

First, during the 1920s, women gained more social independence and began working in larger numbers outside the home. In a 1929 article on this census data for the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Agnes L. Peterson, then the assistant director of the Bureau, pointed out that the share of married women “gainfully employed” had increased from 4.5 percent in 1890 to 9 percent in 1920. Black women work more out of need and destitution.

Dan Bryan (2012) noted that among single women, there was a huge increase in employment during this era. Certain occupations had always been weighted towards women -- teachers, social workers, nurses, and librarians. And for those who were working-class, textile mills had been the one type of factory where jobs could be found. And on the farm, women helped out in myriad ways, as they traditionally had. But now with the rise of the corporate office, a number of other types of jobs opened up. Typists, filing clerks, stenographers, and even some secretarial roles all became possibilities for the ambitious young woman.

In addition, during World War II, the female labor force grew by 6.5 million. In 1944, 37 percent of all adult women were employed and by 1945 comprised 36.1 percent of the civilian labor force. At the height of the war, there were 19,170,000 women in the labor force. The percentage of married women working outside the home increased from 13.9 to 22.5, and those with children at home increased from 7.8 to 12.1%. In 1944, skilled female workers made an average weekly wage of \$31.21 while skilled male workers earned \$54.65 weekly.

From 1940 to 1944, the percentage of women workers employed in factories increased from 20 to 30 percent, and in that same period, the percentage of women workers employed as domestic servants declined from 17.7 to 9.5 percent.

Most importantly, between 1943 and 1945, polls indicated that 61 to 85 percent of women workers wanted to keep their jobs after the war, including married women (47-68%).

Source: Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982).

And according to George Gilder in *The Atlantic* in 1986, “from 1972 to 1985 women's share of professional jobs increased from 44 to 49 percent and their share of “management” jobs nearly doubled growing from 20 to 36 percent.

## *Why didn't it happen like that?* A Student Minquiry

### SO THEN...

**THE ASSUMPTION:** By the year 1985 – 40 years after the end of WWII, women made up nearly half (50%) of the workforce, had equal numbers of professional, management, and executive jobs, and earned the same amount as men in the same positions.

**BUT, THE REALITY:** But as of 1983 married women with a *graduate education* earned 11 percent less than married men with a *high school education* (*Atlantic*, 1986). Women employed in full-time wage and salary work in 1985 earned only 64.5% of the rate of pay for men. This percentage was even lower for minority women (National Committee on Pay Equity).

Why might this be? After 60 years of drastically increasing the role of women the workplace, why was there such inequity in pay for women doing the same work as men?

What supporting questions could help you research to better understand why the result of equal work for equal pay for women from 1945-1985 did not align to the historical trend?

STEPS TO CONSIDER WITH IN PLANNING YOUR MININQUIRY

1. How could you categorize your supporting questions: Political, Economic, Social, Geographic, Minority v. Majority, Legal, Etc. Or by a different means?
2. What are some key search terms that will help you find better answers to the question with Google?
3. Are there some trusted sources and/or databases that could guide you to better answers?
4. How many facts will each person need to bring back to the group? Time limit? How much source information? How will we capture our facts and sources to share with the group?

### COMMUNICATING CONCLUSIONS

1. Share out the evidence each person found to help answer the question. Some ways to start this discussion might be: “The most interesting thing I found was...” followed by similar or supporting evidence that others found. In this way, you will begin to “chunk” together like evidence.
2. Once the evidence has been shared, get rid of evidence you found that does not come from a trusted source. Discuss how you will make this decision.
3. Rank the remaining evidence chunks according to what you find most insightful and most intriguing.
4. Collaboratively create a slide to share with the class about your findings. Make sure you are answering the original question and a supporting question(s).

### WHAT DID I LEARN FROM OTHER GROUP'S MINIQUIRIES?


### WHAT NEW QUESTIONS DO I HAVE?

### MININQUIRY REFLECTION

What is the most interesting new fact/idea you learned while researching this topic with the class? How does that idea/fact align with something (specific) we've already learned? Explain in a paragraph using evidence from this inquiry as well as from our past learning.

What would you change about the group process for your next mininquiry? Why?

What is one goal you have for yourself in future inquiry, research, and communicating conclusions?

What score out of / would you provide yourself? Your group? Why?