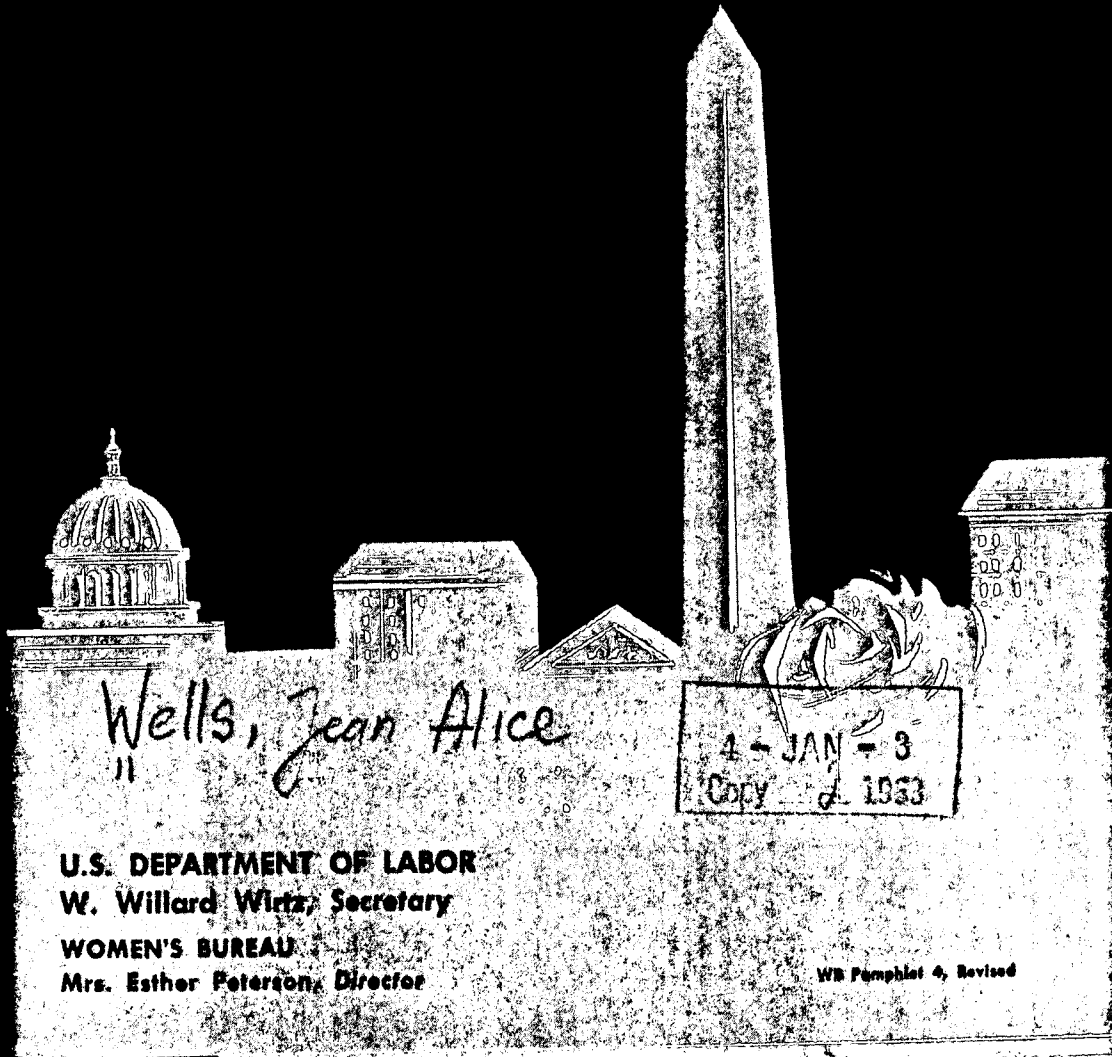


Women in the Federal Service 1939-1959



Wells, Jean Alice
11

4 - JAN - 3
COPY 1953

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
W. Willard Wirtz, Secretary
WOMEN'S BUREAU
Mrs. Esther Peterson, Director

WB Pamphlet 4, Revised

Highlights

-----, TO BE INSERTED

Employment:

The numerical gains of women in the Federal Service have been particularly noteworthy in recent decades. In 1959, a total of 576,000 women worked for the Federal Government; over four-fifths (476,000) were employed in white-collar full-time positions. By comparison, there were fewer than 175,000 women Federal workers in 1939. While men's employment increased 141 percent between 1939 and 1959, women's increased 233 percent.

Location:

In recent years, employment opportunities have increased more rapidly outside the Washington, D.C., area than within. In fact, between 1939 and 1959, about 90 percent of the increase in women's employment took place outside Washington. Although 29 percent of the women employed in Federal Service were working in Washington in 1939, only 17 percent were working there in 1959.

All Federal agencies employ women, although some have higher percentages of women workers than others. The distribution of women among agencies is similar to the distribution of all employees. Almost half of the women were working for the military establishments in 1959 and another fourth, for three agencies: the Veterans' Administration, the Post Office Department, and the Health, Education, and Welfare Department.

Occupations:

Women were employed in four-fifths of the 521 major white-collar occupations listed by the U.S. Civil Service Commission in 1959. Among every 100 women white-collar workers, there were estimated to be:

78 clerical or related workers
8 semiprofessional workers
8 professional workers
1 administrator
5 miscellaneous workers (technicians, specialists, etc.)

Since 1938-39, employment opportunities for women have improved in all types of jobs in the Federal Service. However, the greatest gains (in terms of numbers or percentages of total workers) have been made by women in these occupations:

Accountant	Editorial or information specialist	Medical technologist
Bacteriologist	Legal documents examiner	Nurse
Chemist	Mathematician	Programmer
Draftsman		Statistician
Economist		Therapist

Women's status has changed least in these occupations:

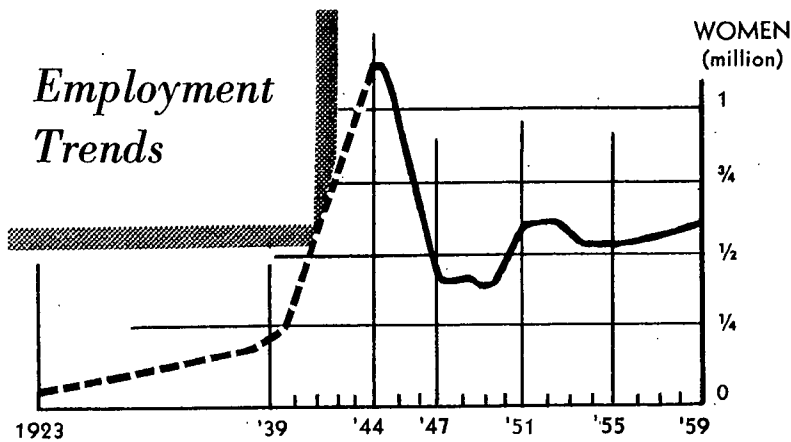
Administrator Doctor Engineer Lawyer

Salaries:

The average (mean) salary of women white-collar workers in Federal Service was \$4,480 in 1959, as compared with \$6,078 a year for men. Annual salaries in 1959 ranged from \$2,960 for grade 1 jobs to \$17,500 for grade 18—as determined under the Classification Act of 1949, as amended.

The average (median) job grade for women in 1959 was grade 4 (\$3,755-\$4,325); this was also the median grade for women in 1954. For men, the median increased from grade 7 in 1954 to grade 9 (\$5,985-\$6,885) in 1959. Almost 80 percent of the women employed in 1959 were in grades 5 and below; 18 percent, in grades 6 through 9; 2 percent, in grades 10 through 12; and less than 1 percent, in grades 13 and above.

WOMEN IN THE FEDERAL SERVICE, 1939-1959



The great increase in the number of women employed by the Federal Government is probably the most spectacular part of the story concerning women in the Federal service. Their numerical gain is related largely to the Government's need for more employees to carry out the increased responsibilities of an expanding economy, as well as to defense requirements. The 575,990 women working for the Government in 1959 compares with 81,500 women employees in 1923, when official employment reports were first issued. The employee ratio is now 1 woman to 3 men; then it was 1 woman to 5 men.

The rise in women's employment has been fairly steady, although marked fluctuations have occurred during and after periods of national emergency. By 1939 the number of women in Federal Service—approximating 173,000—was more than double that of 1923. In 1939 there was about 1 woman to every 4 men employees. During World War II, women's employment exceeded a million and the employee ratio became 2 women for every 3 men. Staff cuts after the war and the return of veterans caused the number of women workers to drop to less than half a million in 1947 and to continue

at about the same level through 1950. Hostilities in Korea brought a moderate increase, as the following figures show: /

	<i>Number of women employees</i>	<i>Ratio of women to men</i>
1923 -----	81,500	1 to 5
1939 -----	172,700	1 to 4
1944 (World War II)-----	1,110,500	2 to 3
1947 (Return of war veterans)-----	444,200	1 to 3
1951 (Korean hostilities)-----	577,500	1 to 3
1954 (Total)-----	521,900	1 to 3
(White-collar, full-time)-----	(440,280)	(1 to 2)
1959 (Total)-----	¹ 575,990	1 to 3
(White-collar, full-time)-----	¹ (476,448)	(1 to 2)

¹The 1959 figures are the only ones listed here which include United States citizens employed overseas. The numbers of women employed by the Federal Government in 1959 in the United States only were: Total—544,110, and white-collar, full-time—460,355.

The gain in women's employment is indicated in a comparison of 1959 figures with those of 1939—just before World War II. The number of women workers increased 233 percent over this period while the number of men increased only 141 percent. This greater percentage gain for women than for men in the Federal Service is similar to the trend among workers outside of Government.

In Conclusion



Women who have gained recognition in Government offer some words of advice for women workers who want to advance their careers:

"Once a woman has found where her interests and abilities lie, she should get the best training and experience possible," declared one woman executive. She continued, "After that she should see to it that she is able to utilize her work skills properly."

"Take advantage of the shortage fields," recommended a woman personnel officer. "The physical sciences and engineering are crying for trained personnel. Here are the places women can advance most quickly if they are qualified."

"Consider engineering among your possible choices for a career," added a woman engineer. "Few women realize how interesting and satisfying a career in professional engineering can be."

"Many women who do not have confidence in their ability to get another job fail to obtain varied employment experience and thereby thwart their chances for advancement," warned a woman administrator who in the past had seen many women workers drift into a blind alley. "Even though a woman finds a specialization of great value, she should not forget that breadth of experience and training can enhance her employability immeasurably."

To young women seeking employment, strong encouragement to enter Federal Service is offered by many women Government officials who have developed successful careers. Most of all, they emphasize the satisfaction of using their training and talents in the interests of their fellow citizens.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1.—White-Collar Employment in the Federal Government, by Agency,
October 31, 1959

Agency	Total employees	Women		
		Number	As per cent of total employees	Percent in D.C. area
TOTAL	1,459,226	476,448	33	17
<i>Executive branch</i> ¹	1,445,930	470,850	33	16
Office of the President.....	2,488	1,134	46	52
Departments.....	1,222,724	386,016	32	16
Agriculture.....	68,919	17,288	25	27
Commerce.....	23,040	6,863	30	65
Defense:				
Air Force.....	150,170	78,877	52	6
Army.....	205,528	95,166	46	13
Navy.....	130,969	59,209	45	19
Office of Secretary of Defense.....	1,689	928	55	96
Health, Education, and Welfare.....	52,479	29,089	55	26
Interior.....	36,583	10,896	30	21
Justice.....	28,195	9,055	32	44
Labor.....	5,712	2,757	48	62
Post Office.....	433,390	40,913	9	2
State.....	18,445	6,997	38	54
Treasury.....	67,607	28,275	42	16
Independent agencies.....	220,718	83,705	38	16
Atomic Energy Commission.....	6,526	2,256	35	33
Canal Zone Government.....	1,143	525	46
Civil Aeronautics Board.....	710	305	43	95
Civil Service Commission.....	3,527	1,759	50	54
Farm Credit Administration.....	777	249	32	24
Federal Aviation Agency.....	31,080	3,910	13	28
Federal Communications Commission.....	1,220	480	39	80
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.....	1,217	312	26	47
Federal Home Loan Bank Board.....	945	217	23	65
Federal Power Commission.....	804	236	29	88
Federal Trade Commission.....	719	287	40	84
General Services Administration.....	12,620	4,592	36	36
Housing and Home Finance Agency.....	10,700	4,642	43	34
Information Agency.....	3,613	1,327	37	78
Interstate Commerce Commission.....	2,261	812	36	75
National Aeronautics and Space Administration.....	5,685	1,458	26	18
National Labor Relations Board.....	1,475	636	43	37
National Science Foundation.....	448	261	59	100
Panama Canal Company.....	1,151	380	33	1
Railroad Retirement Board.....	2,237	1,140	51	1
Securities and Exchange Commission.....	917	292	32	64
Selective Service System.....	4,147	3,710	89	3
Small Business Administration.....	2,092	1,011	48	25
Smithsonian Institution.....	871	235	27	96
Tennessee Valley Authority.....	5,403	1,235	23	(²)
Veterans Administration.....	115,895	50,502	44	4
Other independent agencies.....	2,447	936	38	75
<i>Judicial branch</i>	4,587	2,071	45	15
<i>Legislative branch</i> ³	8,708	3,527	41	89
General Accounting Office.....	5,018	1,757	35	79
Government Printing Office.....	1,194	653	55	98
Library of Congress.....	2,399	1,094	46	100
Other.....	87	23	24	100

¹ Covers all white-collar employees of the executive branch, except those in the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

² Fewer than 0.5 percent.

³ Covers 5 out of 6 agencies; excluded are Members and employees of the Congress.

Source: U.S. Civil Service Commission.