WORKING WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES:
BOOKS ON HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

This reading list was prepared for the Leadership Institute for Trade
Union Women, June 26-July 1, 1988, sponsored by the Wisconsin AFL-CIO and the
School for Workers, UW-Extension.

Annotations are derived in large part from two published bibliographies:
Women's Studies: A Recommended Core Bibliography, by Esther Stineman (Libraries
Unlimited, 1979); and Women's Studies: A Recommended Core Bibliography, 1980-
1985, by Catherine Loeb, Susan Searing, and Esther Stineman (Libraries
Unlimited, 1987).

HISTORIES OF WORKING WOMEN AND WOMEN IN UNIONS


This classic survey, rediscovered by contemporary women's historians,
focuses on the transition from colonial times, when women's labor was centered
in the home and unpaid, to the factory system and women's increasing dependence
on wages.

Baxandall, Rosalyn, Linda Gordon, and Susan Reverby, eds. America's Working

Included in this readable collection of primary source documents are
union records, short stories, poems, songs, social workers' reports, statistical
studies, and more.

Benson, Susan Porter. Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in
American Department Stores, 1890-1940. Urbana: University of Illinois Press,
1986.

Brownlee, W. Elliot, and Mary M. Brownlee. Women in the American Economy: A

This patchwork of letters, speeches, diaries, recollections, and reports
documents women's contributions to American economic life, both as workers and
consumers.

Foner, Philip Sheldon. Women and the American Labor Movement: From the First

Abridged from an encyclopedic two-volume work of the same title, this
book is a rich assemblage of facts about women's labor struggles, both on their
own behalf and in support of their husbands.

Davies renders an account of the feminization of office work in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and its evolution as a field with no upward mobility.


After a short historical chapter, this book presents edited oral histories of ten women who worked in the aircraft industry during World War II.


This anthology gathers the best papers on women and work from the Sixth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women.


This study analyzes the role of pop culture in bringing women into the workforce during World War II and shunting them back into the home after the war.


The nine articles in this volume blend into a coherent social history of women in the garment industries.


Nine essays by historians and labor educators profile innovative programs for women workers' education. Each essay is supplemented by documentary material -- poems, plays, oral histories, and photographs.


This survey of three centuries is generally considered the best overall study of American women's labor. Kessler-Harris interprets the social, economic, and ideological forces that have shaped women's participation in the labor force, as well as analyzing the effects of class, ethnicity, and race and the relationship between women's waged work and the family.


Designed for the college or high school classroom, this text is less comprehensive in historical detail than the author's *Out to Work* (see above), but enlarges the focus to include nonwaged labor such as homemaking and volunteer work.


This history of women's work in the United States from colonial times to the present looks closely at the division of labor by sex both at home and at the factory or office. Matthaai is a Marxist economist, and consequently this book is more theoretical in its approach than similar overviews written by historians (for example, Kessler-Harris's *Out to Work*).

The fourteen articles in this anthology pinpoint specific historical circumstances that shaped women's militancy and explain the nature of male unionists' opposition.


This illustrated catalog of a traveling exhibit features biographies of union women.


Written by historians, the essays in this volume offer a comparative view of women in unions in Great Britain, France, the United States, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Argentina, and Japan.


This book examines women's labor activism around the turn of the century, including the work of the Women's Trade Union League, the IWW, and the Socialist Party. Tax has also recreated this period in her novel *Rivington Street* (1982).


Proceeding chronologically from the 17th century to the start of World War I, this highly readable, illustrated history covers women's work in the home and field (including slave labor), in the factory, and on the frontier. Women's roles in labor unions are emphasized.

WORKING WOMEN AND WOMEN IN UNIONS TODAY


Arguing that the feminist and labor movements must cooperate, Balser examines three working women's organizations: the Working Women's Association of 1868, Union WAGE of the 1970s, and the Coalition of Labor Union Women.


Berch presents a readable summary of current research on women and work, including historical perspectives, statistics on labor force participation and sex segregation of occupations, household work, childbearing, government remedies, the corporate woman, trade unions, and cross-cultural comparisons.


Founders of the national organization of office workers, "9 to 5," Cassedy and Nussbaum offer counsel on salaries, health hazards, automation, family issues, and retirement. Helpful exercises, glossaries of terms, and quizzes break up the text, and an office worker's "Bill of Rights" concludes the volume.

Thirteen original articles document women's trade union experiences in Denmark, West Germany, Finland, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Sweden, and the United States. The case studies look at women's labor force participation, sex segregation of the workforce, representation of women in unions and union leadership, and workplace issues such as wages, training and apprenticeship, seniority, and shorter work weeks.


This is one of the earliest books on the subject of sexual harassment, since followed by more theoretical studies such as Catherine MacKinnon's Sexual Harassment of Working Women: A Case of Sex Discrimination (1979) and other works.


Designed for the undergraduate classroom, this textbook covers the sex segregation of occupations, income inequality, work socialization, economic theory, law, minority women, dual-worker families, and specific occupations (clerical, blue-collar, professional, and managerial).


A 64-page pamphlet, this is a clearly written summary of how corporations are moving labor-intensive jobs to Third World countries where cheap (generally female) labor is readily available. Ehrenreich and Fuentes look at the situation of women on "the global assembly line" in East Asia, Mexico, Central America, Korea, and the Philippines, as well as the garment sweatshops of New York City and the electronics firms of Silicon Valley.


In this readable mock debate, Gold presents arguments pro and con for the controversial idea of equal pay for jobs of comparable worth.


Drawing on interviews, Howe describes the working lives of beauticians, sales workers, waitresses, office workers, and homemakers.


The editors have selected seventeen articles from the journal Social Problems between 1975 and 1981 to serve as an introductory text on women and work.


This commercial publication treats the same subjects as the booklet from the federal Women's Bureau (A Working Woman's Guide to Her Job Rights, see below) but in greater detail.

Sponsored by the Industrial Relations Research Association, this volume presents a scholarly overview of working women's issues in thirteen separately-authored chapters. Chapter 6, by Philip S. Foner, is titled "Women and the American Labor Movement: A Historical Perspective." Chapter 7, by Ruth Needleman and Lucretia Dewey Tanner, is titled "Women in Unions: Current Issues."


The fifteen articles in this collection bring out two major themes: "what capitalism has done to women's work, and how women resist and do for each other." Among the topics are the impact of new technologies, the relation of family and economy, and women in the "global factory." Although based on academic research, the articles are quite feminist and pro-labor in their approach.


The author conducted lengthy oral history interviews with Seattle-area women working in aerospace, shipbuilding, maritime, forestry, and other trades. The first-person accounts are arranged in five thematic sections: feminism, occupational safety and health, race, unions, and family.


Drawing on research by members of the Urban Institute, this volume addresses women's status in the labor market, unemployment and work schedules, women's employment and the family, and changes in the federal income tax system and social security.


This reference book provides statistical data on women's employment through the early 1980s, plus information on state and federal laws.


This succinct guide explains the legal rights of women in the paid labor force under federal law. The chapter titled "Getting the Job" covers employment services, apprenticeship and training programs, and discrimination in hiring. "On the Job" treats a number of concerns, including minimum wages, overtime pay, pay equity, maternity leave, sexual harassment, unemployment benefits, occupational safety, union activities, and tax credits for child care. The final chapter, "After Retirement," discusses social security and pensions.


Walshok, a sociologist, interviewed over a hundred California tradeswomen in the late seventies. Quoting frequently from the women themselves, she discusses their family backgrounds, work role identities, on-the-job experiences, work relationships, and the meaning of work in their lives.

Westwood, an anthropologist who worked for a year in a British hosiery factory, describes women's shop floor culture: how it both resists patriarchal management and reinforces patriarchal conceptions of womanhood; and how it nurtures sisterhood and solidarity among workers.


Many of the statistics in this report reveal the consumer habits of working women, but the data on work responsibilities, attitudes toward work and home, and differences among women according to marital and child status are of wider interest.

Compiled by Susan E. Searing, June 1988