farm production to feed the nation and its troops overseas. Migrant workers became a significant category of farm laborers during the war, and that continued into the 1950s. The types of crops dominating Oregon agriculture during this period were often handpicked fruits and vegetables. Smaller farms were often family run operations, for example the 20-acre orchard of the Japanese Iwatsuki family in Hood River. Shizue Iwatsuki had to run their family's operation after WWII after her husband Kamegoro was injured in a fall; she later founded the Hood River Saga School teaching classes in Japanese flower arrangement and tea ceremony.<sup>188</sup>

There was an increase in Oregon women working in agriculture, forestry, and fishing in 1950, with 9,105 women working in agriculture (six percent of the female workforce) in 1950 versus only 2,999 (3.5 percent) in 1940.<sup>189</sup> The greatest number of women working in agriculture in 1950 were located in Clackamas, Curry, Lane, Marion, Multnomah, Washington, and Yamhill counties and in the cities of Grants Pass, Newberg, Newport, and Ontario.<sup>190</sup> The farm labor force in Oregon during the 1950s was divided into four major groups, some of which included women: local laborers, migrant

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187. This study is focused on women in paid labor, so does not cover the entirety of women working in agriculture as women who lived on farms with their families often worked for free as part of the family.

188. Linda Tamura, "Shizue Iwatsuki (1897–1984)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia*, May 18, 2023, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/iwatsuki\\_shizue\\_1897\\_1984\\_/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/iwatsuki_shizue_1897_1984_/).

189. "Table 30.—Industry Group of Employed Persons, by Sex, for the State, Urban and Rural: 1950," on page 37-45 in U.S. Department of Commerce, "Volume II: General Characteristics of the Population, Part 37 – Oregon."

190. "Table 35.—Economic Characteristics of the Population, by Sex, for Standard Metropolitan Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places of 10,000 or More: 1950," on pages 37-53 – 37-54 in U.S. Department of Commerce, "Volume II: General Characteristics of the Population, Part 37 – Oregon."



workers from California and Texas, undocumented Mexican workers, and a small number of braceros.<sup>191</sup>

While manufacturing, cannery, and agricultural work provided jobs for women of lower economic status, clerical and retail work provided employment opportunities for women who had some access to education. Clerical jobs included telephone operators, secretarial work, and administrative assistants. However, according to writer Tessara Dudley, “Black women were largely shut out of clerical and sales work in the post-war era, despite an expansion in the field for women workers.”<sup>192</sup> For example, telephone operators, in Oregon and nationally, were largely young and White. The National Urban League published a study of telephone system employment in 44 cities, including Portland, in 1946 and found that prior to 1940, there were no Black telephone operators at any of the visited telephone exchanges. By the end of the 1940s, there were 4,700 telephone operators in Oregon.

Women with education were able to go into teaching. Since the beginning of the 20th century, women have comprised the highest percentage of teachers in the U.S. But while women dominated this field, few women were administrators during this period. By the 1950s, the country’s educational system started to coalesce into the elementary and secondary school system largely seen in the present day. Women worked in schools across the state of Oregon, from rural to urban, with many serving in the same school throughout their careers. Harriet Goglin of Canby, for example, served on the Canby School Board and led the high school’s art department for 16 years before becoming vice principal by the late 1980s.<sup>193</sup>

Population increases with the “baby boom” of the postwar era also led to an increased need for teachers. More men returned to the field of teaching after the war, particularly with the benefits of the GI Bill to further college education. In 1955 the requirement for teacher certification in Oregon was increased to a four-year college degree. In 1965, the Oregon



*Woman stands on ladder picking cherries, Willamette Valley, ca. 1965. Courtesy Oregon Historical Society, Valley Migrant League.*



*Telephone operators at Pacific Telephone and Telegraph in Klamath. Herald and News, May 16, 1947.*

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191. An executive order called the Mexican Farm Labor Program established the Bracero Program in 1942; workers were referred to as “braceros.” Lynn Stephen, “The Story of PCUN and the Farmworker Movement in Oregon,” Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies (CLLAS), July 2012.

192. Dudley and Portland State University, “Disfavored for the Color of Their Skin,” 23.

193. “Harriet Goglin (1936–2021),” *The Oregonian*, May 21, 2021.



*Office worker, ca. 1960. Courtesy Bureau of Labor and Industry.*

Legislature passed the Teacher-Board Consultation Law, one of the first collective bargaining laws for teachers in the United States. This allowed Oregon's teachers to negotiate through their unions with their employers.

Health care was another field soon dominated by women in the years following WWII, but only at the nursing and support care levels. There were women physicians practicing in Oregon by the late 19th century (as discussed in the preceding historic contexts), but they were the exception, not the rule. Medical and nursing schools in Oregon, and elsewhere in the country, developed and distributed marketing materials in the 1950s to encourage women to pursue professions in health care and the greater health science community.<sup>194</sup> For example, Evelyn Strange, DMD, was the only woman in her graduating class at the University of Oregon Dental School in 1950, but she returned to teach in 1956 and mentored scores of dental students for the next four decades, taking pride in welcoming more women into the field.

Nursing education, during this period, began to expand with programs gaining broader support and increasing focus on public health. The earliest nursing programs in Oregon had been founded by hospitals, with colleges and universities creating their own programs in the 1920s and 1930s. By the end of WWII, many of the hospital-based programs had disappeared and the university-based ones became more established. In 1960, the nursing department at the University of Oregon separated from the School of Medicine and became the University of Oregon School of Nursing.<sup>195</sup> The Oregon State Nurses Association (OSNA, later Oregon Nurses Association or ONA in 1957) worked hard for the state's nurses in the post-war era, pushing for regulation on nursing hours, establishing a base salary, and earning the right for nurses to unionize (House Bill 1360, 1961).<sup>196</sup>

Women lawyers were still rare during this period. In 1948, Cecilia Gallagher Galey re-established a women's lawyer

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194. Pamela Pierce, "There's a Place for You': Oregon Women in the Health Sciences," Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU): Historical Collections and Archives, May 2020, <https://www.ohsu.edu/historical-collections-archives/theres-place-you-oregon-women-health-sciences>.

195. "'The School of Nursing,'" Oregon Health & Science University Historical Collections and Archives, n.d., <https://www.ohsu.edu/historical-collections-archives/school-nursing>.

196. "ONA History at a Glance - Oregon Nurses Association," accessed April 1, 2024, <https://www.oregonrn.org/page/history>.

association in Portland. The group branded themselves as Queen's Bench of Oregon (later just Queen's Bench) after a group in San Francisco.

Harriet "Hattie" Bratzel (later Kremen) moved up the ranks in the legal profession during the post-war period. Bratzel worked in the office of a Salem attorney after she graduated from high school in 1926 and then began working as a court reporter in other counties. She then became the Marion County court reporter in 1943. In 1945, Bratzel registered for night law school at Northwestern College of Law (now Lewis & Clark Law School), taking classes for a year. Then in 1947, Bratzel discovered that Oregon Supreme Court Justice James T. Brand had been appointed as a judge for the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal in Germany. She jokingly asked if he needed a good reporter—two weeks later, she was hired as his secretary and then as a court reporter for two years.

She returned to Oregon in 1948 and continued her law studies at the Willamette University College of Law, passing the Oregon State Bar exam in 1951. She first ran for Marion County district attorney in 1952 and lost but ran again in 1956 and won—becoming the first woman elected as a district attorney in the state.<sup>197</sup> Bratzel served two terms, but lost the race for a third, returning to private practice in 1966 with a focus on estate planning.

Another woman who made an impact as an attorney in the state during the mid-20th century was Helen Althaus, the first female federal law clerk in Oregon. Before she earned that distinction, Althaus was the first female associate with Portland firm King, Miller, Anderson, Nash and Yerke from 1953 to 1970. Her name was abbreviated to her initials, "H. F.," on the firm's stationery and door and only upgraded to "Helen F." after another woman, Jean Lagerquist Lewis, was hired as a lawyer there.<sup>198</sup> This use of initials was common among professional women working in male-dominated fields who wished to conceal their gender to avoid discrimination. Althaus formed an all-woman law firm in 1970 with Virginia Renwick



AUTUMN COLORS ENHANCED THE TEA TABLE at the home of Mrs. Emil Albrecht, when members of the Klamath Falls Business and Professional Women's Club entertained in honor of visiting BPW officials, Laura York, state president and Mrs. Cecilia Gallagher Galey, Sweet Home. Here — (l to r, standing) are Mrs. A. C. Backet, Mrs. Albrecht, Mrs. Clarence Ward, Mrs. Ingene Boothby, president of the Klamath Falls Club; Laura York, Mrs. Galey and Mae Phinney. Seated, far end of table, Mrs. Clara Shaw and back to camera, Mrs. Rufus Quillen. — Photo by Floyd

*The Klamath Falls Business and Professional Women's Club in 1953. Cecilia Gallagher Galey is pictured second from the right. Herald and News, October 24, 1953, page 6.*



*Harriet "Hattie" Bratzel campaign flyer, 1956. Courtesy U.S. District Court of Oregon Historical Society, Trudy Allen.*

197. Diane Rynerson, "Hattie Bratzel Kremen (1908–1996)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, July 20, 2022), <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/kremen-hattie-bratzel/>.

198. Dilg, "From Coverture to Supreme Court Justice," 364.





*Neva Elliott, Capital Journal, July 21, 1949, page 6.*



*Manche Irene Langley, 1950. Courtesy Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Orhi95776.*

and Gladys Everett (who had established the first all-woman firm in the state with Dorothy McCullough Lee in 1931).

Neva Elliott was also a key woman in the legal field during the mid-20th century. She got her start as a litigator in the 1930s and worked steadily through the 1950s. Elliott then became pro tempore municipal judge in 1959.<sup>199</sup>

Manche Irene Langley, one of the first women admitted to practice law in Oregon, was still practicing law (she was named chief deputy of the Domestic Relations Department of the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office in 1961) well into her 70s.<sup>200</sup>

Although more women were working outside the home during this period, some women established businesses or careers that allowed them to work from home. Some of these jobs were in addition to careers they already held. Many of these women worked in creative professions (e.g., authors, artists). Evelyn Sibley Lampman, began her career writing for radio—KGW in Portland—after the death of her husband in the mid-1940s. But aside from her work with radio, she published her first children's book, *Crazy Creek*, in 1948 and then published multiple books a year (under her own name or pen names Jane Woodfin or Lynn Bronson) for decades.<sup>201</sup>

Antoinette Kuzmanich Hatfield, wife of Oregon politician and later U.S. Senator Mark Hatfield, also worked outside the house—she was the first female dean at Portland State College and later opened the Antoinette Hatfield Gallery in Portland. But during much of her husband's political career, she was known for her skills as a hostess, which she

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199. Elliott later served as a pro tempore Multnomah County judge, from 1967 to the late '80s. Trudy Allen, "Celebrating Queen's Bench's 75th Anniversary" (Oregon Women Lawyers Foundation, n.d.), <https://owlsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2023-Queens-Bench-75th-Anniversary-.pdf>.

200. Trudy Allen, "Manche Irene Langley (1883-1963)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, December 27, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/langley\\_manche\\_2/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/langley_manche_2/).

201. According to Portland city directories, Lampman lived at 6810 SE Yamhill, Portland. Eric A. Kimmel, "Evelyn Sibley Lampman (1907–1980)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, June 28, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/lampman\\_evelyn\\_sibley/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/lampman_evelyn_sibley/).

translated into work, publishing 5 cookbooks, beginning with *ReMARKable Recipes* in 1966.<sup>202</sup>

Ursula K. Le Guin, acclaimed science fiction author and poet, began her writing career in the late 1950s while raising her three children with husband and historian Charles. Her first published works were poems, but by the early 1960s she had moved into science fiction, publishing *Rocannon's World* in 1966.<sup>203</sup> Her novel *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) won her both the Hugo and Nebula awards for best novel, the first woman to win either award.

In the realm of art, Eunice Parsons taught composition and printmaking at Portland Museum Art School from the late 1950s until 1979.<sup>204</sup> But outside her teaching role, she was a painter, tilemaker, and printmaker best known for collages. She has created much of her work in her attic studio in Portland. A modernist sculptor with Jewish roots, Hilda Deutch Morris also taught art at the Portland Museum Art School after her and her husband Carl, also an artist, moved to Portland in 1941. The couple built their home and studio in southwest Portland from salvaged materials followed the 1948 flood in Vanport.<sup>205</sup>

For performance art, Gracie Hansen was recruited from the Seattle-Tacoma area by hotelier Harvey Dick to entertain at his Hoyt Hotel in Portland. Dick renovated the hotel's 5,000-square foot parking garage into a 500-set dinner theater, which opened as Gracie Hansen's Roaring 20s Room



Oregon Secretary of State Mark Hatfield and his fiancée, Antoinette Kuzmanich, were in Salem Sunday for services at First Baptist Church where he is moderator. They plan to be married this summer. She is counsellor for women at Portland State College. (Story on page 7)

*Antoinette Kuzmanich (later Hatfield) pictured with her then-fiance, Oregon Secretary of State Mark Hatfield, in 1957. The Oregon Statesman, November 11, 1957, page 1.*

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202. In Salem, the Hatfields lived at 883 High Street SE. Maureen Flanagan Battistella, "Antoinette Marie Kuzmanich Hatfield (1929–)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, March 15, 2023), <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/hatfield-teas/>.

203. The *Left Hand of Darkness* is considered Le Guin's first ground-breaking work in the genre. Le Guin wrote from home, in her study at 3321 NW Thurman Street in Northwest Portland. Molly Gloss, "Ursula K. Le Guin (1929–2018)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, June 30, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/le\\_guin\\_ursula\\_1929/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/le_guin_ursula_1929/).

204. Jennifer Antonson, "Eunice Lulu Parsons (1916–)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, July 26, 2023), <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/parsons-eunice/>.

205. Joaquin Dollar and Stacey Fletcher, "Hilda Morris (1911-1991)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, June 21, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/morris\\_hilda/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/morris_hilda/).



*Woman picking strawberries, 1966.  
Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.*

in the mid-1960s. She graced the stage at the Hoyt Hotel until February 1971.<sup>206</sup>

## Context-Associated Property Types

Resources significant for their association with this context, Fight for Equality and a Place in the Workforce: 1946–1967, may belong to any property type described in chapter 3 “Associated Property Types,” provided the resource maintains a significant association with a notable event, figure, or trend described in this context. For example, resources belonging to the Commerce category of properties may be significant for their associations with notable women in Oregon’s workforce or for their association with groups of women who consistently worked in or operated businesses out of those resources. Examples may include:

- Professional office buildings,
- Health care clinics,
- Agricultural properties,
- Residences with a studio and/or office space,
- Schools, and
- Department stores.

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206. Donnie/Don Horn, “Gracie Diana Hansen (1922-1985),” in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, March 9, 2023), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/hansen\\_gracie/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/hansen_gracie/).



# PUSH FOR EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS AND SECOND WAVE FEMINISM: 1968–1990

In 1968, the Governor’s Committee on the Status of Women reported that regulations toward women employees were outdated and paternalistic. The committee continued to work through the 1970s; its efforts included analyzing the legal status of women and men under existing Oregon statutes and working towards fuller employment opportunities for women. The committee’s studies reflected work happening throughout the country, particularly with the rise of second wave feminism. Feminist legal scholars like Ruth Bader Ginsburg were re-evaluating the validity and efficacy of single-sex protectionism, like *Muller v. Oregon* (1908), by feminist legal scholars like Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments in 1972 prohibiting sex-based discrimination in any school or any other education program that receives funding from the federal government, expanding educational access to women.

However, even with the civil rights victories of the 1960s, there remained no statewide protections for LGBTQ workers for many years. In 1974 Portland was the first city in Oregon to adopt civil rights protections for lesbian and gay residents and ban anti-gay discrimination for city jobs. Responding in part to the discrimination they faced, groups of lesbian women formed separatist communities in southwest Oregon as part of the back-to-the-land movement, establishing places to live that reflected their own ideals of equality and citizenship. The Oregon Supreme Court ruling in *Gunther v. Washington County* expanded equal pay for equal work, further solidifying the rights of women as workers. Women continued to achieve greater positions of power in employment and elected office in the state during this period, which ends with the election of Oregon’s first female governor, Barbara Roberts, in 1990.

## Oregon’s Female Population and Workforce

Between 1970 and 1990, the number of women working in Oregon continued to rise, comprising nearly 50 percent of the workforce in the state by the end of the 20th century. By 1970, women made up 40.5 percent of the workforce in Oregon—the U.S. Census reported 310,861 women working in the state. Of those working women, 302,684 were White, 3,996 were Black,



*Equal Rights Amendment Rally in Eugene, 1981. Oregon Daily Emerald, July 2, 1981.*

and 3,966 were Spanish language speakers. In a separate census report focused solely on Native Americans (categorized as American Indians), 1,506 of working women in Oregon in 1970 were Native American.<sup>207</sup> Only 87 Black women worked outside of urban areas.<sup>208</sup> The number of Native American women working in urban areas had increased by this year, with 928 in urban areas versus 528 in rural areas.<sup>209</sup>

The 1970 U.S. Census also provided clearer categories of professions and reported that the profession with the highest number of women working in it, 35 percent, was the clerical field (e.g., secretaries, stenographers, typists, bookkeepers, and other similar workers). This was followed by service work (e.g., cleaning, food, health, personal, and similar) at 20 percent and then professional and technical work (e.g., nurses, health workers besides nurses, teachers, and technicians) at 16 percent.

For Black women in 1970, these numbers were different: The highest percentage of Black women were in service work at nearly 31 percent, followed by clerical work at just under 30 percent, and manufacturing at 12 percent.<sup>210</sup>

As more women moved into the workforce, more women also became business owners. The U.S. Census Bureau

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207. Table 4. Economic Characteristics of the Indian Population by Urban and Rural Residence: 1970, 33, in U.S. Department of Commerce, “American Indians: 1970 Census Population Subject Report” (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1973), <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/42043783v2p1d1gch2.pdf>.

208. Table 53. Employment Status by Race, Sex, and Urban and Rural Residence: 1970, 39-141, [https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1970/population-volume-1/1970a\\_or-05.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1970/population-volume-1/1970a_or-05.pdf) (accessed March 7, 2024).

209. Table 4. Economic Characteristics of the Indian Population by Urban and Rural Residence: 1970, 33, in U.S. Department of Commerce, “American Indians: 1970 Census Population Subject Report.”

210. Only 7 percent of White women in Oregon worked in manufacturing in 1970. Table 54. Occupation of Employed Persons by Race, for Urban and Rural Residence: 1970, 39-143, [https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1970/population-volume-1/1970a\\_or-05.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1970/population-volume-1/1970a_or-05.pdf) (accessed March 7, 2024).

began tracking this data released its first report on woman-owned businesses in 1972. The study confirmed that women owned 4,928 businesses in Oregon.<sup>211</sup> Of those 4,928 firms, only 103 were owned by minority women.<sup>212</sup> The majority of these businesses were retail or service related. The next study was published in 1977 and showed a steady increase in the number of woman-owned businesses in Oregon with a total of 10,205 businesses, still primarily retail and service-oriented.<sup>213</sup>

The number of women working in Oregon in 1980 increased to 516,531, comprising 41.5 percent of the total workforce in the state, according to the 1980 U.S. Census.<sup>214</sup> The professional categories were far more specific in the 1980 U.S. Census. The professional category with the greatest number of women employees by 1980 was technical, sales, and administrative support—which included clerical work—at 45 percent of the female workforce, followed by the managerial and professional specialty occupations (e.g., executives, managers, teachers, engineers, scientists) at 22 percent.<sup>215</sup> By 1980, more than 50 percent of women in Oregon over the age of 16 were in the workforce. The number of Native American women working in Oregon had increased significantly to 4,903 by 1980.<sup>216</sup>



*Secretary of State Norma Paulus.*  
*Oregon Daily Emerald, May 27, 1977, 7.*

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211. Only 701 of those 4,928 businesses had paid employees. U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Minority Business Enterprise, and U.S. Bureau of the Census, “Women-Owned Businesses, 1972” (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976),

212. Table 11 on page 258 in U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Minority Business Enterprise, and U.S. Bureau of the Census, “Women-Owned Businesses, 1972.”

213. Table 2 on 38 in U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, “Women-Owned Businesses, 1977” (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980).

214. “Table 67. Labor Force Characteristics: 1980,” on page 39-44 in U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, “General Social and Economic Characteristics: Oregon,” 1980 Census of Population (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983).

215. “Table 68. Occupation of Employed Persons: 1980,” on page 39-45 in U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, “General Social and Economic Characteristics: Oregon.”

216. Table 10. Labor Force Characteristics of Selected American Indian Tribes for States: 1980, 551, in U.S. Department of Commerce, “1980 Census of Population, Subject Reports, Characteristics of American Indians by Tribes and Selected Areas: 1980” (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1989), [https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1980/1980censusofpopu80211unse\\_bw.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1980/1980censusofpopu80211unse_bw.pdf).





*Striking nurses at Sacred Heart Hospital, Eugene. Oregon Daily Emerald, October 7, 1980, Page 6.*

By 1990, women working in Oregon comprised 44.8 percent of the workforce in the state, with 632,407 women working according to the 1990 U.S. Census.<sup>217</sup> As in the previous decade, in 1990, the technical, sales, and administrative support occupations continued to be the category with the highest number of women at 41.8 percent of the female

workforce, following again by managerial and professional specialty occupations at 27.8 percent.<sup>218</sup> Prime industries for women workers included retail, teaching, and healthcare.

## Legal and Labor Framework

This historic context begins in 1968, the year the Governor's Committee on the Status of Women released their second major report. This report provided a strong critique of Oregon's existing labor regulations related to working women:

*Even a casual examination of protective labor legislation and regulations in Oregon reveals an outmoded paternalistic attitude toward women employees. ... Women employees should be classed as adult employees and should not be*

217. "Table 24. Labor Force Characteristics: 1990," on page 48 in U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Social and Economic Characteristics, Oregon," Census 1990 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993).

218. "Table 25. Occupation of Employed Persons: 1990," on page 49 in U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Social and Economic Characteristics, Oregon."

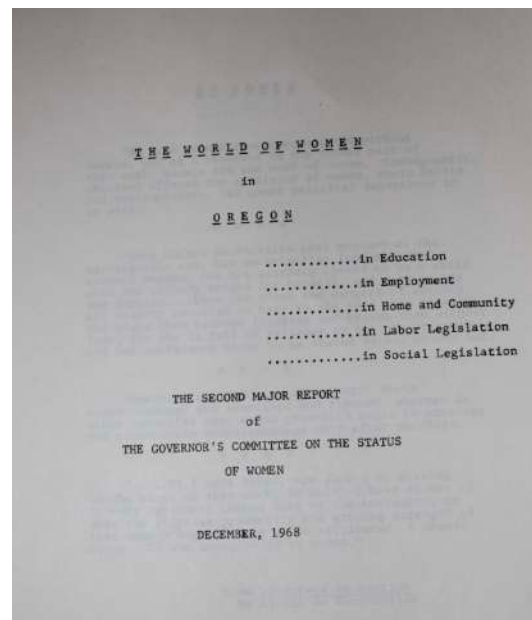
*subjected to regulations applicable to children, the aged, and the physically handicapped.*<sup>219</sup>

By the time the 1968 report was released, women in Oregon were employed in every one of the 479 occupations listed in the 1960 census. However, they were still largely working in the fields that they had always worked, and making less money than their male counterparts. The 1968 report from the Governor's Committee on the Status of Women further noted:

*Since 1947, there has been an almost continuous decline in the percentage of all professional, technical, and allied workers who are women. In contrast, women constitute a considerably larger proportion of those in service and clerical jobs. In 1947 they represented 44 percent of all service workers, but today the percentage is 54 percent. Similarly, over the same period there has been an increase in their proportion in the clerical field from 60 to 70 percent.*<sup>220</sup>

The research undertaken by the Employment Sub-Committee within the Governor's Committee on the Status of Women discovered, in comparing the median earnings of men and women employed (full-time and year-round), that women in 1963 received only 59 percent of the wages paid to men. Private household work remained a profession largely held by women—the 1960 U.S. Census identified 97 percent of the workers in this field as women.<sup>221</sup> In 1940, there were 11,405 private household workers in Oregon; 9,497 in 1950; and 13,740 in 1960. The 1968 report noted that workers within this field were socio-economically depressed as they were often only employed part-time, paid marginal wages, and the nature of their work exempted it from most labor protection laws.

Another key element identified in the 1968 report was the cost of childcare and the impact on working mothers and families. In 1968, there were 122 licensed day care centers in Oregon, with 25 located in Portland. The counties with the



The World of Women in Oregon, title page.

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219. The Governor's Committee on the Status of Women, "The World of Women in Oregon" (Salem, OR, December 1968), 57.

220. The Governor's Committee on the Status of Women, "The World of Women in Oregon," 37.

221. The Governor's Committee on the Status of Women, "The World of Women in Oregon," 51.

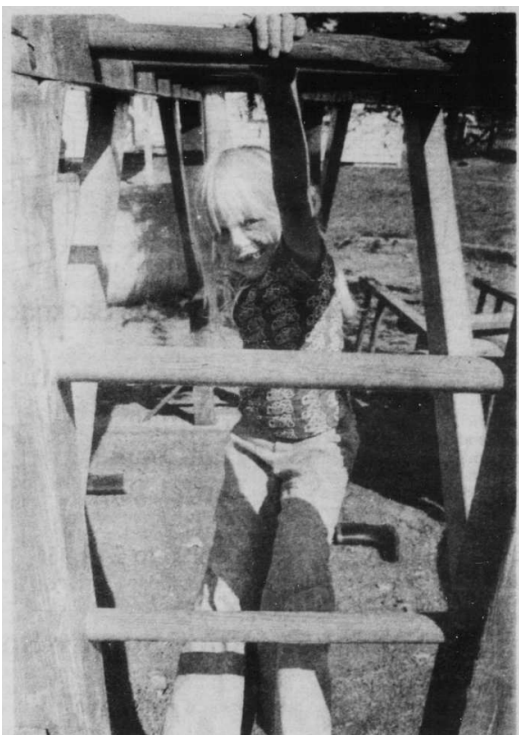


Photo by Eric Boekelheide  
Having a swinging time is Michelle, one of the many children of University students who stay at childcare centers while their parents are in school. Two campus-area agencies, the Child Care and Development Center and the EMU Childcare center, offer such services.

*Childcare center at University of Oregon. Oregon Daily Emerald, September 22, 1977, Section B, Page 8.*

highest numbers of day care centers were Multnomah (13), Washington (17), and Marion (17). Many counties had zero licensed day care facilities— this does not mean that they did not exist, but that they were not licensed by the State Department of Health.<sup>222</sup>

The report specified a separate kind of childcare, family day care, in which three or fewer children were managed by people other than their parents or guardians within a home setting. Since family day cares were not licensed by the state—Oregon was one of only a few states that did not license them—the report noted that they were not eligible Child Welfare Service funds.<sup>223</sup>

The Oregon Legislature acknowledged the impact of pregnancy and childbirth on women workers when they passed a law requiring employers to pay women sick leave for work absences due to childbirth in 1971, and unemployment pay due to pregnancy was authorized in 1973.<sup>224</sup> However, the new laws were largely unenforced and by 1974, only an estimated one percent of the state's 5,000 public and private employers observed the legal mandate.<sup>225</sup>

Shortly after the release of the 1968 report from the Governor's Committee on the Status of Women, the first sex discrimination case in Oregon hit the courts, filed by Diana Richards in 1969. Richards, an employee at Griffith Rubber Mills in Portland, accused her employer of not promoting her to press operator due to her gender.<sup>226</sup> Richards' case was upheld by the U.S. District Court via enforcement of Title VII of

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222. Counties without any licensed day care centers in 1968 were Baker, Crook, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Lake, Lincoln, Morrow, Sherman, Tillamook, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, and Wheeler. The Governor's Committee on the Status of Women, "The World of Women in Oregon," 47.

223. Family day care likely occurred in an individual's home, and it is unclear how many of these existed or still exist as they are not licensed and likely not functioning as businesses with licenses or taxes, even though the women performing this work are typically earning wages. Report, 49.

224. John Guernsey, "Few Employers Give Pregnancy Sick Leave," *The Oregonian*, May 1, 1974, 15.

225. Guernsey, "Few Employers Give Pregnancy Sick Leave," 15.

226. Interestingly, Griffith Rubber Mills, still a family-owned business, is now a certified woman-owned business. Mercier, "Breadwinning, Equity, and Solidarity: Labor Feminism in Oregon, 1945–1970," 30.



the Civil Rights Act of 1964.<sup>227</sup> However, the court noted that Griffith Rubber Mills had not violated Oregon state law and union contract regulations, which prohibited women from lifting more than 30 pounds in the workplace—demonstrating the discriminatory nature of protective legislation.

Other examples of women workers fighting back against protective legislation and union regulations in the state include a 1965 strike by the Local 1188 of the Retail Clerks Union in Coos Bay to protest pay inequities in grocery stores, which particularly used distinctions between “light and heavy duty” to prevent women from earning higher wages. The union later struck Safeway stores around Oregon and a joint lawsuit was filed against Safeway in U.S. District Court in 1970. Rather than drawing out a trial, Safeway chose to voluntarily end its company’s gendered job classifications in 1971. The impact of this decision in Oregon was mostly felt in counties outside of the greater Portland area, where women were making 20 cents less an hour than their male coworkers.<sup>228</sup>

Work to protect women’s rights as workers was still needed in Oregon during this period. After passage of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, with its Title VII prohibiting employment discrimination based on sex, Oregon’s Bureau of Labor established an advisory committee to help develop policies to address the issue of sex discrimination in Oregon workplaces. The advisory committee did determine that Oregon’s protective standards for women were discriminatory, and by 1970 recommended a woman be hired to oversee the BOL’s efforts to oversee these efforts. This aligned with the Oregon Legislature adding a prohibition against sex discrimination in employment to the state’s Human Rights Laws. The BOL established the Women’s Equal Employment Opportunity program later that year and Eleanor S. Meyers, then Executive Director of the Portland YWCA, was hired as the program’s first executive director. According to local newspaper coverage, Meyer’s appointment was “the first state



*Eleanor S. Meyers. Oregon Labor Press, October 2, 1970, page 2.*

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227. Title VII prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin.

228. “Impact of Safeway Equal Pay Policy Cited,” *The Oregonian*, April 14, 1971, 17.



Women athletes, University of Oregon.  
Courtesy University of Oregon.

executive in the nation specifically assigned to securing equal employment opportunity for women.”<sup>229</sup>

Concurrently with the release of the 1968 report from the Governor’s Committee on the Status of Women, there was significant women’s activism across the nation and in the state of Oregon. The BOL, by 1972, had developed guidelines for employers to eliminate discrimination against women workers—including hiring practices, wages, and promotional opportunities. A report from this period from the BOL stated, “Women, in general, will no longer accept a secondary role in the world of work.”<sup>230</sup> In 1972, Congress passed the Education Amendments of 1972, which contained a critical piece of legislation related to sex discrimination—Title IX.<sup>231</sup> Prior to the passage of Title IX, higher education institutions could legally prevent women from enrolling in certain degree fields and some, if not many, institutions did just this. The National Women’s History Museum writes that the impact of this exclusion has had lasting impacts on women in the workforce, stating:

*This effectively maintained a pipeline of women towards a few, female-dominated professions, including teaching. While today, all major fields are open to women, there remains a distinct gender imbalance in undergraduate majors.*<sup>232</sup>

Oregon was no different from other states in the nation with this issue. However, 13 women faculty members in Oregon’s public education institutions, later joined by nine more women, filed a class-action suit against the Oregon State Board of Higher Education in 1980. The suit, known as *Penk et al. v. the*

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229. “Oregon Names First Equal Employment Executive for Women,” *The Oregonian*, August 27, 1970, sec. 2, 20. Eleanor Meyers, who lived on a farm outside Wilsonville, was selected for experience in both labor and management, having worked as a supply checker, secretary, and waitress before moving into nonprofit management.

230. Bussel, “BOLI: 120 Years of Service to Working Oregonians,” 37.

231. The Education Amendments of 1972 were amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The amendments are best known for Title IX, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex in educational institutions receiving federal financial assistance.

232. “Why Are So Many Teachers Women?,” National Women’s History Museum, August 17, 2017, <https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/why-are-so-many-teachers-women>.

*Oregon State Board of Higher Education*, was the first class-action suit against a statewide system in the entire country.<sup>233</sup> The plaintiffs represented 2,200 women in Oregon's eight colleges and universities and sought \$33.1 million in back pay, alleging the Board of Higher Education paid women faculty members nine to 10 percent less per year than their male counterparts with comparable duties and qualifications.<sup>234</sup>

The plaintiffs also sought a resolution to systemic inequities in promotion, tenure, and professional responsibilities between men and women in higher education. The suit had an early victory in October 1981 when Judge Helen Frye certified the plaintiffs as a class. Despite meeting all the prerequisites for a class-action suit, the suit did not go to trial until February 1984. And there were two attempts by the defendants (the state and their attorneys) to disqualify Judge Helen Frye from presiding over the trial. In his opening statement as the plaintiffs' attorney, Don Willner told the court that women faculty members in the U.S. were paid on average 15 percent less than men, but that in the state of Oregon, they were paid 30 percent less.<sup>235</sup> After the months-long trial concluded, Judge Frye delivered a 487-page opinion in February 1985 and sided with the defendants, prompting the plaintiffs to file an appeal to the U.S. District Court of Appeals; unfortunately the plaintiffs did not succeed with their appeal. However, the years-long effort generated public support and interest, including from state legislators, related to the discrimination faced by women in the workplace.

The rise of second wave feminism, the passage of Title IX, and dedicated efforts by the Oregon BOL to increase



Photo by David Corey

Jane Gray, a University biology professor and a plaintiff in a class-action sex discrimination suit, leafs through a hefty, 57-page questionnaire from a Philadelphia law firm.

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233. The discontent over unfair treatment for women faculty began long before this class-action suit. Seven women from Western Oregon State College filed a suit, *Hein v. WOSC*, in 1979 alleging the college violated the Equal Pay Act. Women from other campuses began banding together, forming Committee W in fall 1979, and confirmed system-wide inequities in Oregon's higher education institutions. In order to better support the *Hein v. WOSC* suit and better advocate for other women faculty, a statewide committee was formed, Faculty Women for Equity (FEW), to pursue a class-action suit—the resulting *Penk et al. v. the Oregon State Board of Higher Education*. For more information about this important suit and the key players, please read Elizabeth Lindeman Leonard's article "Faculty Women for Equity: A Class-Action Suit against the State of Oregon."

234. Elizabeth Lindeman Leonard, "Faculty Women for Equity: A Class-Action Suit against the State of Oregon," *Affilia* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 6.

235. Leonard, "Faculty Women for Equity: A Class-Action Suit against the State of Oregon," 11.

*Jane Gray, a plaintiff in Penk et al. v. the Oregon State Board of Higher Education, Oregon Daily Emerald, April 27, 1982, page 1.*





Images from the Oregon Blue Book, courtesy of the Oregon State Archives

*The eleven female members of the 1973 Oregon legislative session. Courtesy Oregon State Archives.*

employment opportunities for women coincided with an increase of Oregon women in politics. Several new women were elected to the Oregon Legislature in 1972, with 11 women elected in total.<sup>236</sup> These legislators formed a strong bipartisan coalition and worked to pass a series of feminist bills in the 1973 legislative session, 11 bills in total. Nearly half of the women legislators were in their first term and their successful efforts were unprecedented. The labor of these women legislators and their colleagues resulted in the state of Oregon having by 1977, according to lobbyist and later politician Gretchen Kefoury, “the most progressive women’s legislative accomplishments in the country.”<sup>237</sup> Oregon ranked ninth in the nation for women’s representation in state legislatures in 1977.<sup>238</sup> More women were elected in the following years, including Gretchen Kefoury<sup>239</sup> and Mae Yih (born Chih Feng Dunn), who was the first Chinese-born woman in the U.S. to be elected to

236. The 11 women elected to the 1973 Oregon Legislature were Senators Betty Browne and Betty Roberts and Representatives Mary Burrows, Peg Dereli, Nancie Fadeley, Vera Katz, Norma Paulus, Grace Peck, Mary Rieke, Mary Roberts, and Pat Whiting. Vera Katz served in the Oregon House from 1973-1990 and was the first woman Speaker of the House of Representatives; Norma Paulus served in the Oregon House from 1970-1975; Nancie Fadeley served in the Oregon House of Representatives from 1971-1981; Mary Whitelaw Rieke served in the Oregon House of Representatives from 1970 until her death in 1978.

237. Tara Watson and Melody Rose, “She Flies With Her Own Wings,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 111, no. 1 (2010): 38–63.

238. *Ibid.*, 60.

239. Gretchen Kefoury served in the Oregon House from 1977–1982.

a state legislative chamber.<sup>240</sup> Several of the 1970s women legislators went on to other positions of power in Oregon politics, such as Vera Katz (the first woman Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives), Betty Roberts (Court of Appeals, Judge, and Oregon Supreme Court, Justice), Mae Yih (first woman to serve as president pro tempore of the Oregon Senate) and Mary Wendy Roberts (Commissioner of Labor and Industries, first woman to hold the position, 1979–1995).<sup>241</sup>

The efforts of women legislators in the 1970s and into the 1980s—from both sides of the aisle, urban and rural—propelled women’s rights in the state, including within the workforce. Working with the Governor’s Commission on the Status of Women, the Oregon Council on Women’s Equality, the Oregon Women’s Political Caucus, the Women’s Rights Coalition, and the Women’s Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, Oregon’s women legislators worked to prohibit discrimination of women in employment and retirement and in public accommodations and in higher education. Key legislation passed during this period opened credit access for women, addressed domestic violence, and identified pregnancy leave as a benefit. During this period, White men continued to occupy the most seats in the Oregon Legislature, and the earliest women to serve in the legislature were all White. Key BIPOC<sup>242</sup> women legislators elected in the 1970s and 1980s include Mae Yih (elected to the State House in 1976 and State Senate in 1982) and Margaret Louise Carter (the first Black woman elected to the Oregon State Legislature upon her election to the State House in 1984 and the first Black president pro tempore in the State Senate). The first Native American to serve in the Oregon State Legislature was a woman, Jacqueline S. Taylor, and she was not elected until 1990.

A key piece of federal legislation passed during this time that impacted women, both in and out of the workforce, was the 1974 passage of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA). With this legislation, Congress made it illegal for creditors to discriminate against credit applicants based on sex or marital status, as well as race, color, religion, national origin, or age.

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240. Kerry Tymchuk, “Mae Yih (1928–),” in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, May 18, 2023), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/yih\\_mae/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/yih_mae/).

241. Watson and Rose, “She Flies With Her Own Wings,” 59.

242. BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Color.



*Margaret Louise Carter, Portland Observer, January 9, 1985, Page 11.*



*Mae Yih. Courtesy Barnard College.*



*Barbara Roberts. Courtesy Oregon Women's History Consortium.*

This act gave women the ability to apply for credit cards or loans in their own name without a male co-signer.<sup>243</sup>

Women in leadership roles in state agencies, like women legislators in the state, worked to prohibit discrimination against women in the workforce. The BOL actively worked to implement the affirmative action guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Labor. In 1979, Mary Wendy Roberts was appointed Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor, the first woman to hold the position. During her tenure, BOL became the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). Roberts' time with BOLI was marked by robust enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, with particularly emphasis on women, minorities, and people with disabilities. In 1985, an appeals court upheld a ruling by Roberts that found the City of Roseburg was paying a female employee, Debra Mobley, less than her male colleagues doing similar work.<sup>244</sup>

In 1984, Barbara K. Roberts was elected as Oregon Secretary of State, the second woman to hold the position after Normal Paulus. She spent one and a half terms as secretary of state before running for governor. Roberts' gubernatorial campaign was a success and in 1990 she became the first woman elected to the state's highest executive office.<sup>245</sup> With Roberts' election and subsequent service, women of Oregon reached a new level of power and authority in the state—women were working at every level of employment in the state of Oregon. After only one term, Roberts chose not to run for re-election and another woman would not sit in the governor's office for another two decades with Kate Brown's election in 2014.<sup>246</sup> Brown was succeeded by another woman, Tina Kotek, was elected in 2022 and began her first term in 2023. Kotek is the first openly lesbian

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243. Jessie Kratz, "On the Basis of Sex: Equal Credit Opportunities," National Archives: Pieces of History (blog), March 22, 2023, <https://prologue.blogs.archives.gov/2023/03/22/on-the-basis-of-sex-equal-credit-opportunities/>.

244. Bussel, "BOLI: 120 Years of Service to Working Oregonians," 48.

245. Heather Burmeister, "Barbara Kay Roberts (1936–)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, May 4, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/roberts\\_barbara/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/roberts_barbara/).

246. Governor Kate Brown served two terms as governor between 2015 and 2023.



governor in Oregon history and, along with Maura Healey of Massachusetts, also elected in 2022, one of only two openly lesbian governors elected in the entire nation.<sup>247</sup>

## Where Oregon Women Worked

Women continued to work in manufacturing, agriculture, and other trades in Oregon during this time. Mechanization decreased the number of employees needed overall in some agricultural pursuits; however, hand-picked crops still relied on labor—primarily men and women of color, many of them immigrants.

The supply of natural resources also changed the number and types of jobs available to women (or any workers) during this period. For example, by 1970, there were only six canneries left on the Columbia River and the last major cannery on the Columbia, the Bumble Bee facility at Astoria, closed in 1980.<sup>248</sup>

Women farmers in the Willamette Valley established the Oregon Women for Agriculture (OWA) in 1969 to address regulatory concerns in the grass and seed industry; Mary Holzapfel was the founder and first president. Today, the organization focuses on nearly all aspects of agriculture. Women and men of Mexican descent continued to grow as the primary farm laborers in the state during this period.<sup>249</sup> Grace Dinsdale converted her family's dairy farm to Blooming Nursery in 1981—which grew to a 130-acre nursery in Cornelius and one of the leading growers of perennials in the Pacific Northwest.<sup>250</sup>

An interesting counterpoint within agriculture in Oregon was the establishment of a back-to-the-land movement by lesbian women. The largest back-to-the-land communities in



*Maria Cavasos and her family at a migrant labor camp. Photographed by Priscilla Carrasco. Courtesy Valley Migrant League, Oregon Historical Society.*

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247. "Governor of Oregon : Meet the Governor : State of Oregon," Office of Oregon Governor Tina Kotek, accessed March 22, 2024, <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/pages/meet-the-governor.aspx>.

248. Harrison, "Canneries."

249. Stephens piece on the history of the Pineros y Campesinos Unidos (Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United, or PCUN) is a good start for additional research into this topic, from understanding labor camps and where women laborers fit within this field of work.

250. Jim LeMonds, "A Perennial Powerhouse," *Digger*, December 2008, [https://bloomingnursery.com/downloads/OANArticle\\_12-08.pdf](https://bloomingnursery.com/downloads/OANArticle_12-08.pdf).



*Full Moon Rising crew. Courtesy Outlaws and Outliers exhibit, University of Oregon.*



*Teacher (Mrs. Gardner) and students ride the escalator on a field trip to the Portland International Airport, 1965. Courtesy Valley Migrant League, Oregon Historical Society.*

the state were established in southern Oregon. According to historian Heather Burmeister, lesbian back-to-the-land movements, like other back-to-the-land movements, “idealized farm labor and the rural community of the past.”<sup>251</sup> The 1970s back-to-the-land movements emphasized maximizing the fruits of one’s labor, rather than earning wages. However, despite this perspective, women still worked at these communities,

although not in the strict sense of “wage labor” as defined by this study.<sup>252</sup>

In the early 1970s, Jerry Rust, John Sundquist, and John Corbin founded a reforestation co-operative in Lane County, which became known as the Hoedads after the planting tool.<sup>253</sup> Although founded by men, women comprised 25 percent of Hoedad crew worker-owners—a striking number in an industry still dominated by men. Each Hoedad crew had its own theme, and the theme of the all-lesbian crew Full Moon Rising was one of female empowerment.<sup>254</sup>

For women earning wages in Oregon, though, there continued to be highly gendered job categories, despite advances in legislation and education. Clerical work, in particular, was one of those categories. By 1980, 80 percent of all clerical jobs in the United States were held by women; a statistic that steadily rose every year from just over 60

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251. Heather Burmeister, “Women’s Lands in Southern Oregon: Jean Mountaingrove and Bethroot Gwynn Tell Their Stories,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 115, no. 1 (2014): 60–89, <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregon-histq.115.1.0060>.

252. This movement in Oregon is worthy of its own discussion and the University of Oregon houses the Southern Oregon Lesbian Land Community Collection which features digital video and audio recordings of Heather Burmeister’s interviews with lesbian community members, including Hawk Madrone (also known as Lynda Blumenthal), Zarod Rominski, Jean Mountaingrove, Bethroot Gwynn, Billie Miracle, J. Tangren Alexander, Jemma T. Crae, and Dana MacDonald.

253. Hoedads Inc. was fully incorporated in 1974.

254. Ester Barkai, “Outliers and Outlaws,” *Eugene Weekly*, February 9, 2023, <https://eugeneweekly.com/2023/02/09/outliers-and-outlaws/>.

percent in 1950.<sup>255</sup> Authors England and Boyer refer to the rapid increase in women clerical workers in the 20th century as the “feminization of clerical work.” The number of women journalists also increased during this period. A landmark 1971 study of journalists found that, nationally, an estimated 22 percent of daily newspaper journalists and nearly 11 percent of television journalists were women. By the next study in 1982, those numbers had increased to 34 percent of staff in daily newspapers and 33 percent in television.<sup>256</sup> Bobbie Doré Foster, a Black woman, founded *The Skanner* newspaper in Portland with her husband Bernie in 1975. As co-owner and founder of the weekly newspaper for the Portland-Vancouver Black community, Bobbie had her hand in all things related to the newspaper, from bookkeeping to writing and editing.

The number of women owning (or co-owning) their own businesses or becoming entrepreneurs increased during this period.<sup>257</sup> Dorothy Bishop Butler Hadley and her husband, Hurtis Hadley, opened the first Black-owned bakery in the state on April 19, 1977, when they purchased and re-opened the Milwaukie Pastry Kitchen.<sup>258</sup> Gertrude (Gert) Lamfrom Boyle took over management of her family’s business, Columbia Sportswear, in 1970 after her husband Neal died of a heart attack. Under Gert’s leadership, Columbia Sportswear became the largest outerwear brand in the United States in the



*Dorothy Bishop Butler Hadley and Hurtis Hadley of Milwaukie Pastry Kitchen.*

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255. England and Boyer, “Women’s Work: The Feminization and Shifting Meanings of Clerical Work,” 309.

256. Christy C. Buckley, “A Pioneering Generation Marked the Path For Women Journalists,” Nieman Reports, accessed April 1, 2024, <https://niemanreports.org/articles/a-pioneering-generation-marked-the-path-for-women-journalists/>.

257. The passage of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) in 1974 made it illegal for women seeking credit to be discriminated against on the basis of sex or marital status.

258. Milwaukie Pastry Kitchen was located at 10607 SE Main Street, Milwaukie. The Hadleys, who had grown up in Vanport, operated the business until 1985, when increasing rents coupled with a suburban development (Clackamas Town Center) challenged their business. Francheska Cannone and S.E. Harris, “Dorothy Hadley (1942–) and Hurtis Hadley (1942–),” in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, December 29, 2023), <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/hadley-dorothy-and-hurtis/>.





*Crescent Construction. Gladys Campbell Papers, Eugene Lesbian History Collection, Coll 914, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries.*

1980s.<sup>259</sup> Kathryn “Devi” Hunt, Marilyn Picariello, Barbara Bryant, and Ellen Greenlaw founded Mother Kali’s Bookstore in Eugene in 1976, a feminist bookstore which became a hub for the lesbian/queer community in the city. The women operated the bookstore as a co-operative and were financed initially by an \$800 inheritance from Greenlaw.<sup>260</sup> The original location for the bookstore was at 11th Avenue and Lawrence Street. Mother Kali’s operated out of three different locations.<sup>261</sup>

Another Eugene business established in the same period was Gertrude’s Silver Eighth Note Cafe, founded as a collective by a group of women in late 1975.<sup>262</sup> Gertrude’s was sold in April 1979 to the Wild Iris. Rena Klein and Susan Baker founded Crescent Construction, the first all-women construction company licensed in Oregon, in the 1970s. The company was an entirely lesbian-owned and operated business.

Creatives also continued to flourish. Marian Wood Kolisch had done secretarial and broadcast work before staying home to raise her two daughters. But after taking a photography workshop with Paul Miller in central Oregon in 1974, she found her calling. By 1976, she had become a professional

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259. Gertrude was born in Augsburg, Germany in 1924. As antisemitism increased after the Nazis rose to power in the 1930s, her family decided to leave the country and settled in Portland in 1937. Her father, Paul Lamfrom, had owned a shirt factory in Germany. After a few years in Portland, Lamfrom purchased Rosenfeld Hat Company and changed the name to Columbia Hat Company. Mary Oberst, “Gertrude Lamfrom Boyle (1924–2019),” in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, March 6, 2024), <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/boyle-gert/>.

260. Judith L. Raskin and Linda Long, Oral History Interview with Marilyn Picariello and Kathryn Hunt, August 30, 2018, University of Oregon, [https://uoregon.aviaryplatform.com/collections/1634/collection\\_resources/56367?embed=true](https://uoregon.aviaryplatform.com/collections/1634/collection_resources/56367?embed=true).

261. Another location for Mother Kali’s was at 541 Blair Boulevard, Eugene. The University of Oregon’s Outliers and Outlaws: The Eugene Lesbian Project is a great starting point for additional research into places associated with Eugene’s lesbian community. University of Oregon Women’s and Gender Studies Program, “Outliers and Outlaws: Eugene Lesbian History Project,” accessed May 23, 2024, <https://outliersoutlaws.uoregon.edu/>.

262. “Gertrude’s Cafe Collection (701.001),” Lane County History Museum, accessed May 13, 2024, <https://lchm.pastperfectonline.com/archive/5F039502-3EB0-4863-B89C-222338777166>.

photographer and began a decades long career chronicling the lives of 20th century Oregonians shaping cultural life.<sup>263</sup> Eva Castellanoz, based in Nyssa on the Oregon-Idaho border since 1957, worked in the sugar beet and onion fields as a young woman, but learned how to make coronas or crowns that are fundamental in wedding and quinceañera celebrations. In addition to her art, she is an activist and teacher for Oregon's Latino Community and won a National Heritage Award in 1989.<sup>264</sup>

Lillian Pitt (Warm Springs, Wasco, and Yakama) also took up artistic pursuits after a previous career; back problems caused her to leave her hairdressing profession in the late 1970s. She began taking art classes, with a focus on ceramics, at Mount Hood Community College and is now a Pacific Northwest Native American artist recognized for her work in a range of mediums, from glass to mixed media, clay masks to jewelry. Born on the Warm Springs Reservation in 1944, Pitt has lived in Portland since the early 1960s and her studio is located there.<sup>265</sup> Dancer and choreographer Bonnie Merrill—alongside Jann Dryer McCauley, Catherin Evleshin, and Patricia Wong—established the nonprofit Portland Dance Theater in 1972, the first contemporary dance troupe in the city, and later the Hillside Center for dance instruction.<sup>266</sup>

Science fiction writer Molly Gloss began her career as a teacher before becoming a full-time writer in 1980. Her novella *Outside the Gates* was published in 1986 and followed by *The Jump-Off Creek* in 1989.<sup>267</sup> Jean Auel, Portland-based author of *Clan of the Cave Bear* (1980), launched her writing



*Lillian Pitt, courtesy Lillian Pitt.*

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263. Jennifer Strayer, "Marian Wood Kolisch (1920-2008)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, July 20, 2022), <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/kolisch-marian-wood/>.

264. Joanne Mulcahy, "Eva Castellanoz (1939-)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, November 8, 2023), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/castellanoz\\_eva/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/castellanoz_eva/).

265. Rebecca Dobkins, "Lillian Pitt (1944-)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, March 18, 2024), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/pitt\\_lillian\\_1944\\_/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/pitt_lillian_1944_/); "Lillian Pitt: Native American Artist," accessed April 19, 2024, <https://www.lillianpitt.shop/>.

266. Martha Ullman West, "Bonnie Merrill (1935–2019)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, April 10, 2024), <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/merrill-bonnie/>.

267. John Davies, "Molly Gloss (1944-)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, October 10, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/gloss\\_molly\\_1944\\_/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/gloss_molly_1944_/).



Elizabeth Woody, courtesy Oregon Cultural Trust.

career after previous work as a clerk, circuit board designer, and technical writer; she earned an MBA from the University of Portland in 1976.<sup>268</sup>

Elizabeth Woody (Navajo, Warm Springs, Wasco, Yakama)—niece of Lillian Pitt and her studio manager for a time—published her first book of poetry, *Hand Into Stone*, in 1988, which won her an American Book Award from the Before the Columbus Foundation in 1990.<sup>269</sup>

Although women continued to be the highest percentage of educators in the state and country, some women who had entered the teaching field in the 1960s began to rise to positions of leadership in their schools and districts by the 1970s, including Monita Johnson of North Bend High School (who, after nearly a decade teaching became the first student activities director in 1974, then dean of students in 1979, then vice-principal in 1985, and principal in 1989); Kathleen Hanneman (who served as the first woman principal in the Salem-Keizer School District at McNary High School from 1981 to 1987); and Verna Bailey (hired as Beaverton School district's director of human resources in 1974 before becoming assistant principal at Five Oaks Middle School in 1984).<sup>270</sup> But by the 1988-89 school year, the Oregon School Directory

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268. Eric A. Kimmel, "Jean M. Auel (1936-)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, February 18, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/ael\\_jean\\_m\\_1936\\_/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/ael_jean_m_1936_/).

269. Woody became Oregon Poet Laureate in 2016, the first Native American appointed to the position. Janice Gould, "Elizabeth Woody (1959-)," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, May 26, 2023), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/woody\\_elizabeth/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/woody_elizabeth/).

270. Leland Chapman, "Oregon Women in Educational Administration: Profiles and an Analysis of Upward Career Mobility Factors" (Dissertation, Portland State University, 1989), <https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.1173>; Wendy Owen, "Montclair Elementary Principal Verna Bailey Leaves a Legacy as She Steps Down," *The Oregonian*, May 7, 2013, [https://www.oregonlive.com/beaverton/2013/05/montclair\\_elementary\\_principal.html](https://www.oregonlive.com/beaverton/2013/05/montclair_elementary_principal.html); "Verna Bailey," Legal Defense Fund (blog), accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.naacpldf.org/about-us/scholarship-recipients/verna-bailey/>; "Salem-Keizer's First Woman Principal Remembered at Celebration of Leadership," *Salem Reporter*, October 8, 2021, <https://www.salemreporter.com/2021/10/08/salem-keizers-first-woman-principal-remembered-at-celebration-of-leadership/>; "Kathleen Hanneman Obituary," *The Statesman Journal*, September 25, 2020, <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/statesmanjournal/name/kathleen-hanneman-obituary?id=13329620>; "Kathleen Hanneman," *SK-Beacons*, accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.skbeacons.com/the-honorees/2021-22-honorees/kathleen-hanneman>; "Principal Nominated for West," *Albany Democrat-Herald*, June 10, 1987.





only lists twelve women in superintendent or superintendent-principal positions out of the 304 school districts in the state.

Oregon women were continuing to advance in the workforce in the state entering fields long dominated by men, including the justice system, healthcare, and building and design industries. During the latter part of the 19th century, women—who had previously not been able to vote or serve on a jury—earned law degrees and were working in every area of the legal profession.<sup>271</sup> According to legal historian Janice Dilg, this period of time represents the “2nd generation” of women lawyers who entered law school in the 1960s or began their law careers after the passage of key federal legislation, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX in 1972. Despite these advances, women lawyers in Oregon faced challenges that their male counterparts did not, from lower wages and limitations on gaining partner status in law firms, to pushback

*Fellow judges at the investiture ceremony of Betty Roberts as Associate Justice of the Oregon Supreme Court, 1982. Mercedes Deiz, Circuit Court, Multnomah County; Laurie Smith, District Court, Lane County; Betty Roberts; Jean Lewis, Senior Judge, Circuit Court, Multnomah County; Helen Frye, Federal District Court, Portland; and Kathleen Nachtigal, Circuit Court, Multnomah County. Courtesy Oregon Historical Society Research Library.*

271. Janice Dilg, “From Coverture to Supreme Court Justice: Women Lawyers and Judges in Oregon History,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2012): 361, <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.113.3.0360>.



*Rice spent the majority of her career as a nursing team leader at Kaiser beginning in the 1980s and following her time with Portland Public Schools and the State of Oregon. This early 1990s photo shows Rice (center) with her outpatient surgery team at Kaiser's West Interstate Clinic.*

*Trudy Rice and fellow coworkers at Kaiser's West Interstate Clinic. Courtesy Trudy Rice, Oregon Historical Society.*

on court appearances. Mercedes Diez, the first Black woman admitted to the bar in Oregon in 1960, worked as a trial lawyer before being appointed to the District Court and then winning election to the Circuit Court in 1972. Although the first female judge to serve in Oregon was appointed in 1926 (Mary J. Spurlin), it was a brief stint, and another woman would not serve in the state's judiciary until 1961 with the appointment of Jean Lewis to the Multnomah County Circuit Court. Lewis was followed by Helen Frye's appointment to the Lane County Circuit Court in 1971 (and later commissioning to U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon in 1980) and Betty Roberts' appointment to the Oregon Court of Appeals in 1977 (and later appointment to the Oregon Supreme Court in 1982).<sup>272</sup> The nonprofit professional association Oregon Women Lawyers (OWLS) was incorporated in 1989, which formed after a meeting of three existing organizations of Oregon women attorneys: Queen's Bench, Lane County Women Lawyers, and The Mary Leonard Law Society in Salem. While professional women had made great strides in addressing gender inequities in the 20th century, the continued formation of these professional organizations suggests their work was ongoing.

Healthcare was another industry that saw an increase in women employees across all positions, not just support care or nursing positions, likely the result of marketing efforts in the 1950s as well as the increased access to educational programs with passage of Title IX. Marketing efforts by healthcare educational programs continued during this period, with increased outreach to BIPOC potential students by the 1980s.<sup>273</sup> Gertrude "Trudy" Rice became one of the first Black registered nurses (RN) in Oregon when she graduated from Portland Community College in 1968, one of only two Black women (Lenora Morris) in the program.<sup>274</sup> Rice had previously been a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), but wanted to complete additional training. As a single mother, Rice at one point worked multiple jobs to support her family, working

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272. Dilg, "From Coverture to Supreme Court Justice," 367; Oregon Women Lawyers, "Oregon Women Judges: Quick Facts," n.d., <https://www.oregonwomenlawyers.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Oregon-Women-Judges-Quick-Facts.pdf>.

273. Pamela Pierce, "'There's a Place for You': Oregon Women in the Health Sciences," Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU): Historical Collections and Archives, May 2020, <https://www.ohsu.edu/historical-collections-archives/theres-a-place-you-oregon-women-health-sciences>.

274. Christin Hancock, "Trudy Rice's Story: Nursing and Race in Oregon History," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 114, no. 2 (2013): 204–25.

shifts at a community clinic and at the Holladay Park Hospital in Northeast Portland in addition to her full-time position as a health coordinator for Portland Public Schools.<sup>275</sup> By the 1970s, 95 percent of RNs in Oregon were still White. In 1977, Elizabeth Washington, a Black woman, was the first woman of color appointed to serve on the Oregon State Board of Nursing.<sup>276</sup> The first nurse practitioner in Oregon was Karla Jagow in 1977.<sup>277</sup>

Although women accessed more and higher levels of white-collar professions by the 1970s and 1980s, they also continued to work in blue-collar professions as well and similarly advanced through the ranks. During this period, the state of Oregon through the Bureau of Labor worked to expand apprenticeship opportunities in the state. The agency's Apprenticeship Division was committed to helping women and minorities enter apprenticeship programs, particularly in the building and construction trades.<sup>278</sup> In 1989, four tradeswomen in Oregon founded the Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. (OTI) "on the principles that women can attain economic self-sufficiency by pursuing careers in the construction, manufacturing, mechanical, and utility trades while helping the construction trades industry to build a diverse workforce."<sup>279</sup> They quickly added a fifth to their cohort, and their Founding Sisters Circle was comprised of Connie Ashbrook, Elevator Constructor; Kate Barrett, Carpenter; Melinda Koken, Carpenter; Sandy Hay Magdaleno, Operating Engineer; and Ann Zawaski, Carpenter. OTI, which still exists, placed particular emphasis on recruiting low income and minority women in the greater Portland area. Their organization has sought to increase the number of women working in the trades as historically women have worked in limited numbers in the

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275. Hancock, "Trudy Rice's Story: Nursing and Race in Oregon History," 212.

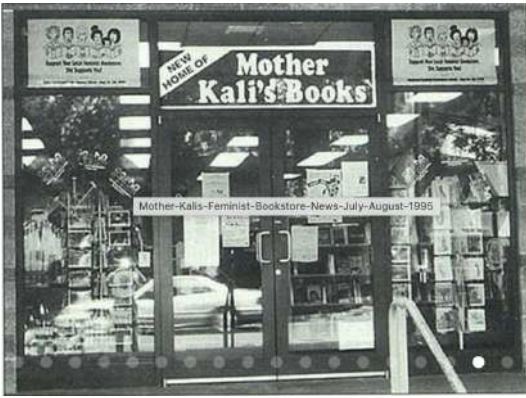
276. Schechter, Patricia. "The Labor of Caring: A History of the Oregon Nurses Association." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 108, no. 1 (2007): 20.

277. Patricia Schechter, "Oregon Nurses Association," in *Oregon Encyclopedia* (Oregon Historical Society, May 26, 2022), [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon\\_nurses\\_association/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon_nurses_association/).

278. Bussel, "BOLI: 120 Years of Service to Working Oregonians," 56.

279. "Mission and History - Oregon Tradeswomen," Oregon Tradeswomen, November 4, 2020, <https://oregontradeswomen.org/mission-and-history/>.





*Mother Kali's Bookstore, 1995. Feminist Bookstore News. From Outliers and Outlaws: The Eugene Lesbian History Project – Digital Exhibit.*

trades with only 2 percent of women working in the trades nationally by 2003.<sup>280</sup>

## Context-Associated Property Types

Resources significant for their association with this context, Push for Equality and Second Wave Feminism: 1968–1990, may belong to any property type described in chapter 3 “Associated Property Types,” provided the resource maintains a significant association with a notable event, figure, or trend described in this context. For example, resources belonging to the Commerce category of properties may be significant for their associations with notable women in Oregon’s workforce or for their association with groups of women who consistently worked in or operated businesses out of those resources. Examples may include:

- Professional office buildings (including offices for professional associations),
- Health care clinics,
- Residences with a studio and/or office space,
- Schools,
- Specialty stores (e.g., bakeries, bookstores), and
- Department stores.

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280. “Oregon Tradeswomen: Mission and History” (California State University, Dominguez Hills, Department of Archives and Special Collections, ca. 2003), <https://digitalcollections.archives.csudh.edu/digital/collection/tradeswomen/id/163/rec/4>.

# 03

## ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

Although this phase of the Oregon Women's History Project did not include survey and inventory, the project team did review known resources associated with women's history and, more specifically, women's labor history. Ultimately, the second phase of this project will refine the associated property types and develop the registration requirements. However, this project team did consider an initial evaluation approach to determine if a property is eligible for listing in the National Register for its association with Oregon Women's Labor History.

In order to be eligible for listing in the National Register, properties (i.e., districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects) must possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, as well as meet at least one of the four Criteria for Evaluation. These criteria require that properties:

- Be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A); or
- Be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past (Criterion B); or
- Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C); or
- Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (Criterion D).

A property eligible for its association with Oregon Women's Labor History must have a significant association with a woman or women involved in labor in the state. A woman's business ownership or being the first woman to participate in a labor activity may be significant, but a nomination must carefully outline why they are significant. Property- and individual-specific research must provide the argument for the significance of the association. Most properties eligible under an Oregon Women's Labor History MPD will be eligible under National Register Criterion A, although a property may be eligible under any of the four criteria. For example, a building designed by a distinguished female architect and also used as her office, is likely eligible under Criterion A for women's history as well as Criterion C for architecture.

In thinking through the types of properties associated with women's labor history in Oregon, women are undeniably associated with all the data categories for functions and uses in National Register Bulletin 16A, "How to complete the National Register Registration Form." However, in reviewing the categories and subcategories, some more easily align themselves with women in the workforce. For example, with the category of "education," women comprised the majority of



*KMED Radio Station, Sparta Building, 12–16 Riverside Avenue North, Medford. Courtesy Oregon Historic Sites Database.*

educators, so for women educators, schools are places of employment and historically female-led workplaces.

The property types identified within this chapter are in no way an exhaustive list and are simply a starting point for consideration. Example properties listed in this chapter have not been surveyed by the project team or been evaluated for retention of integrity. This list will be expanded upon through survey and inventory work to identify and document properties associated with the labor history of women in Oregon. However, through preparation of this historic context, the following seven (7) categories of functions with samples of associated property types (e.g., building, site, structure, object, district) represent the story of women working in Oregon and should inform initial survey work to refine property type identification and develop registration requirements. The data categories for functions and uses in the National Register Bulletin 16A were utilized to classify associated property types. Those categories are:

- **Agriculture** – Women have worked in agriculture, paid and unpaid, throughout Oregon’s history. Agriculture is not just related agricultural fields or subsistence farming, but also includes processing, horticulture, water management use, and storage supporting agriculture. Properties associated with this function include agricultural fields and buildings associated with women farmers and laborers (e.g., orchards, wheatfields, pastures, barns), processing facilities (e.g., canneries, food processing sites, wineries), horticultural facilities (e.g., nurseries, greenhouses, gardens), animal and fishing facilities (e.g. stockyards, hatcheries), irrigation facilities (e.g. canals, dams), and storage (e.g., granaries, silos, warehouses).
- **Commerce** – This is a broad category associated with women working in Oregon and covers a range of different professions and economic classes. Properties associated with this function include businesses (e.g., office buildings, newspaper offices), professional buildings (e.g., law office, engineering office), organizational (e.g., union offices, professional associations), financial (e.g., banks), specialty stores (e.g., bakeries, groceries, clothing stores), department stores, restaurants, and warehouses. Worksites and community places associated with women’s labor issues, as well as the locations of worker strikes or significant protests, fall under this category.



- **Domestic** – Women often worked where they lived, although this historic context does not focus on the unpaid labor women complete in their own homes. Properties associated with this function include single and multiple dwellings, hotels, institutional housing, camps, and secondary structures. The function is related to the property itself where women took in paid work (e.g., sewing, childcare), operated their own business or as professionals (e.g., medical practitioners, women running boarding houses, apartments, beauty shops, artist or writing studios), lived to support their paid labor (e.g., labor camps, nurses' quarters), and completed domestic labor to manage the households of other women and families.
- **Education** – Women, both nationally and in Oregon, dominate the teaching profession in K-12 education and have entered higher education positions in greater numbers since the mid-20th century. Women are educators, educational support workers (e.g., counselors, aides), and administrators (e.g., principals, deans). Women are also researchers in academic fields. In relationship to the historic context of women working in Oregon, these property types are significant for their association with women working, not learning. Property types associated with this function include school buildings (e.g., schoolhouses, high schools, boarding schools, trade schools), colleges (campuses or individual buildings), libraries, and research facilities (e.g., laboratories).
- **Government** – This category is related to women working in government, either as elected or appointed officials or in professional/administrative positions. Many of these types of buildings are likely associated with multiple contexts and areas of significance. Property types associated with this function include city halls, government office buildings, post offices, courthouses, and public works buildings.



*Roseburg Veterans Administration Hospital. Nurses' Quarters, 2010. Photographed by Trent Spurlock. Courtesy Oregon Digital.*



*Diamond Cannery, 620 Columbia Street, Hood River, 1988. Courtesy Oregon State Historic Sites Database.*

- **Health Care** – Oregon women work in all levels of the health care field and have long worked in nursing and other supportive health care positions in the greatest numbers. Property types associated with this function include hospitals (e.g., private, public, medical centers) and clinics (e.g., doctor’s office, dental office, pharmacy).
- **Industry/Processing/Extraction** – While Oregon women have worked in professions associated with industrial property types throughout the period of significance associated with this historic context, it has been in fewer numbers than other categories like Commerce and Agriculture. Property types associated with this function include manufacturing facilities (e.g., mills, factories), waterworks (e.g., reservoir, dam), energy facilities (e.g., power plant, hydroelectric dam), industrial storage, and communications facilities (e.g., telephone company building, television station).

## Agriculture

Agriculture related properties conveying physical and associative qualities related to Oregon Women’s Labor History may occur anywhere in the state where agricultural work occurs. This includes large farming and orchard operations in the Willamette Valley, ranching and hay facilities in Central and Eastern Oregon, nurseries throughout the state, fishing and processing sites along the Oregon Coast and Columbia River, and canning (both fishing and agricultural products) sites throughout the state. A property significant for its agricultural role will not be eligible under the Oregon Women’s Labor History MPD simply because a woman or women worked there. The property must be associated with the working life of a key female agricultural worker (e.g., a woman-owned farm or a cannery associated with the working life of a key unionizer or activist) or be associated with a significant or notable concentration of women workers during the period of significance (e.g., farm where the Women’s Land Army worked during WWII).

Below are a few possible examples, either already in Oregon Historic Sites Database or uncovered in the course of context research:

- Diamond Cannery, 620 Columbia Street, Hood River: Commercial canneries were among the top employers of women in Oregon during the early 20th century, and

Hood River canneries are known to have employed women as seasonal laborers.

- Sebastian-Stewart Fish Company, 1 Ninth St, Astoria: Commercial canneries were among the top employers of women in Oregon during the early 20th century, and fish canneries in Astoria employed women, including Chinese- and Japanese-Americans.
- Blooming Nursery, 3839 SW Golf Course Road, Cornelius: This 130-acre commercial nursery established by Grace Dinsdale in 1981 exemplifies women's entrepreneurial success in a male-dominated industry.



*Helen Bernhardt Bakery, 1717 NE Broadway, Portland. Courtesy Helen Bernhardt Bakery.*

## Commerce

A significant number of properties associated with women working in Oregon will likely be related to commerce. This category of properties includes professional office buildings, major department stores, small shops, and restaurants. A property within this category must be associated with the working life of a key woman in her professional area of expertise (e.g., the Loyalty/Buyers Building at 317 SW Alder Street, Portland, where Mercedes Diaz first practiced law) or be associated with a significant or notable concentration of women workers during the period of significance (e.g., a retail store with a majority of women employees).

Below are a few possible examples, either already in Oregon Historic Sites Database or uncovered in the course of context research:

- Helen Bernhard Bakery, 1717 NE Broadway #1775, Portland: Bakeries are specialty shops where women often worked or supervised others in the 20th century. Helen Bernhard started this business in 1924 as a way to supplement her husband's income.
- Milwaukie Pastry Kitchen, 10607 SE Main Street, Milwaukie: The Milwaukie Pastry Kitchen became the first Black-owned bakery in Oregon when Dorothy Bishop Butler Hadley and Hurtis Hadley purchased and re-opened the business in 1977.

## Domestic

Domestic or residential related properties, while typically associated with personal rather than professional life, are often key properties associated with women's labor history.





*Hatfield, Antoinette Marie Kuzmanich and Mark, House, 883 High Street SE, Salem. Courtesy Oregon Historic Sites Database.*

These can range from single-family residences where women professionals ran their own businesses to boarding houses owned and/or operated by a woman. A residence will not be eligible under the Oregon Women's Labor History MPD simply because a woman lived there. Documentation of the woman (or women) who earned wages within the home is necessary to establish the significance of the property. Properties for residential use built and/or designed by women professionals may be eligible under this MPD even if they are eligible outside of the MPD under Criterion C. The authors of this context recommend that any future nominations submitted for properties designed or built by women architects, engineers, and/or contractors reference this MPD to continue to expand understanding around women's history in Oregon.

Below are a few possible examples, either already in Oregon Historic Sites Database or uncovered in the course of context research:

- Women's Realty Board Demonstration House, 2805 SE Knapp Street: Portland's women realtors commissioned the construction of this residence as a way to promote themselves. It reflects the women's entrepreneurial spirit and effort to work around gender discrimination in the real estate business.
- Multnomah County Hospital Nurses' Quarters, 3037 SW Second Avenue, Portland: This property is an example of housing established specifically for women working as nurses at the Multnomah County Hospital. It illustrates both the large numbers of nurses needed for a hospital and the gendered nature of nursing during the 20th century.
- Hatfield, Antoinette Marie Kuzmanich and Mark, House, 883 High Street SE, Salem: This property is an example of a residence where a woman conducted business. Antoinette Marie Kuzmanich Hatfield, wife of politician Mark Hatfield, was known for her skills as a hostess, which she translated into work, publishing 5 cookbooks. Her Salem home was a key location for her work.
- Castellanoz, Eva, House, 1650 North Third Street, Nyssa: This property is an example of a residence where a woman conducted business. Eva Castellanoz has worked out of her Nyssa home, including production of the crowns she makes for wedding celebrations.

## Education

Nearly every educational property in Oregon will be associated with women's history given the high percentage of educators who are women. A property within this category must be associated with the working life of a key woman in education (e.g., the first school to have a woman principal, a school associated with a highly credentialed and recognized teacher) or demonstrate association with a significant or notable concentration of women workers during the period of significance (e.g., a religious school run by nuns working as educators). Properties associated with education will likely be eligible under other areas of significance beyond women's history (e.g., Criterion A under Education, Criterion C under Architecture); however, the authors of this context recommend that any future nominations submitted for education related properties outline the contributions of women educators in the nominations and reference this MPD to demonstrate the significant role women have played and continue to play in education.

Below are a few possible examples, either already in Oregon Historic Sites Database or uncovered in the course of context research:

- Christie School, 2507 Christie Drive, Lake Oswego: This Catholic-run institution cared for and educated young orphaned girls. It not only played a significant role in educating girls, it also reflects the contributions of women educators.
- La Grande Normal School (now Eastern Oregon University), La Grande: Established as a Normal School, this institution was established to meet the growing demand for a workforce of trained teachers in the early 20th century.
- Marylhurst College (now University), Lake Oswego: Established in the late 19th century, Marylhurst College was the first women's liberal arts college in the Pacific Northwest and is important in Oregon women's educational history.

## Government

As women in Oregon have reached higher levels of authority and power in places of government within the state—at all levels of governance—many government related properties are associated with important women in the state's history. A property within this category must be associated with



*La Grande Normal School, La Grande.  
Courtesy Oregon Historical Society.*



*Lane County Courthouse, 125 East Eighth Avenue, Eugene. Courtesy Docomomo Oregon.*



*St. Elizabeth Hospital, 2365 Fourth Street, Baker City, 1988. Courtesy Oregon Historic Sites Database.*

the working life of a key woman in the government (e.g., the courthouse where the first woman judge in Oregon presided, a campaign office) or demonstrate association with a significant or notable concentration of women workers during the period of significance (e.g., government office building with key women workers or pattern of women employees). Government related properties will likely be eligible under other areas of significance beyond women's history (e.g., Criterion A under Politics/Government, Criterion C under Architecture); however, the authors of this context recommend that any future nominations submitted for government related properties outline the contributions of women legislators, judges, and government officials in the nominations and reference this MPD to demonstrate the significant role women have played and continue to play in Oregon politics and governance.

Below are a few possible examples, either already within Oregon Historic Sites Database or uncovered in the course of context research:

- Lane County Courthouse, 125 East Eighth Avenue, Eugene
- Bureau of Labor & Industries office building, 1800 SW 1st Avenue, Portland

## Health Care

Many of Oregon's health care properties will be associated with working women at some level given that women have long comprised the majority of people working in nursing and supportive care positions. A property within this category must be associated with the working life of a key woman in the health care profession (e.g., the clinic or office where a well-recognized woman healthcare worker spent their career or worked on a significant project) or demonstrate association with a significant or notable concentration of women workers during the period of significance (e.g., a hospital or clinic where many women worked). Healthcare related properties may be eligible under other areas of significance beyond women's history (e.g., Criterion A under Health/Medicine, Criterion C under Architecture); however, the authors of this context recommend that any future nominations submitted for healthcare related properties outline the contributions of women healthcare workers in the nominations and reference this MPD to demonstrate the significant role women have played and continue to play in Oregon medicine and healthcare.



Below are a few possible examples, either already within Oregon Historic Sites Database or uncovered in the course of context research:

- Biswell Clinic, 2790 Main Street, Baker City: This clinic building was established by husband-and-wife doctors, Drs. Roger and Flora Biswell at a time when the number of female doctors was still quite limited.
- St. Elizabeth Hospital, 2365 Fourth Street, Baker City: This institution was run by women—the Catholic Sisters of St. Francis—and had an important educational mission to train nurses.
- Kerr, Albertina, Nursery, 424 NE 22nd Avenue, Portland: This institution provided adoption services and day-care for children of single mothers. It also reflects the significance of Albertina Kerr, an early 20th century advocate for women and children.



*Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Building, 2923 NE 24th Avenue, Portland. Courtesy Oregon Historic Sites Database.*

## Industry/Processing/Extraction

There are industrial and manufacturing properties associated with Oregon's working women present around the state; however, they exist in far fewer numbers than property types associated with the other functions discussed. A property within this function category must be associated with the working life of a key woman in industry or manufacturing (e.g., a property where a key leader worked) or demonstrate association with a significant or notable concentration of women workers during the period of significance (e.g., Kaiser Shipyard, where women worked in large numbers during WWII). This category also covers a category of properties related to women workers that are more white collar in nature, telephone buildings, which are communications facilities. Industrial and manufacturing related properties may be eligible under other areas of significance beyond women's history (i.e., Criterion A under Industry); however, the authors of this context recommend that any future nominations submitted for industrial properties outline the contributions of women workers in the nominations and reference this MPD to demonstrate the lasting contributions women have made within industry in Oregon.

Below are a few possible examples, either already within Oregon Historic Sites Database or uncovered in the course of context research:

- Kay, Thomas, Woolen Mill, 1313 Mill Street SE, Salem: Woolen mills employed large numbers of Oregon women

in the early 20th century. Thomas Kay Woolen Mill was a large employer of women and girls in Salem during the rise of protectionism and subsequent unionization.

- Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Building, 2923 NE 24th Avenue, Portland: A high percentage of telephone company operators and workers in Oregon were women. In 1947, Oregon telephone workers joined a nationwide strike against the company, which was then the largest private employer in the country. This building potentially embodies the important contributions of women telephone operators to labor history.
- KMED Radio Station, Sparta Building, 12–16 Riverside Avenue North, Medford: Already listed in the National Register, the nomination for this property mentions that this was the first radio station owned and operated by a woman, Blanch McBride Virgin. This building's nomination could be amended to include more information about Virgin, her work, and the connection to women's history.

# 04

## CONCLUSION

### SUMMARY

The Oregon SHPO tasked the project team with developing a historic context statement for women's history in Oregon. After reviewing the literature review and preparing an annotated bibliography, it became clear that this context is just one chapter in a broader scope of work to more clearly identify, document, and evaluate properties associated with women's history. With that in mind—as well as the timeframe, scope, and budget for this project—the authors chose to narrow the focus to a specific area of women's history, labor, and a defined time period, 1903–1990.

Women have always worked in Oregon, even if they have not received wages for that work. The idea of work was ever-present in previous histories and studies about women in Oregon, making it a natural starting point for this historic context statement. In order to better focus the historic context statement, provide a broader range of property types associated with women's labor history, and concentrate the efforts of the project team, it became clear it would be most productive to emphasize paid labor. This also allowed the authors to demonstrate the significant strides made by women to enter new career fields and reach key positions of power and decision making.

Even in selecting a more narrowed focus for this study, it was an impossible task to identify all the professions women have held in Oregon during the defined period. Furthermore, researching any one of these jobs on their own would provide rich insight into the lives and work of women in the state. As the authors, we endeavored to provide a broad overview, illustrated with the achievements of individual women and organizations, while not getting lost in deep dive research on any one topic. This means we identified several avenues for future research and consideration, which we will outline below.

Before we discuss recommendations, though, we wanted to identify a common thread that emerged during our research—the tenuous nature of the progress made by and for women in the workforce.

Although the advances working women have made in the last century are remarkable, there is still work to be done. Some labor and workplace reports from the 1960s and 1970s identified obstacles to advancement women faced that still ring true today in 2024. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how fragile career advancement has been for many women across the nation. When schools and childcare providers shuttered their doors during the pandemic's lockdowns, millions of women left the workforce, either because their jobs no longer existed or due to needing to care for their children full-time. A 2023 article published in *Human Rights Magazine* states that “in February





*Strawberry processing, women workers, 1915–1955. OSU Special Collections & Archives Research Center, Oregon State University.*

2021, women’s labor force participation hit a low last seen in 1988, losing an entire generation of gains.”<sup>1</sup> Although the pandemic impacted everyone, it was clear as early as October 2020 that working mothers were bearing the brunt of childcare responsibilities and shortening their work hours or even leaving their jobs.

A 2023 presentation by the U.S. Census Bureau entitled “The Disproportionate Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women in the Workforce” outlines how women experienced more job loss during the pandemic and that the female workforce has been slower to recover than the male

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1. Emily J. Martin, “Women and the Workplace — What We Learned from COVID,” *Human Rights Magazine* 29, no. 1/2: Labor & Employment Rights (October 31, 2023), [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human\\_rights\\_magazine\\_home/labor-and-employment-rights/women-and-the-workplace/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/labor-and-employment-rights/women-and-the-workplace/).

workforce.<sup>2</sup> Industries that employ more women were hit hardest by pandemic job loss—such as leisure and hospitality, retail, education, and health care. Black women and Latina women were also impacted more severely than White women.<sup>3</sup>

Those national statistics align with what happened in Oregon during the pandemic. In Oregon, nearly half (48%) of all the jobs lost in the initial wave of pandemic job loss in 2020 were in leisure and hospitality, service (e.g., hair salons), and private education. According to a July 2021 report by the State of Oregon Employment Department:

*Leisure and hospitality in particular employed more women, more of Oregon's young workers, and more Black, Indigenous, and workers from communities of color than Oregon's economy overall. Other hard-hit sectors also tended to have more women and more low-wage workers.*<sup>4</sup>

It is clear that 2020 and the subsequent pandemic years will be another defining moment in the history of women at work. Ideally, the years that follow will see more than just a repeat of the rebound that occurred for women in the workforce between the end of World War II and 1950, and that the barriers to advancement identified in the mid-century, like access to affordable childcare, will be removed for future generations.

Learning and writing about the generations of women that preceded us in work has been equal parts inspiring and illuminating. And living through the recent historic event of the pandemic, which had such a profound impact on women in the workforce, made the work of writing about working women—the discrimination and struggles, the advancement, and achievements—all the more poignant.

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2. U.S. Census Bureau and Patrick Clapp, “The Disproportionate Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women in the Workforce,” Census.gov, February 14, 2023, <https://www.census.gov/data/academy/webinars/2023/impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-women-in-the-workforce.html>.

3. Martin, “Women and the Workplace — What We Learned from COVID.”

4. State of Oregon Employment Department, “Disparate Impacts of the Pandemic Recession in Oregon,” July 2021, [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/eta/Performance/pdfs/annual\\_economic\\_reports/2021/OR%20Disparate%20Impacts%20of%20the%20Pandemic%20Recession.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/eta/Performance/pdfs/annual_economic_reports/2021/OR%20Disparate%20Impacts%20of%20the%20Pandemic%20Recession.pdf).

## Recommendations

Through the process of establishing the project methodology, conducting the literature review and context research, and writing the historic context statement, several items came up that the SHPO may want to consider for future or more specific research. Those recommendations are as follows:

- Conduct more focused research into women at work in Oregon prior to 1903. For this study, 1903 was utilized as the beginning date for the historic context statement to align with when the protective legislation for women in the workforce in Oregon was passed. This does not mean that women were not at work prior to 1903 and more in-depth research will uncover more specifics about the landscape for working women in the preceding decades.
- Similarly, consider more focused research into working women of color to provide a balanced reflection of Oregon women's experiences. For example, Native American women's experience with wage jobs in the 20th century is a largely unexplored topic that includes the connections between Native women and the textile industry at Pendleton Woolen Mills.
- Closer examination of women's professional and union organizations could better illuminate the workplace inequities and discrimination women have experienced, as well as the efforts taken to address these challenges.
- More focused place-based studies of working women could reveal local patterns that were not uncovered in this statewide study or that run counter to broader trends.
- Consider future studies on the other themes and sub-themes not explored in this historic context (e.g., kinship, transforming the landscape, social reform, and culture and leisure).
- Explore women's history themes through the lens of archaeological investigation to reveal the significant contributions of women who may not otherwise be reflected in the built environment.
- Researching city directories is a recommended early step in revealing places associated with working women. Business directories group information by industry, trade, and business type, which lists the locations of places where women commonly worked (e.g. telephone



companies, boarding houses, and laundries) or lists women by occupation (e.g. nursing, “hem stitching”).

- Completing targeted research of censuses, directories, and ethnic newspapers within defined geographical areas can help identify women of color and their occupations. Beyond these traditional sources, specialized research of recent scholarly publications, archival collections, and oral histories, that are noted in the Annotated Bibliography, can identify places where women of color worked.
- Outreach to local historical organizations could uncover properties associated with working women not revealed through traditional searches. Lines of inquiry could include seeking (1) photographs of women at work, (2) a list of top employers of women in the 20th century, and (3) stories of trailblazing women.

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# APPENDICES

The following items are included within the appendices of this report:

- Annotated Bibliography - This document was prepared as the project team began initial research into possible approaches and methodology.
- List of Known Resources - This list is compiled from the Oregon Historic Sites Database with additions from the authors' own research.
- Timeline of Events - This timeline is drawn from Kimberly Jensen's timeline with additions from the authors' own research.

# ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

In researching women's history in the Pacific Northwest and referencing previous work, notably Sue Armitage's *Shaping the Public Good* and Karen Blair's *Women in Pacific Northwest History*, it became clear that there are many themes that connect with women's history. The themes within this annotated bibliography are derived from the accompanying Oregon Women's History historic context statement. There are two primary themes—work and community/kinship—which are clear threads that seem to underscore any discussion of women's history. In addition to these themes, there are additional themes that are connected to these broader themes. These themes largely cross multiple eras, unless otherwise specified.

For the purposes of this annotated bibliography, citations are grouped under themes which are then organized alphabetically. When a source provides a general overview of women's history without a thematic or topical slant, it is organized under the "General" theme. Historiography-related sources are grouped under the theme of "Historic Context Methodology." A summary of each theme is provided to enhance keyword searches for future researchers.

## Community and Kinship

This theme covers the ways women have consciously and subconsciously formed community—from survival purposes to advancement/betterment. This includes extended family networks as well as racial/ethnic groups, religious groups, neighborhood groups, and clubs/societies.

### Relevant Sources

**Azuma, Eiichiro. "A History of Oregon's Issei, 1880-1952." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 94, no. 4 (1993): 315–67. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20614543>.**

Azuma's article traces the history of Oregon's Issei—or first-generation Japanese Americans who emigrated from Japan—from the arrival of

Miyo Iwakoshi (married to Andrew McKinnon, a White Australian Scot), Iwakoshi's younger brother, Riki, and Iwakoshi's adopted daughter, Tama Jewel Nitobe, in 1880 and through the passage of the Walter-McCarran Act of 1952, which allowed Japanese immigrants to become naturalized U.S. citizens. This article discusses where Japanese immigrants moved, found work, and established communities. Key communities included Hood River, Montavilla, and Lake Labish. Azuma acknowledges the important role Japanese women made within the family economy. This article is packed with information and is an excellent resource for prominent Japanese community members and organizations in Oregon prior to 1950.

**Eisenberg, Ellen. *Embracing a Western Identity: Jewish Oregonians 1849-1950*. Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 2015.**

Eisenberg's *Embracing a Western Identity: Jewish Oregonians 1849-1950* is a study of Jewish life in Oregon, with particular emphasis on the Portland Jewish community. Oral histories from Portland Jewish women provide a vivid image of the Jewish community in Portland including the various waves of immigration and differences in class and religious identity. Neighborhood

House, a settlement house in South Portland, is highlighted for its role in helping Jewish women immigrants acclimate to their new environment.

**Eisenberg, Ellen. *The Jewish Oregon Story, 1950-2010*. Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 2016.**

Eisenberg continues her research and documentation of the Jewish community in Oregon, picking up in 1950 where she left off in *Embracing a Western Identity*. The involvement of Jewish women in the League of Women Voters is touched on in this book as well as the devastation wrought on the Jewish neighborhood in South Portland through urban renewal efforts.

**Graaf, Lawrence B. de. "Race, Sex, and Region: Black Women in the American West, 1850-1920." *Pacific Historical Review* 49, no. 2 (1980): 285–313. doi:10.2307/3638903.**

Graaf's article is not specific to Oregon, rather covering the experience of Black women in the colonization and settlement in the West, defined as the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states (Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon, and California). It is a general study and provides more overview information rather than specific context related to Black women in Oregon.

**Mendoza, Marcela. "Latinas and Citizenship in Oregon." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2012): 444–51. doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.113.3.0444.**

Mendoza's article highlights the often-missing stories of Latinas in discussions of the early history of Oregon women's enfranchisement. Mendoza quickly delineates that the monolithic "Latina" identifier would not have been used by Spanish-speaking women who relocated to Oregon from Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, instead using Tejanas, Hispanas, or Mexicanas. Mendoza's work recommends a re-examination of institutional records to "sift through the bias" to better understand the decisions Mexican and Latina women have made within their economic, social, and political environments.

**Nagae, Peggy. "Asian Women: Immigration and Citizenship in Oregon." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2012): 334–59. doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.113.3.0334.**

Nagae's article focuses on the complex history of Asian women's citizenship in Oregon, acknowledging that previous scholarship on Asian women immigrants as largely been focused on California. Nagae outlines the waves of immigration from Asia to the West Coast, beginning with men from China, then Japan, and South Asia/India. Many early Chinese and Japanese women immigrants were viewed as sex workers (or prostitutes) whether they made their living that way or not. Nagae covers the range of federal laws that impacted Asian immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries, with specific discussion about Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipina women. The article ends after the passage of another Immigration Act in 1965 and does not delve into post-1965 Asian immigration.

**Oregon Black Pioneers. "Oregon Black Pioneers - Preserving the History of Black Oregonians." Accessed November 30, 2023. <https://oregonblackpioneers.org/>.**

The Oregon Black Pioneers website provides a wealth of information about the history of the Black community in Oregon. It includes the Oregon Black Pioneers Historic Photograph Collection, an archive of Oregon Black newspapers in Portland, and oral histories with elders in



Eugene and Portland. In addition to these online collections, the website features both Portland and statewide maps of properties (extant and non-extant) associated with Black communities.

**Ricciardi, Gabriella.** “Telling Stories, Building Altars: Mexican American Women’s Altars in Oregon.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 107, no. 4 (2006): 536–52. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20615685>.

This article focuses on the religious devotion of Mexican American women and the domestic altars they have built for private, sacred celebration. This article provides insight into a specific aspect of religious expression by Mexican women.

**Terhune, Carol Parker.** “Coping in Isolation: The Experiences of Black Women in White Communities.” *Journal of Black Studies* 38, no. 4 (2008): 547–64. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40034421>.

Terhune’s article is a summary of an exploratory study into the experiences of 14 Black middle-class women who relocated to the predominately White Pacific Northwest. Terhune is a Black female scholar and blended a “Black feminist critical paradigm with an interpretive hermeneutic framework” in conducting her research. This article discusses how Black middle-class women who moved to the Pacific Northwest formed (or did not form) community.

**Thompson, Carmen P.** “Expectation and Exclusion: An Introduction to Whiteness, White Supremacy, and Resistance in Oregon History.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, no. 4 (2019): 358–67. doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.120.4.0358.

This article, provided in a special issue of the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, provides examples of White supremacy and resistance in Oregon history. It begins with a brief overview of American Whiteness, as established in the early North American colonies, and provides a discussion and critique of various historical theories on race and Whiteness. This piece provides an overview of the entire special issue related to White supremacy in Oregon and is a key starting point for any work related to Oregon’s racial history.

## Culture and Leisure

Like other areas of life, leisure and cultural pursuits have largely been defined and considered from the male perspective. Although, still, labor is a throughline that runs through any discussion of women’s leisure as many women were responsible for the creation and support of cultural, leisure, and recreational activities. Community and kinship are also key elements of this sub-theme, as cultural pursuits, leisure activities, and sports have drawn women together and created connection outside of the traditional family network. This area has been particularly challenging to find clear scholarly references.

### Relevant Sources

**Blair, Karen.** *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980.

This book, a reworking of Blair’s doctoral dissertation, provides an overview of the history of the women’s club movement in the United States. Blair posits that clubs, cultural or literary, provided

women with an avenue toward autonomy. This work is not specific to the Pacific Northwest or Oregon, but rather a broad overview of the role clubs played in shaping community for women.

**Nash, Tom. “Federal Writers’ Project in Oregon.” In *Oregon Encyclopedia*. Accessed February 1, 2024. [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/federal\\_writers\\_project\\_in\\_oregon/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/federal_writers_project_in_oregon/).**

This article provides information about the Federal Writers Project and the Oregon travel guide as a means to developing artist and writers and encouraging recreation. Many women are pictured in the photograph associated with the article, so this topic may be an avenue for future research.

**Oregon Historical Society. *Oregon Encyclopedia*. Accessed January 30, 2024. <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/>.**

The Oregon Encyclopedia and Oregon History Project have many great bios on individual women who’ve contributed to art, literature, and recreation in Oregon.

**Paulson, Sarah. “Jantzen Red Diving Girl.” *Oregon History Project*. 2007. <https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/jantzen-red-diving-girl/>.**

Jantzen Knitting Mills developed and sold swimsuits in the early 1900s. Their logo – the red diving girl – and market prowess helped them gain national recognition as a leader in swimwear. This, along with other materials related to Jantzen, could provide interesting insight into women in sports in the first half of the 20th century.

**Robbins, William G. *Oregon: This Storied Land*. Second edition. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020.**

Robbins’ Chapter 8—Education, the Arts, and Letters—is of particular relevance when it comes to culture and leisure in Oregon. His excellent narrative spans Oregon history, touching on topics of Indigenous culture, literary and musical societies, cultural museums, art institutions, local Shakespeare festivals, and the region’s rich writing tradition. Although Robbins’ narrative is not specific to women, his discussion includes important examples of women’s contributions.

**University of Oregon Libraries. “Leadership and Legacy – Athletics and the University of Oregon: Evolution of Women’s Sports at Oregon.” Accessed January 30, 2024. <https://sportshistory.uoregon.edu/topics/the-universitys-response-to-title-ix/evolution-of-womens-sports-at-oregon/>**

This University of Oregon website uses archival materials to reveal nearly a century of women’s contributions to recreational and sports history at the state’s flagship university. The story begins with loosely organized competitions and the founding of the Co-ed Athletic Club in the 1890s and continues through the Title IX era and its impact on UO’s sports programs. This web feature includes three essays entitled “The Early Years for Women (1890s-1970),” “1970s-1980s: Title IX Era at Oregon,” and “Present Day.”

## General

The following “general” sources provide an overview of women’s history, either nationally, regionally, or in Oregon. They cover multiple time periods and thematic topics. Rather than pigeonholing them within one of this project’s themes, they are including within this broad category

as they would be excellent research starting points for anyone interested in the subject of “women’s history.”

### *Relevant Sources*

**Armitage, Susan H. *Shaping the Public Good: Women Making History in the Pacific Northwest*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2015.**

Emerita Professor of History and Women’s Studies at Washington State University, Sue Armitage provides a broad account of women’s history in the Pacific Northwest from the earliest days to the present. Armitage weaves in stories of individual women throughout the narrative, effectively demonstrating the essential role women have played in shaping not only their families but communities. This book is essential reading for any student of Pacific Northwest women’s history seeking to understand the work of women throughout this region’s history with well-documented sources.

**Blair, Karen J. *Northwest Women: An Annotated Bibliography of Sources on the History of Oregon and Washington Women, 1787-1970*. Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1997.**

Retired professor of history, Karen J. Blair pulls together over 700 articles and books related to the history of women in Washington and Oregon. This bibliography covers rural and urban women and a range of ethnic and racial backgrounds. Blair’s annotated bibliography is a critical starting point for any student of Pacific Northwest women’s history.

**Chambers, Jennifer. *Remarkable Oregon Women: Revolutionaries & Visionaries*. Charleston, SC: History Press, 2015.**

This book identifies radical, progressive, and individualistic women in Oregon’s history. Each chapter is devoted to a woman (or women working together or in the same time period) for change in Oregon. This is broad overview with a works referenced section at the end of the book.

**Jameson, Elizabeth. “Toward a Multicultural History of Women in the Western United States.” *Signs* 13, no. 4 (1988): 761–91. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3174111>.**

Jameson’s article provides a review of the state of western women’s history in the late 1980s and the influence of the scholarly traditions of women’s history, western history, and ethnic history. For researchers seeking to understand earlier trends in historiography of women’s history, Jameson’s work provides a great summary.

**Jameson, Elizabeth, and Susan H. Armitage. *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women’s West*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.**

A valuable introduction to the rapidly changing field of western history, *Writing the Range* explains clearly how race, class, and culture are constructed and connected. The first section examines issues raised by more than a decade of multicultural western women’s histories; following are six chronological sections spanning four centuries. Each section offers a short introduction connecting its essays and placing them in analytic and historical perspective. Clearly written and



accessible, *Writing the Range* makes a major contribution to ethnic history, women's history, and interpretations of the American West.

**Jensen, Kimberly.** "A Bibliography of Regional Women's History." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2012): 505. <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.113.3.0505>.

In this compilation, Jensen revisits historian Karen J. Blair's review of Pacific Northwest women's history and the four topical areas she had identified: female Protestant missionaries, pioneer Euro-American women, Native women, and women's clubs and their activities. Jensen confirms strides forward have been made in researching and documenting women's history in the areas of politics, minority women, women's lives after World War II, and activism. Jensen concludes more analysis needs to occur related to women of color, lesbians, and women living and working in less documented regions of the state.

**Prescott, Cynthia Culver.** *Gender and Generation on the Far Western Frontier*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007.

In this book, Prescott explores the gender roles and ideological changes for White American immigrants in Oregon's Willamette Valley between 1845 and 1900. Prescott documents the rise of Western immigrants from subsistence living to middle class status, partaking in consumer culture and leisure.

**Schulz, Austin, and Mary Beth Herkert.** "Chronicling Women's History at the Oregon State Archives." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2012): 492–99. doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.113.3.0492.

This article provides a summary of records at the Oregon State Archives related to women's history in Oregon, including property records as well as correspondence and legislation related to suffrage, equal rights, employment, health, athletics, and education.

## Historic Context Methodology

### Relevant Sources

**Baco, Meagan.** "Three Steps Toward a Radically Effective Preservation Movement." *Forum Journal* 32, no. 2 (2018): 55–64. <https://doi.org/10.1353/fmj.2018.0013>.

Baco's article provides three recommended steps for improving professional historic preservation support of grassroots efforts, emphasizing in particular that such work will encourage "a more inclusive and equitable future." Baco's recommended steps are: Grow professional competency and ensure fair compensation; Employ new technology that plays well with others; and Push for radical inclusion of underrepresented communities. The article also includes numerous links to other articles and databases of information related to grassroots efforts to document more inclusive histories.

**Burtseva, Sandi.** "Women's History Doesn't Begin or End: An Interview with Turkiya Lowe." *Forum Journal* 32, no. 2 (2018): 16–25. <https://doi.org/10.1353/fmj.2018.0009>.

This article is a transcription of an interview by Sandi Burtseva with Turkiya Lowe, the chief historian of the National Park Service (NPS) since 2017 at the time of the article's publication

(2018). Lowe's career with NPS spanned two decades and she spoke about the evolution in research and interpretation at sites associated with women's history during her career. One example Lowe highlights is Fort Vancouver National Historic Site in Vancouver, Washington—while not in Oregon, the fort played a key role in Oregon's history and development. At that site, researchers uncovered the story of Monima Travers, a Black woman enslaved by a White U.S. army captain and freed in 1851.

**Makinster, Nicole. "Directory of Women's History Sites in the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties." Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, 2008.**

This directory provides a list of properties included in the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties that are associated with women's history. The directory organizes the properties by broad themes: Agriculture and Settlement, Education, Public Policy, Community Service, Business and Professional, Labor, Arts and Literature, Society, and the Darker Side. While this directory only directly relates to Colorado history, its organization and themes were considered in preparation of the historic context for women's history in Oregon.

**Miller, Page Putnam, ed. *Reclaiming the Past: Landmarks of Women's History*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.**

This seven-essay volume identifies historic structures associated with women's history to weave together historic preservation and feminist scholarship, too increase connection between women's history and tangible resources at National Park Service (NPS) and National Landmarks Program sites through structures associated with women's history. The themed seven essays include architecture (Barbara J. Howe), the arts (Barbara Melosh), community (Gail Lee Dubrow), education (Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz), politics (Joan Hoff), religion (Jean R. Soderlund), and work (Lynn Y. Weiner).

**Miller, Page Putnam. "Women's History Landmark Project: Policy and Research." *The Public Historian* 15, no. 4 (October 1, 1993): 82–88. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3378641>.**

Miller's article provides a summary of the Women's History Landmark Project, which was established in 1989 by a cooperative agreement between the Organization of American Historians and the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, and the National Park Service. Miller served as the director of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History. The project included a series of scholarly essays about women's history and preparation of National Historic Landmark nomination forms for nearly 50 properties, successfully securing NHL status for 31 sites by 1992. Miller's overview outlines several of the challenges the Women's History Landmark Project faces from interpreting the "national significance" standards for NHL designations to questions of integrity. Many of these issues are still concerns within the historic preservation field today, three decades later.

**National Park Service Park History Program. "Exploring a Common Past: Researching and Interpreting Women's History for Historic Sites." National Park Service, 2003, updated 2005.**

This booklet, prepared through a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the Organization of American Historians, is a compilation of essays intended to assist historic site managers, historians, and interpreters in reviewing and evaluating their interpretive

programs and media in light of recent scholarship in the area of women's history. It contains four essays: "Partnerships in Interpreting Women's History" by Anne M. Derousie, "Women's History Scholarship" by Sara M. Evans, "Women's History and Cultural Landscapes" by Jill Cowley and Shaun Eyring, and "Women's History and the Built Environment" by Leslie N. Sharp.

**Roth, Darlene, Roth Associates, Inc., Bamby Ray, Ray & Associates, Ced Dolder, Ray & Associates, Lynn Speno, Ray & Associates, Penny Luck, Gail L. Dubrow, University of Washington, Beth Gibson, Sarah Boykin, and Leslie Sharp, Director of Special Projects, College of Architecture, Georgia Institute of Technology. "Georgia: A Woman's Place, A Historic Context - DRAFT." Prepared for the Historic Preservation Division Department of Natural Resources, November 2002.**

This is the 2006 draft study prepared for the Georgia Historic Preservation Division, Department of Natural Resources — "Georgia: A Woman's Place: A historic context." The methodology within this draft women's historic context is an important starting point as Georgia was one of the first states in the country that implemented a SHPO-led initiative for women's history (1995). It is an incredibly thorough draft and emphasizes the complexities with developing such a broad historic context. It provides a narrative section, dividing Georgia's history into four periods; a findings section with special studies; and covers the rationale and selection process for new National Register of Historic Places nominations.

**Sanhueza, Alicia. "A Woman's Place is in the Register: Advancing Women's Stories in Oregon's Historic Sites." Master's Terminal Project. University of Oregon, June 2019.**

Sanhueza's terminal project provides a context of gender in historic preservation efforts and an important evaluation of women's history initiatives within State Historic Preservation Offices. In addition to their review of other state's initiatives, Sanhueza takes a deep dive into the Oregon Women's History Project established by the Oregon SHPO in 2012. Their recommendations serve as a foundation for new work related to the Oregon Women's History Project moving forward.

**Toothman, Stephanie. "Introduction: Understanding Our National Story Through Women's History Sites." *Forum Journal* 32, no. 2 (2018): 7–15. <https://doi.org/10.1353/fmj.2018.0008>.**

In this introduction to an edition of the Forum Journal devote to women's stories, Stephanie Toothman of the National Park Service emphasizes that recognizing and interpreting women's stories is essential to understanding our national history. Toothman's overview covers the range of National Park Service initiatives that have worked to tell the fuller story around women's history.

## Labor and Industry

While "work" is one of the two broad themes for this project, this sub-theme addresses specifically the paid, typically outside of the home, labor of women. Through identifying this as a sub-theme, this project can better define the spaces within which women have operated and address the impacts on women of earning income. This theme covers the range of women's labor through time, including domestic work, teaching, sex work, healthcare, wartime industrial work, and the expansion of jobs open to women.

## Relevant Sources

**Dilg, Janice. “For Working Women in Oregon’: Caroline Gleason/Sister Miriam Theresa and Oregon’s Minimum Wage Law.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 110, no. 1 (2009): 96–129. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20615934>.**

Dilg’s article discusses the passage of the minimum wage law for women workers in Oregon, the first in the nation, in 1913. The work to pass the law is discussed through exploration of the life and work of social reform activist Carolina Gleason (later Sister Miriam Theresa). The Consumer’s League of Oregon (CLO), founded in 1903, hired Gleason in 1911 to oversee a survey of wages and working conditions throughout the state as they worked craft a minimum wage bill. This piece provides a concise, yet thorough summary of the work completed to pass this landmark legislation in Oregon as well as the impacts of the *Muller v. Oregon* decision. The article also includes discussion and mentions of other key Oregon social reform organizations, including the Catholic Women’s League (CWL), The Portland Woman’s Club, Oregon Federation of Colored Women’s Club, and Portland YWCA.

**Dilg, Janice. “From Coverture to Supreme Court Justice: Women Lawyers and Judges in Oregon History.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2012): 360–81. doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.113.3.0360.**

This article provides an overview of the U.S. District Court of Oregon Historical Society Oral History Collection, which features oral histories related to the legal profession and the law from the late 19th century into the first decade of the 21st century. Women’s engagement within the legal system significantly changed during the time period covered by this collection, with earning the right to vote and serve on a jury and working at all levels of the legal profession and judiciary. Within this collection there are 26 interviews with women lawyers and judges. Key interviewees from the collection highlighted in this article include Helen Althaus (first female federal law clerk in Oregon and formed an all-woman law firm with Gladys Everett and Virginia Renwick); Jean Lagerquist Lewis (first female Circuit Court judge in Oregon); Mercedes Diaz (the first African American woman admitted to the bar in Oregon and first female African American Judge in the Pacific Northwest); Betty Roberts (the first woman appointed to the Oregon Court of Appeals); Norma (Peterson) Paulus (first woman to be elected as Secretary of State in Oregon); Velma Jeremiah (first female partner in a large Portland law firm); Barrie Herbold (founding partner of trial & litigation firm Markowitz & Herbold); Noreen Kelly Saltveit McGraw (first female trial attorney at the Oregon Department of Justice); former Oregon U. S. Attorney Kristine Olson; and Judge Susan Graber of the U.S. Appeals (first pregnant Oregon Supreme Court justice).

**Jimenez, Corri. “The Red-Lights of Portland.” *The ASHP Journal* 9, no. 2 (Winter 1997): 4, 7.**

This is a short article in *The ASHP Journal*, the student-led journal created by the University of Oregon’s Historic Preservation Program. Jimenez’s article provides a brief overview of prostitution in Oregon with particular focus on Portland. Their citations may prove useful for more in-depth information.

**Lipschultz, Sybil. “Hours and Wages: The Gendering of Labor Standards in America.” *Journal of Women’s History* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 114–36.**

This article provides an overview of the differing paths of social reform related to gender in the Progressive Era of reform. Challenges emerged as some social reformers sought protections



for women in the workforce but utilized paternalistic language. Social feminists then began to shift the narrative around labor laws from women from the concept of “women’s dependency to women’s equality.” Key court cases summarized include *Muller v. Oregon*, *Bunting v. Oregon*, *Stettler v. O’Hara*, and *Adkins v. Children’s Hospital*.

**Mercier, Laurie. “Breadwinning, Equity, and Solidarity: Labor Feminism in Oregon, 1945–1970.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, no. 1 (2019): 6–45. doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.120.1.0006.**

Mercier’s piece summarizes the rise of labor feminism in Oregon between 1945 and 1970. While other areas in the country, particularly the Northeast and Midwest, there were increasing numbers of unionized women workers, the Pacific Northwest and Oregon, lagged behind due to many of its major industries remaining largely male dominated (e.g., logging, mining, fishing). This article notes that many of the White working women pushing for unionization did not include BIPOC women in their ranks. Key White labor feminists in Oregon are highlighted as well as important strikes in the cause for equal pay.

**Pierce, Pamela. “‘There’s a Place for You’: Oregon Women in the Health Sciences.” *Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU): Historical Collections and Archives*, May 2020. <https://www.ohsu.edu/historical-collections-archives/theres-place-you-oregon-women-health-sciences>.**

From UW catalog, maybe rewrite about OR: This web page on the OHSU’s Historical Collections and Archives webpage provides a collection of women’s stories about their lived experiences in the health professions. It juxtaposes these stories alongside popular images, photographs, and marketing materials aimed at recruiting women into health sciences careers. It includes stories and references to women of color in health professions. There are also four oral history interviews summarized with full transcripts available (Ann Beckett, Ph.D., R.N., Professor Emerita, School of Nursing; Toni Eigner-Barry, D.M.D., Professor, School of Dentistry; Carol Lindeman, R.N., Ph.D., Dean Emerita of the School of Nursing; and Frances Storrs, M.D., Professor Emerita of Dermatology, School of Medicine).

**Rose, Chelsea. “Lonely Men, Loose Women: Rethinking the Demographics of a Multiethnic Mining Camp, Kanaka Flat, Oregon.” *Historical Archaeology* 47, no. 3 (2013): 23–35. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43491334>.**

This article refutes preconceived notions that women were not present at mining camps in the Western gold rush, with archaeological evidence demonstrating that they were present, using Kanaka Flat, outside of Jacksonville, in Oregon as a case study. Furthermore, Rose’s article challenges the notion that any women present in mining camps were sex workers, but that the mining community contained both bachelors and families. Rose’s work seeks to shift the previously shared narrative about Kanaka Flat as a disreputable community of brothels and saloons, to a more robust understanding of it as a small community of Hawaiians, Native

Americans, Portuguese, Whites, and Blacks living near mines along Jackson Creek. Essentially, according to Rose, Kanaka Flat was an “ethnic suburb” of Jacksonville.

**Scholles, Holly, Mary Solares, and Sarah Taylor. “‘We Can Give Birth. We Can Do It.’: Reflections on Learning and Promoting Midwifery in Oregon.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 117, no. 2 (2016): 252. <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.117.2.0252>.**

This article is a transcript compiled from a panel discussion by Eliza E. Canty-Jones with Holly Scholles, Sarah Taylor, and Mary Solares at the Oregon Historical Society’s November 17, 2015, symposium on “Regulating Birth.” Scholles, Taylor, and Solares began their careers as midwives in the 1970s. Taylor worked in Headstart centers and operated a free prenatal clinic in Portland. Scholles spent much of her career as a rural midwife and founded Birthingway College of Midwifery in 1993. Solares graduated from the Northwest School of Practical Midwifery and, along with other midwives and activists, founded the Portland Birth Center in 1978 on SE Thirty-Eighth in Portland. The panelists discuss their careers and experiences in midwifery in Oregon.

## Social Reform

Women have been impacted by public policy and government actions long before they won the right to vote. Public policy and activism go hand-in-hand, as women have long advocated for themselves and others. This sub-theme covers how women have worked to bridge the gap between the vital role they play in their families and the public and the long-standing barriers held up to deny them access to formal decision making and seats of power.

### Relevant Sources

**Blair, Karen. *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980.**

This book, a reworking of Blair’s doctoral dissertation, provides an overview of the history of the women’s club movement in the United States. Blair posits that clubs, cultural or literary, provided women with an avenue toward autonomy. This work is not specific to the Pacific Northwest or Oregon, but rather a broad overview of the role clubs played in shaping community for women.

**Burmeister, Heather. “Women’s Lands in Southern Oregon: Jean Mountaingrove and Bethroot Gwynn Tell Their Stories.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 115, no. 1 (2014): 60–89. [doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.115.1.0060](https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.115.1.0060).**

This article by Heather Burmeister highlights the countercultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s and the emerging subculture of the Women’s Liberation Movement. This movement, a back-to-the-land movement, was largely led by lesbians and Burmeister documents this in northern California and southern Oregon, highlighting influential members Jean Mountaingrove and Bethroot Gwynn. Key communities mentioned include Cabbage Lane in southern Oregon and WHO farm in Estacada. The stories of these women and these lesbian lands were collected by the women themselves and archived by archivist Linda Long at the University of Oregon’s Special Collections and University Archives. Both Mountaingrove and Gwynn were educated White women. The article includes excerpts from oral history interviews from each.

**Gordly, Avel Louise. *Remembering the Power of Words: The Life of an Oregon Activist, Legislator, and Community Leader. Women and Politics in the Pacific***

**Northwest. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2011. <http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9780870716140/>.**

Gordly's autobiography recounts her life growing up Black in Portland during the 1950s and 1960s and her activism that lead to her election to the Oregon State Legislature. Gordly served three terms in the Oregon House of Representatives before becoming the first African American woman elected to the Oregon State Senate, where she served another three terms. This autobiography provides contextual information about the Black community in Portland with particular emphasis on the experience of Black women.

**Haarsager, Sandra. *Organized Womanhood: Cultural Politics in the Pacific Northwest, 1840-1920*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.**

From UW catalog, maybe rewrite about OR: In *Organized Womanhood*, Sandra Haarsager shows how women's organizations in the Pacific Northwest became a major social force, imposing education, culture, and political reform to counter others' vision of a Wild West. Meeting in clubs to study great literature or art, women soon found themselves lobbying for better social, legal, and economic status for women, from working women to widows. Their ideas about education and culture counterbalanced the pressures of fast-paced economic and political development in the Northwest. Through reference to a vast number of documents, most unpublished, Haarsager pieces together the history and influence of women's organizations. Profiles of club leaders interspersed throughout the text highlight the achievements of individual women.

Hancock, Christin. "Regulating Birth: Locating Power at the Intersection of Private and Public in Oregon History." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 117, no. 2 (2016): 122. <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.117.2.0122>.

This article is the product of a symposium hosted by the Oregon Historical Quarterly's editorial board on the history of birth in Oregon in November 2015. It provides an overview of the articles submitted for the symposium and then collected within a special edition of the Oregon Historical Quarterly.

**Helquist, Michael. "'Lewd, Obscene and Indecent': The 1916 Portland Edition of Family Limitation." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 117, no. 2 (2016): 274. <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.117.2.0274>.**

Margaret Sanger, the nation's preeminent birth control activist in the early 20th century, published *Family Limitation* in 1914 providing many Americans their first access to comprehensive literature on pregnancy prevention. Sanger spoke at Heilig Theater on June 19, 1916, in Portland. While in Portland, Sanger met with Dr. Marie Equi—physician, lesbian feminist, and women's rights activist—and asked Equi to revise *Family Limitation* in order to appeal more to middle class

women. The author of this article, a biographer of Equi, discusses Equi's involvement with the pamphlet and the impact it had on Portland politics and reform.

**Helquist, Michael. *Marie Equi: Radical Politics and Outlaw Passions*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2015.**

This book was named a Stonewall Honor Book in 2016. Helquist's biography of Marie Equi covers the boundary breaking life and work of one of the first woman physicians in the Pacific Northwest and the first well-known lesbian in Oregon.

**Hoffman, Bruce. "Birth Activism, Law, and the Organization of Independent Midwifery in Oregon." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 117, no. 2 (2016): 198. <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.117.2.0198>.**

Hoffman provides a history of midwifery in Oregon within the context of Oregon birth activism in the 1970s. The Oregon Midwifery Council (OMC) was established in 1977, one of the first midwifery organizations founded in the nation. The article provides an overview of OMC history and its newsletter, Birthing.

**Jensen, Kimberly. "'Neither Head nor Tail to the Campaign': Esther Pohl Lovejoy and the Oregon Woman Suffrage Victory of 1912." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 108, no. 3 (2007): 350–83. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20615762>.**

Jensen's article outlines the life story of Esther Clayson Pohl Lovejoy who would go on to be a key activist in Oregon for women's suffrage. The article traces her life from her birth in 1869 to English immigrant parents, through her three years of study at the University of Oregon Medical Department, her married and family life, and public health activism. In addition to her public health work – as one of the physicians on the Portland Board of Health – Pohl was a staunch advocate for women's suffrage. Other key activists contemporary with Pohl are mentioned, including Josephine Mayer Hirsch (president of the Portland Equal Suffrage League and board member of the National Council of Jewish Women), Dora Espey Wilson (president of the Portland Women's Club), and Sarah Evans (columnist for the Oregon Journal and market inspector for the City of Portland).

**Jensen, Kimberly. "Revolutions in the Machinery: Oregon Women and Citizenship in Sesquicentennial Perspective." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 110, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 337–41.**

Kimberly Jensen, a historian specializing in women's history, delves into a study the history of women's citizenship throughout Oregon statehood. Jensen begins with early issues of land ownership by women then moves into the voter activism efforts of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the first women to hold public offices in the state. Some legislation and a few key court cases (both U.S. Supreme Court and Oregon Supreme Court) related to women's rights—



with results ranging from no change to progressive—are outlined in this article, including *Muller v. Oregon* (1908), *State v. Hunter* (1956), and *Hewitt v. State Accident Fund Corporation* (1982).

**Jensen, Kimberly. “Significant Events in the History of Oregon Women and Citizenship.”** *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2012): 500. <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.113.3.0500>.

This timeline, beginning in 1850 and extending until 2021, provides a list of critical dates related to citizenship and Oregon women, with brief information. Jensen’s timeline could provide a starting point for future research.

**Jensen, Kimberly. “Women’s ‘Positive Patriotic Duty’ to Participate: The Practice of Female Citizenship in Oregon and the Expanding Surveillance State during the First World War and Its Aftermath.”** *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 118, no. 2 (2017): 198–233. doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.118.2.0198.

This piece highlights the participation of Oregon women in the public realm, living up to their “patriotic duty,” during World War I. Jensen’s article pays special attention to the civic pageantry of the time (e.g., parades and Liberty Loan drives). Jensen discusses women’s citizenship within three threads: status of citizenship, practice of citizenship, and citizenship of shared experience. The efforts of women’s club, predominately White women’s clubs, are highlighted but also contrasted with the work of immigrant women and women of color like Hazel Cartozian (a vocal supporter of Armenian Portlanders for the Third Liberty Loan), Pearl Moy (a Chinese American woman and one of the founders of the Chinese Student Association within Portland’s YWCA), Katherine Gray (leader within the Oregon Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs), and Lizzie Weeks (leader of the Colored Women’s Republican Club).

**Long, Linda. “Equality, Politics, and Separatism: The Papers of Oregon Feminists in the University of Oregon Libraries.”** *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2012): 452–65. doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.113.3.0452.

Long’s article highlights the primary source documents (letters, diaries, photographs, pamphlets, reports, meeting minutes) held within the collections of University of Oregon libraries. Three collections are highlighted: Abigail Scott Duniway Papers, Oregon Women’s Political History Collection, and the Jean and Ruth Mountaingrove papers. The Abigail Scott Duniway Papers is a broad collection of the pioneer woman’s life of advocacy for suffrage. The Oregon Women’s Political History Collection contains materials related to Oregon women’s political and activist work in the 2nd half of the 20th century. And the Jean and Ruth Mountaingrove papers, a lesbian couple who were part of the separatist lesbian land movement of the 1970s, establishing Rootworks in 1978 near Wolfs Creek in Josephine County, and publishing *Woman Spirit* from 1974 to 1984, a magazine blending feminism and spirituality.

## Transforming the Landscape

The landscape of Oregon has been transformed through human habitation as past and current occupants have left their mark, both positive and negative. Native Americans in the Willamette Valley used deliberate and controlled fires—sometimes called “cultural burns”—to clear underbrush to stimulate root, nut, and berry production, managing the valley’s oak savanna landscape long before the arrival of White Western immigrants. When Euro-American immigrants arrived in the greater

Pacific Northwest in the early 19th century they too played a role in transforming the landscape, while also controlling and monetizing it through resource extraction (e.g., timber and mining) and cultivation (e.g., irrigation and agriculture). White settlement displaced Native Americans—interrupting and even obliterating traditional lifeways. These efforts by early immigrants evolved into regional and local industries that became the economic backbone of Oregon in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The long-term impacts of resource extraction and cultivation in turn nurtured a conservation movement. This theme focuses on the often-overlooked role women have played in transforming what they saw as an empty landscape into farms and communities. This theme carries forward the overarching theme of work as women participated in the efforts to transform the landscape.

### *Relevant Sources*

**Barber, Katrine. “‘We Were at Our Journey’s End’: Settler Sovereignty Formation in Oregon.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, no. 4 (2019): 382–413. doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.120.4.0382.**

In this article, Barber places the Oregon history within the larger context of colonialism and dominance. While a general overview, this article is important in relationship to women’s history as Barber created a chart organized by race and gender outlining when laws were passed granting citizenship status, voting rights, and property rights.

**Butruille, Susan G. *Women’s Voices from the Oregon Trail: The Times That Tried Women’s Souls, and a Guide to Women’s History along the Oregon Trail*. Boise, Idaho: Tamarack Books, 1993.**

Butruille’s book shares the experiences of the women who traveled along the 2,000-mile trail to Oregon in the mid-19th century, weaving historic narrative with diary entries, letters songs, poetry, recipes, and quilts. This book would provide a reader with a take on the Oregon Trail entirely from the viewpoint of women and highlight key individuals.

**Chused, Richard H. “The Oregon Donation Act of 1850 and Nineteenth Century Federal Married Women’s Property Law.” *Law and History Review* 2, no. 1 (1984): 44–78. <https://doi.org/10.2307/743910>.**

Richard H. Chused, law professor, writes about 19th century federal women’s property law with emphasis on the Oregon Donation Act of 1850. Chused highlights the unusualness of the Oregon Donation Act of 1850 in comparison to other federal legislation related to women’s property law. To place the Oregon Donation Act in context, Chused provides an overview of early federal land grant policy. Chused then discusses the history and early application of the act. This article is an overview of policy rather than the specifics related to early women landowners.

**Coleman, Kenneth R. “‘We’ll All Start Even’: White Egalitarianism and the Oregon Donation Land Claim Act.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, no. 4 (2019): 414–39. doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.120.4.0414.**

Coleman’s article outlines how racist privilege for Whites was engrained within Oregon’s social-political structure through the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 and the 1857 Oregon Constitution, both of which barred Black people from land ownership. Suffrage in the Oregon Constitution was also limited to free, male descendants of White men. Coleman notes that while these legal provisions were not unusual, it was unusual given how few Black people lived in Oregon when

the laws were passed. This article provides a clear picture of the systematic efforts by White men to ensure their control of the landscape as they established Oregon as a territory and then a state. And it ultimately shows the lasting legacy those early decisions have made upon the state and its inhabitants, past and present.

**Gregory, James. “Oregon Migration History 1850-2018.” Online. University of Washington: America’s Great Migrations Project, 2022. <https://depts.washington.edu/moving1/Oregon.shtml>.**

This web article, written by James Gregory and hosted as part of the University of Washington’s online “Civil Rights and Labor History Consortium,” provides data and visualizations of migration to Oregon from 1850-2018. It traces birthplaces of residents to race and decade; foreign birthplaces of residents by state and decade; birth states of residents; and outmigration (Oregon born but living in other states).

**Hancock, Christin. “Health and Well-Being: Federal Indian Policy, Klamath Women, and Childbirth.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 117, no. 2 (2016): 166. <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.117.2.0166>.**

This article is the product of a symposium hosted by the Oregon Historical Quarterly’s editorial board on the history of birth in Oregon in November 2015. Hancock discusses the impact of shifting federal Indian policy on the health and childbirth experiences of Klamath women in Oregon. Traditional birth practices of Klamath women were supplanted by western medical policies, profoundly impacting their wellbeing. The impact was further amplified when federal funding for western health care was inconsistent and inadequate. Hancock provides a history of Klamath tribes with specific emphasis on Klamath women and their health. Hancock traces this history from pre-contact through settler colonialism and Christian missionaries to the termination policy enacted in the 1960 and the continuing decline in Klamath health during the 1970s and 1980s. The policy of termination—with the federal government seeking to terminate its responsibility for Indian Affairs—is discussed and its effect on Klamath women. Key Klamath women connected with health care issues are highlighted in the article, including Dorothea McAnulty (the sole woman on the Klamath Executive Committee in 1956) and Ramona Soto-Rank (Secretary of the [Klamath] General Council in the late 1970s). Activism efforts to restore health to Klamath women concludes the article.

**Jetté, Melinda Marie. *At the Hearth of the Crossed Races: A French-Indian Community in Nineteenth-Century Oregon, 1812-1859*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2015.**

Historian, professor, native Oregonian, and descendent of the French Canadian men and Native women who resettled French Prairie, Melina Marie Jetté writes about the French Prarie in Oregon’s Willamette Valley. The French Prairie is considered “one of the earliest sites of extensive intercultural contact in the Pacific Northwest” and Jetté’s work focuses on the French-Indian families who resettled the homeland of the Ahantchuyuk Kalapuyans. “With At the Heath of the Crossed Races, Jetté delivers a social history that deepens our understanding of the Oregon Country in the nineteenth century. This history of French Prairie provides a window into the multi-racial history of the Pacific Northwest and offers an alternative vision of early Oregon

in the lives of the biracial French-Indian families whose community challenged notions of White supremacy, racial separation, and social exclusion.”

**Platt, Amy E. ““Go into the Yard as a Worker, Not as a Woman’: Oregon Women During World War II, a Digital Exhibit on the Oregon History Project.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (2015): 234–48. doi:10.5403/oregonhistq.116.2.0234.**

Platt’s article showcases excerpts from an Oregon Historical Society digital exhibit showcasing the work of Oregon women during World War II. It provides an overview of the type of jobs women took on during the war as many men were drafted to serve in the military. It also highlights the discrimination women of color experienced during and after the war, and identifies the different experience of women of Japanese descent who the U.S. Government incarcerated.

**Snyder, Bethany, and Mara Oliva. “A Maternal Brand of Environmentalism: Carol Browner’s Gendered Leadership of the Environmental Protection Agency.” *Journal of Women’s History* 34, no. 4 (Winter 2022): 101–24.**

Snyder and Oliva discuss the leadership by Carol Browner of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the early 1990s. Browner was the second woman to lead the organization, succeeding Anne Gorsuch. This article does not specifically reference Oregon but provides broader context of the role of women in federal leadership positions and the connection of women to environmental justice issues.

**Tamura, Linda. *The Hood River Issei: An Oral History of Japanese Settlers in Oregon’s Hood River Valley*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.**

Tamura’s book tells the stories of Japanese immigrants arriving between the late 1800s and the 1920s who resettled the Hood River Valley in Oregon. Tamura began interviewing Issei, first generation Japanese, in 1985. This collection of oral histories covers Issei early life in Japan, immigration, resettlement and farming in the Hood River Valley, and the hardships of World War II.

**Whaley, Gray H. “Oregon, Illahee, and the Empire Republic: A Case Study of American Colonialism, 1843-1858.” *Western Historical Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (2005): 157–78. doi:10.2307/25443145.**

Gray H. Whaley, assistant professor of history at Western Michigan University, uses Western Oregon as a case study to re-examine American westward expansion as colonization. Although this article does not specifically focus on women, it does discuss how, through the provisional land laws and then federal law, married White men could claim 640 acres of land (with 320 in the name of their wife). It does mention how there were five women who were able to successfully file claims between 1853 and 1856 as independent settlers, not wives or heirs (although they were all married).

**Willingham, William F. *Starting Over: Community Building on the Eastern Oregon Frontier*. Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 2005.**

Willingham’s book traces community building in Eastern Oregon, beginning chronologically with Native American territorial use and subsequent White Euro-American settler-colonialism in the 19th century with livestock and farming practices. One chapter in particular, focuses on homesteading life, with emphasis on community, social networks, and kinship.



## Work

A consistent thread running through many of the sources documenting women's history is one of work or labor. Even when women have not had paying jobs outside the home, they have always worked. Women have always been at work in Oregon. From the Native American women who processed the game and fish from successful hunting and fishing parties to the women who dug roots and gathered berries as they all managed seasonal migrations with complex planning and oversight. This includes Western immigrant women whose own household or farm labor was unpaid, immigrant and working-class women who performed domestic or skilled labor for wages or room and board, and the women who hired and organized other women.

### Relevant Sources

**Bledsoe, Lucy Jane. "Adventuresome Women on the Oregon Trail: 1840-1867." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 7, no. 3 (1984): 22–29. doi:10.2307/3346237.**

Bledsoe's article addresses the imbalanced narrative regarding women's experiences on the Oregon Trail. She presents viewpoints that challenge the once-dominant narrative of women as passive, fearful, and reluctant participants in westward migration. While acknowledging that most women traveling the trail strongly identified with the 19th-century tenets of domesticity, piety, and passivity, she argues that historians have overemphasized this domestic ideology resulting in a distorted understanding of women's role in westward migration and settlement. Using hundreds of Oregon Trail accounts, she demonstrates how personal experiences varied widely and that the journey through rugged conditions expanded women's traditional domestic boundaries. The accounts reveal the richness of women's experiences of personal growth, enthusiasm, and purpose.

**Jameson, Elizabeth. "Women as Workers, Women as Civilizers: True Womanhood in the American West." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 7, no. 3 (1984): 1–8. doi:10.2307/3346233.**

Jameson's article examines the influences that have shaped our collective understanding of womanhood in the American West and how a more thoughtful approach to sourcing can reveal under-told stories and new perspectives. Traditional western history, which presents women as virtuous, passive, and domestic, has relied on public documents, newspapers, and prescriptive literature that reinforce a male-dominant, middle- and upper-class, White perspective that virtually excludes women of color and the working class. By approaching western women's history through the experiences of the people who lived the history, Bledsoe argues, we can better understand women's contributions to both private and public arenas.

**Kessler-Harris, Alice. *Women Have Always Worked: A Concise History*. Second. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018.**

"A classic since its original publication, *Women Have Always Worked* brings much-needed insight into the ways work has shaped female lives and sensibilities. Beginning in the colonial era, Alice Kessler-Harris looks at the public and private work spheres of diverse groups of women—housewives and trade unionists, immigrants and African Americans, professionals and menial laborers, and women from across the class spectrum. She delves into issues ranging from the gendered nature of the success ethic to the social activism and the meaning of citizenship for female wage workers. This second edition features significant updates. A new chapter by

Kessler-Harris follows women into the early twenty-first century as they confront barriers of race, sex, and class to earn positions in the new information society.”

**Hall, Greg. “The Fruits of Her Labor: Women, Children, and Progressive Era Reformers in the Pacific Northwest Canning Industry.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 109, no. 2 (2008): 226–51. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20615850>.**

Hall’s article illuminates a pivotal period in women’s labor history in the Pacific Northwest. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, fruit and vegetable canneries in states along the Pacific Coast were primary employers of female workers – both adults and children. This coincided with Progressives’ push for improved working conditions and wages, which on one hand helped eliminate child labor in canneries, but on the other hand established protective laws that treated working women differently than working men. Hall’s examination of this formative phase of the Pacific Northwest canning industry, its workforce, and the Progressives who sought to reform it offers a rich perspective on the changing role of women as wageworkers in society, growing public concern about child labor, and state governments’ evolving social and labor history.

**Meiners, Jane E., and Geraldine I. Olson. “Household, Paid, and Unpaid Work Time of Farm Women.” *Family Relations* 36, no. 4 (1987): 407–11. doi:10.2307/584492.**

This article—written by professors within the Oregon State University’s Department of Family Resource Management, College of Home Economics—examines the roles women on farms play within the family farm enterprise. Furthermore, this article looks into the differences between paid (off-farm) and unpaid (farm) work for farm women and how one affects the other. The article summarizes a number of studies completed between the 1960s and 1980s about the unpaid work of women on farms, despite many farm women’s involvement in nearly all aspects of the farming operation. This data heavy piece would provide an interesting comparison to more recent studies to determine if the time spent at “work” (unpaid or paid) by women has changed in the last 4 decades.

**Monroe, Shafia M. “Birth, Healing, and Women of Color: Symposium Keynote Lecture and Discussion.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 117, no. 2 (2016): 232. <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.117.2.0232>.**

This is an edited transcript of Shafia Monroe’s keynote lecture at the Oregon Historical Society’s November 17, 2015, symposium “Regulating Birth.” She is the founder and president of the International Center for Traditional Childbearing in Portland, Oregon. The organization is the first international black midwives professional and infant mortality prevention non-profit organization, and it brings together black midwives, doulas, nurses, physicians, and health care practitioners to share best practices and experiences. In her address, Monroe discusses the black women’s experience in Oregon, through a lens of midwifery and childbirth, and how a long history of regulation has shaped this history.

# TIMELINE OF EVENTS

The following timeline is partly compiled from Kimberly Jensen’s “Significant Events in the History of Oregon Women and Citizenship” in *Oregon Historical Quarterly* (2012). Additional events are included from the research conducted through preparation of this historic context statement.

Year(s)	Timeline of Key Women’s Labor History Events
1893	Passage of the eight-hour workday law by the Illinois state legislature, which, according to historian Nancy Woloch, “marked the start of the Progressive Era campaign for protective labor laws.”
1898	The National Consumers’ League is founded. It establishes a network of local leagues with a focus on campaigning for protectionist laws and seeking to improve women’s working conditions in stores and factories.
1900	The <i>Portland Labor Press</i> is established. It is the official publication of the Federated Trades Council (and later the Central Labor Council of Portland and the Oregon State Federation of Labor). It later becomes the Oregon Labor Press (1915) and later the Northwest Labor Press (1986).
1902	Oregon adopts initiative and referendum system.
1902	The Oregon State Federation of Labor organizes and holds its first annual convention in Portland in May.
1903	The Consumers’ League of Oregon is established.
1903	The Oregon State Legislature creates the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
1903	The Oregon State Legislature passes a law making it illegal for employers to have women work more than 10 hours per day in certain industries. The United States Supreme Court later upholds this law in <i>Muller v. Oregon</i> (1908).
1903	Women’s Trade Union League is established. The nationwide organization includes working-class women as well as wealthier women, who support organizing labor unions and eliminating sweatshop conditions in industry and manufacturing.
1905	Emma Gotcher is required to work longer than a 10-hour day in Curt Muller’s Grand Laundry at what is now 320 N 17th Ave in Portland. Emma files a complaint in court leading to <i>Muller v. Oregon</i> .
1908	In <i>Muller v. Oregon</i> , the United States Supreme Court upholds the constitutionality of Oregon’s restrictions on the number of hours wage-earning women could be employed.
1912	Woman suffrage, on the ballot for the sixth and final time, is approved with 52 percent of voters voting in support.
1913	The Consumers’ League of Oregon produces its “Report of the Social Survey Committee” to present to the Oregon State Legislature. It leads to Oregon’s minimum wage law.
1913	The Oregon State Legislature creates the nation’s first compulsory minimum wage law and its governing agency, the Oregon Industrial Welfare Commission. In 1923, the United States Supreme Court strikes down a similar law in <i>Adkins v. Children’s Hospital</i> .
1914	Marian B. Towne, Democrat of Jackson County, is the first woman elected to the Oregon House of Representatives.
1914	The Industrial Welfare Commission of Oregon publishes its report on laundries in Portland. Its findings are crucial in moving the legislature to enact the the Industrial Welfare Commission Order No. 13 in 1916, which further restricts women’s work hours, and raises the minimum wage for women.
1915	Kathryn Clarke, Republican of Douglas County, is the first woman elected to the Oregon Senate (January special election). Oregon Women’s Legislative Council begins lobbying efforts.
1916	Umatilla, Oregon, voters elect Laura J. Starcher mayor with an all-female city council.
1919	Seattle General Strike in February 1919 inspires strikes throughout the region and nation in many industries, including Portland’s laundry workers and telephone operators in communities across Oregon.
1919	Congress passes 19th Amendment, which says the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Year(s)	Timeline of Key Women's Labor History Events
1920	On January 12, both houses of the Oregon Legislature adopt House Joint Resolution 1, introduced by Representative Sylvia Thompson, making Oregon the 25th state to ratify the 19th Amendment.
1920	On June 5, the Women's Bureau is established within the U.S. Department of Labor.
1920	In November, Esther Pohl Lovejoy, Democrat from Oregon's Third District, is the first woman to run for United States Congress from Oregon in a general election. She receives 44 percent of the vote.
1920	In November, an all-female slate of candidates wins election to the Yoncalla City Council, including mayor Mary Goodell Burt and council members Jennie Lasswell, Bernice Wilson, Nettie Hanan, and Edith Thompson.
1921	Oregon voters approve jury service for women.
1923	In <i>Adkins v. Children's Hospital</i> , the United States Supreme Court strikes down a minimum wage law in the District of Columbia. Although the ruling only affected the District of Columbia's law, it had a profound dampening effect on similar laws around the nation.
1923	Oregon's Alien Land Law prohibits persons ineligible for citizenship from owning or leasing land. The law largely targeted Japanese and Chinese nationals to keep them from buying and leasing land in Oregon.
1924	Caroline Gleason (Sister Miriam Theresa) becomes first woman to receive a PhD from the School of Social Work at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Her dissertation was on the Oregon labor movement.
1924	Federal Indian Citizenship Act makes United States citizenship possible for all Native women and men.
1931	Mary Anderson, Director of the Women's Bureau within the U.S. Department of Labor, submits report on legislation affecting women in industry in the State of Oregon. The report is written by Caroline Gleason and is largely based rooted in her PhD dissertation research.
1934	The federal Indian Reorganization Act creates a context for elected tribal governments, and Oregon Native women begin leadership roles in these governments.
1935	Congress passes the National Labor Relations Act, granting employees at private-sector workplaces the right to seek better working conditions and to form or join unions.
1935	Nan Wood Honeyman becomes the first woman elected to the United States Congress from Oregon. She serves as a Democrat in the House of Representatives from 1935 to 1939.
1940	The federal government's definition of the labor force changes to include all individuals working for pay, unpaid family workers, and the unemployed seeking work when they are surveyed. This change was reflected in the 1940 United States Census.
1942	President Franklin Roosevelt issues Executive Order 9066, forcing the evacuation of Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans to prison camps for purposes of wartime security during WWII.
1943	Congress creates the Women's Land Army to address labor shortages in the agricultural sector during WWII. In Oregon, the program is administered by Oregon State College and headed by Mabel Mack.
1947	Helen Althaus becomes the first female federal law clerk in Oregon, clerking for United States District Court Judge James Alger Fee from 1947 to 1949.
1948	Portland voters elect Dorothy McCullough Lee as mayor. She is the first woman to serve as the city's mayor.
1949	The Oregon Legislature passes the Fair Employment Practices Act, barring discrimination due to race, religion, color, or national origin by employers with more than five workers or by labor unions. Oregon is the sixth state to pass an employment anti-discrimination bill.
1952	McCarran-Walter Act enables first-generation Asian women and men to acquire citizenship but also contains a prohibition preventing "aliens" who were homosexual or considered to be homosexual from entering or remaining in the United States.
1955	Governor Paul Patterson signs the Equal Pay for Equal Work Law requiring employers to pay men and women equal wages when doing equal work.



Year(s)	Timeline of Key Women's Labor History Events
1955	Edith Green begins her tenure representing Oregon's 3rd congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives. She works for passage of the Equal Pay Act and for Title IX legislation to support equity in education and sports.
1960	Mercedes Deiz becomes first African American woman lawyer admitted to the Oregon bar. In 1969 she becomes the first African American woman appointed a district court judge.
1960	Maurine Neuberger is elected to represent Oregon in the U.S. Senate. She was the first—and as of this date, the only—woman in Oregon's history to represent the state in the U.S. Senate.
1963	Congress passes the Equal Pay Act protecting men and women who perform substantially equal work in the same establishment from sex-based discrimination. It is the first national civil rights legislation focusing on employment discrimination.
1964	Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin. It also creates the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to enforce the act.
1964	Oregon Governor Mark O. Hartfield establishes the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women.
1968	The Governor's Commission on the Status of Women issues its report, finding that that regulations toward women employees were outdated and paternalistic.
1969	Diana Richards, an employee at Griffith Rubber Mills in Portland, files the first sex-discrimination case in Oregon, charging her employer with not promoting her to press operator due to her gender.
1969	Women farmers in the Willamette Valley form Oregon Women for Agriculture to address regulatory concerns in the grass and seed industry.
1970	Nellie Fox-Edwards, then the only woman the 18-member Oregon ALF-CIO Board, is appointed by Labor Commissioner Norman Nilsen to a new committee on Sex Discrimination in Employment.
1970	A Coos Bay woman and Local 1188 jointly file a lawsuit against Safeway in U.S. District Court, to protest pay inequities in grocery stores, which particularly used distinctions between "light and heavy duty" to prevent women from earning higher wages. As a result, Safeway voluntarily eliminates its gendered job classifications.
1972	Congress passes Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, prohibiting sex-based discrimination in any school or any other education program that receives funding from the federal government.
1973	Oregon Supreme court finds the state's statute on abortion to be unconstitutional.
1973	Oregon Legislature ratifies the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), but the ERA was not ratified by enough states to add it as an amendment to the Constitution.
1974	Portland is the first city in Oregon to adopt civil rights protections for lesbian and gay residents and ban anti-gay discrimination for city jobs.
1975	Oregon Women's Land Trust forms and is part of the back-to-the-land movement.
1977	Betty Roberts becomes the first woman appointed to the Oregon Court of Appeals
1977	Norma Paulus becomes first woman elected to statewide office as Secretary of State; Paulus is elected Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1990 and again in 1994.
1977	Mae Yih becomes Oregon's first Asian American woman elected to the House of Representatives.
1979	Oregon Supreme Court in Gunther v. Washington County expands equal pay for equal work toward comparable worth.
1979	Mary Wendy Roberts is appointed Oregon's Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and is the first woman to hold the position.
1980	Women faculty members in Oregon's higher education institutions file a class-action suit against the Oregon State Board of Higher Education, alleging it pays women faculty members less than their male counterparts. The suit, known as Penk et al. v. the Oregon State Board of Higher Education, is the first class-action suit against a statewide system in the entire country.
1982	Betty Roberts becomes the first woman on the Oregon Supreme Court.
1984	Margaret Carter becomes the first African American woman elected to the Oregon Legislature.

Year(s)	Timeline of Key Women's Labor History Events
1987	Governor Neil Goldschmidt signs an executive order prohibiting discrimination against lesbians and gays in state employment.
1989	Tradeswomen Connie Ashbrook, elevator constructor; Kate Barrett, carpenter; Melinda Koken, carpenter; Sandy Hay Magdaleno, operating engineer; and Ann Zawaski, carpenter, form Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. to connect women in the trades and help industries build a diverse workforce.
1990	Jacqueline S. Taylor becomes the first Native American to serve in the Oregon State Legislature.
1990	Barbara K. Roberts becomes the first woman elected as Governor of Oregon.

# LIST OF KNOWN RESOURCES

The following table is a short list of properties that the project team pulled together that may demonstrate an association with women's history. This list was developed as part of Phase 1 of this project and sorts properties identified within the Oregon Women's History project in the Oregon Historic Sites Database into the four themes identified during the concept and approach development. A more detailed list with recommendations and notes has been provided as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to the Oregon SHPO.

Resource Name	Street Address	City	County	Theme(1)	Theme (2)	Year Built
Seaside Women's Club	811 2nd Ave	Seaside	Clatsop	Culture and Leisure	Social Reform	1925
Kemp IOOF Lodge #181	Ehrck Hill & Odell	Odell	Hood River	Culture and Leisure		1905
Womens Civic Improvement Clubhouse	59 Winburn Way	Ashland	Jackson	Culture and Leisure	Social Reform	1922
Geer, R C, Farmhouse	12390 Sunnyview Rd SE	Salem vcty	Marion	Culture and Leisure	Social Reform	c.1848
Women's Community Clubhouse	260 2nd Ave N	Stayton	Marion	Culture and Leisure		1927
Lone Fir Cemetery	2115 SE Morrison St	Portland	Multnomah	Culture and Leisure		1866
Women's Comfort Station	230 NW Park Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Culture and Leisure		c.1928
Lincoln High School	1620 SW Park Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Culture and Leisure	Labor and Industry	1910
Women's Club	1220 SW Taylor St	Portland	Multnomah	Culture and Leisure		1922
Portland Garden Club	1132 SW Vista Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Culture and Leisure		1954
Union Women's Club	518 N Main St	Union	Union	Culture and Leisure		1921
Odd Fellows Hall	22550 SW Washington St	Sherwood	Washington	Culture and Leisure		c.1925
Elwood School	24480-24500 S Elwood Rd	Colton	Clackamas	Labor and Industry		c.1900
Convent Of The Holy Names, Marylhurst College	Pacific Hwy S	Lake Oswego	Clackamas	Labor and Industry		1911
Munson, Clara, House	858 SE Harbor St	Warrenton	Clatsop	Labor and Industry	Social Reform	1890
Kay, Thomas, Woolen Mill	1313 Mill St SE	Salem	Marion	Labor and Industry		1886
Gaiety Hollow	545 Mission St SE	Salem	Marion	Labor and Industry		1932
Brown, Charles & Martha, House	425 N 1st Ave	Stayton	Marion	Labor and Industry		1902

Resource Name	Street Address	City	County	Theme(1)	Theme (2)	Year Built
Kerr, Albertina, Nursery	424 NE 22nd Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry	Social Reform	1921
Shogren, Fred A, May & Ann, House	400 NE 62nd Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		c.1906
Superior Service Laundry	710 NE 21ST AVE	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		1928
Yale Union Laundry Building	800 SE 10th Avenue	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		1908
Dr. J.A. Reuter House	420 E 8th Street	The Dalles	Wasco	Labor and Industry		1890, 1909
Pallay Building	221-223 NW 3rd Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		c. 1915
National Laundry Building	1535 SE 9th Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		1925
Excelsior Laundry	825-835 NW Davis St	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		1906
Opera House Laundry	217 NW Everett St	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		1906, 1925
US Laundry Company Building	1006 SE Grand Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		c. 1915
Troy Laundry Building	1025 SE Pine St	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		1913, 1953
Portland Laundry Company Building	1740 SE Martin Luther King Blvd	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		1920
Laundry Building	2774 NW Thurman St	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		1921
Cannery Building	122 S John Adams St	Oregon City	Clackamas	Labor and Industry		c.1930
White Star Cannery	3 2nd St	Astoria	Clatsop	Labor and Industry		c.1880
Hanthorn, J O, Cannery	100 39th St	Astoria	Clatsop	Labor and Industry		1875
Elmore, Samuel, Cannery Site	10 3rd	Astoria	Clatsop	Labor and Industry		1895
Kinney, Marshall J, Cannery	1-5 6th St	Astoria	Clatsop	Labor and Industry		1895
Ocean Foods Cannery	7th	Astoria	Clatsop	Labor and Industry		1950
Elmore Dock	10-12 7th St	Astoria	Clatsop	Labor and Industry		1906
Sebastian-Stewart Fish Company	1 9th St	Astoria	Clatsop	Labor and Industry		1945
Union Fish Cannery (Site)	10-16 Basin St	Astoria	Clatsop	Labor and Industry		c.1922
Columbia River Packing Company	70 W Marine Dr	Astoria	Clatsop	Labor and Industry		1984



Resource Name	Street Address	City	County	Theme(1)	Theme (2)	Year Built
Elmore, Samuel, Cannery (NHL)	70 W Marine Dr	Astoria	Clatsop	Labor and Industry		1886
Cannery Building	Main St	Coquille	Coos	Labor and Industry		1920
Diamond Cannery Warehouse	504-520 Cascade St	Hood River	Hood River	Labor and Industry		1930
Diamond Cannery Offices	506 Columbia St	Hood River	Hood River	Labor and Industry		1920
Diamond Cannery	620 Columbia St	Hood River	Hood River	Labor and Industry		1930
Creswell Cannery	S Mill	Creswell	Lane	Labor and Industry		1913
Florence Fish Cannery	Bay & Laurel Sts	Florence	Lane	Labor and Industry		1893
Kern Brothers Cannery	Siletz River Rd	Kernville	Lincoln	Labor and Industry		1896
McGowan Cannery Residence No.1	60765-60790 NE Enquist Pl	Bridal Veil vcty	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		c.1900
Burke Pea Cannery	118 E Main St	Athena	Umatilla	Labor and Industry		c.1936
Seafert Cannery		The Dalles	Wasco	Labor and Industry		c.1886
Cannery	Columbia St	Sherwood	Washington	Labor and Industry		c.1945
Springbrook Cannery	2201 N Springbrook Way	Springbrook	Yamhill	Labor and Industry		
Neighborhood House	3030 SW 2nd Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry	Social Reform	1910
St Elizabeth Hospital	2365 4th St	Baker City	Baker	Labor and Industry	Social Reform	1912
Kay, Thomas, Woolen Mill	1313 Mill St SE	Salem	Marion	Labor and Industry		1886
Pendleton Woolen Mills	SE Court & 14th Sts	Pendleton	Umatilla	Labor and Industry		1909
Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Building	2923 NE 24th Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Labor and Industry		1921
Biswell Clinic	2790 Main St	Baker City	Baker	Labor and Industry		
Milwaukie Pastry Kitchen	10607 SE Main Street	Milwaukie		Labor and Industry		
Helen Bernhard Bakery	1717 NE Broadway #1775	Portland		Labor and Industry		
Castellanoz, Eva, House	1650 N. Third Street	Nyssa		Labor and Industry		
Sparta Building (KMED Radio Station)	12-16 Riverside Ave N	Medford	Jackson	Labor and Industry		1911

Resource Name	Street Address	City	County	Theme(1)	Theme (2)	Year Built
Corvallis Women's Club Building	117 SW 7th St	Corvallis	Benton	Social Reform	Culture and Leisure	1916
Canby Womens Civic Club Maple Trees	NW 1st Ave	Canby	Clackamas	Social Reform		c.1925
Post House	10285 S New Era Rd	Canby	Clackamas	Social Reform		c.1870
Women's Library	31703 Hwy 70	Bonanza	Klamath	Social Reform	Culture and Leisure	c.1935
Creswell Public Library and Civic Improvement Club Clubhouse	195 S 2nd St	Creswell	Lane	Social Reform	Labor and Industry	1875
Eugene Womens City Club	450 E 14th Ave	Eugene	Lane	Social Reform	Culture and Leisure	c.1890
University Of Oregon Women's Memorial Quad Ensemble	1468 University St	Eugene	Lane	Social Reform		1917
Shelton-McMurphey House & Grounds	303 Willamette St	Eugene	Lane	Social Reform	Labor and Industry	1887
Farmer, Ray L, House	795 Winter St NE	Salem	Marion	Social Reform		c.1890
Portland YWCA	1111 SW 10th Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Social Reform		1957
Campbell Court Hotel	1115 SW 11th Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Social Reform		1921
Catholic Womens League	3134 NE 24th Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Social Reform		1911
Arleta Branch Library	4420 SE 64th Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Social Reform	Culture and Leisure	1918
YWCA	8010 N Charleston Ave	Portland	Multnomah	Social Reform		1936
Cedar Crossing Covered Bridge	Deardorf Rd	Portland vcty	Multnomah	Social Reform		1982
Honeyman, David T & Nan Wood, House	1728 SW Prospect Dr	Portland	Multnomah	Social Reform		1907
Williams Avenue YWCA	6 N Tillamook St	Portland	Multnomah	Social Reform		1927
Dundee Women's Club Hall	1026 Hwy 99W	Dundee	Yamhill	Social Reform	Culture and Leisure	1915
Campbell Hall, Linfield College	College Ave	McMinnville	Yamhill	Social Reform		1950
Christie School for Orphan Girls	2507 Christie Dr	Lake Oswego	Clackamas	Social Reform	Labor and Industry	1907
Hanley, Michael and Martha B., Farmstead	1053 Hanley Rd	Medford	Jackson	Transforming the Landscape	Social Reform	1854
Ashland Cemetery	E Main & Morton Sts	Ashland	Jackson	UNKNOWN		1860
Jacksonville Cemetery	W E St	Jacksonville	Jackson	UNKNOWN		1859
Odd Fellows-Rebekah Lodge Sign	175 S Oregon St	Jacksonville	Jackson	UNKNOWN		1969

Resource Name	Street Address	City	County	Theme(1)	Theme (2)	Year Built
Mineral Springs College Women's Dormitory	314 Crowfoot Rd	Lebanon	Linn	UNKNOWN		1892
Tubman School	2231 N Flint	Portland	Multnomah	UNKNOWN		1952