

# Kansas Women.

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# Outline of Thesis.: —

History of Kansas Women in general.  
 Kansas women as :-

Wage-earners

Wages.

No. hrs per da.

Health.

Why women receive  
 lower wages  
 than men.

Political leaders :

Hist of Woman Suffrage.

Writers

Agriculturists

Teachers.

All other employments.

## Kansas Women.

The history of the Women of Kansas is so interwoven with the history of the state that it is almost impossible to tell their story without giving a part or the whole of the history of Kansas. It would take the inspiration of a poet, the eloquence of an orator, and the genius of a writer, to do justice to their sterling worth, their ambition and their endurance. Characters were developed, grand and noble, which exerted their influence in the years that followed. They deprived themselves of the comforts of life, and deemed no sacrifice too great which gave them the opportunity of educating their children. In the state today no truer, braver men and women ever lived, and it is this kind who have made an impress upon Kansas and her institutions.

What Kansas is today, she owes to the foundations laid by her brave pioneers. Kansas has an eager restless spirit and her people are ever progressing. This spirit is manifested in the service of women as county superintendents, regents and professors of colleges, organizers of

clubs in literary and art circles, in the industrial world and in almost every other line which could be mentioned.

Every year the field occupied by working women becomes more extended, and the demand for reliable information as to their work increases. It is difficult to make an investigation in which the position of the average Kansas woman can be shown. A complaint, and a just one, has been made of the low wages paid to women in general. The 5th Annual report of the Bureau of Labor for 1889, shows there are 22,780 women employed in the various trades and industries in Kansas. The statistics were gathered from the six larger cities in the state.

Of the 147 women interviewed, 110 were single, 16 married and 21 were widows. This goes to show that, as a rule, working women are single, and only work until other conditions shall relieve them of care. Indeed this is one of the reasons why women get so much lower wages than men, because thinking that matrimony will relieve them of all burdens, they do not take enough interest in their work to become proficient and so in most cases, work in a half-hearted way. Another fact was shown, that 72 girls

had both parents living, the fathers of 5-7 were dead, and the mothers of 40 were dead.

One of the computations made, found that 87 girls lived with parents, which bears out the assumption that working-girls live with their parents as far as possible. Women work on an average of 60 hours per week, or 10 hours per day. Calls are made, especially of saleswomen where women in busy seasons work extra hours.

The time lost by the average working-girl is 11.8 weeks. leaving, out of 52 weeks, 40.2 weeks for work. Sixty-one of the 147 girls report having served an apprenticeship. The average time being 6.4 months at an average of \$1.85 per week.

As to health conditions, 49 report that their health is not so good as when they became wage-earners. Eleven report that they are better and 87 report no change. Of the great majority of girls who work 60 hours per week there is 66.66% of the girls who do housework and their own sewing, wholly or in part. One hour is allowed to 75.96% for dinner, 20.16% are allowed less than an hour, the shortest time being fifteen minutes.

The average weekly income from wages for the time worked, is \$6.68; average weekly income for 52 weeks is \$5.17; average weekly expenses for 52 weeks was \$5.36 showing a deficit of 19 cts. This shows that the greater number of girls are helped by parents or friends.

In this report, there are testimonials from every occupation. These letters written by the girls express their true sentiments in regard to their work. Many instances are given where the wages of men were double the wages of girls in doing the same kind of work. This exists not only in factories hotels, &c, but even in a college in this state, where boys were paid ten cents an hour for doing in some cases precisely the same work, or labor which was not any harder than that done by the girls, who received  $7\frac{1}{2}$  cents an hour.

After these facts, comes the question, Why are women paid less than men?

There is hardly a field where we do not find women occupied, whether we look in religion, art, music, medicine, education, science &c. and what has been her compensation?

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Is it just and fair? There are a few logical reasons why women are employed at a lower rate than men.

1 - Women lack the influence which comes from combination and association. For one reason, they are not a political factor, and it takes direct legislative influence to bring the hours of labor of women and children to an equality with that of men.

2 - Women as a new economic factor has created a pressure in certain fields in which the supply has been made greater than the demand.

3 - As has been mentioned before, she is unequipped for her work, thinking that it will be interrupted by maternity.

4 - Women are not physically able to compete with men. In most cases they do not rely entirely on their wages, being supported in part by their parents or friends.

5 - Women are not so well content to commence at the foot of the ladder, and statistics show that they obtain higher positions in less time than men.

Some people think that women in engaging in industrial pursuits, will lower their moral standard. This is not so, and will not be so; for, as women grow more independent, they will not marry simply to get a home. It is one of the deepest of moral crimes for a woman to sell her life to a man because he can give her certain conveniences and provide for her so she need not work so hard.

If women were pecuniarily independent and had nothing to gain from marriage as regards her material well being, it would probably come to be considered a degradation for her to marry a man she could not both love and esteem. If a woman has an opportunity of honorably supporting herself while pursuing intellectual and spiritual development, she is more liable to seek or accept marriage from the highest and purest motives. If woman gains industrial emancipation, she will enter those industries, which by experience she has found she is best fitted for, and will abandon the fields in which man excels her.

As to her political ambition, she will gain her political freedom in spite of all arguments against it. To secure this, it takes persistent effort, and this is what the Women of Kansas are undertaking. A history of the "Woman's Suffrage" question of Kansas shows determined effort and steadfastness of purpose. As early as March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1867, an amendment on Woman's Suffrage was submitted to the people. On April 3<sup>rd</sup> of the same year, an Impartial Suffrage convention met at Topeka. In August, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton came from New York to Kansas to advocate Woman's suffrage. In September the Republicans met at Lawrence, and organized a campaign in favor of negro suffrage, and against Woman suffrage. In February, 1868, a Woman Suffrage Convention was held at Topeka. The Democratic party of the same year adopted equal suffrage in their platform. In August, 1882, the Republicans requested the legislature to submit the Woman Suffrage Amendment to the people. The question of equal suffrage was not agitated

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Very much until 1894, when the Amendment was again submitted to the people.

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The Amendment was lost, but the campaign brought into prominence a number of Kansas women, whose abilities were fully recognized, by their work in the cause of Woman Suffrage.

Perhaps one who is most generally known is Anna L. Diggs, who is a politician and a journalist. She was chosen by the People's Party to reply to the platform utterances of John J. Ingalls. She is a radical speaker, and does much for political and personal independence and equality.

Laura M. Johns did perhaps more than any other one person in securing the passage of the 'Municipal Suffrage Law,' which was passed in 1887. The loyal service Mrs Johns has given to equal suffrage indicates how deeply she feels the dependence of living in a government without being a factor of the same.

Scores of other women might be mentioned, such as Mrs Bina Otis, Mrs Anna E. Wait, Mrs May Belleville Brown, Helen Kinder, Mrs Thurston, Mrs Ella W. Brown, Mrs Hopkins, and many, many other women who are working in a more quiet way.

Nearly every town, small or large, has its Women's Clubs, whether literary or political, and the vast amount of good done by these clubs cannot be fully realized.

Of the Women Writers of Kansas, it is hard to find the names of even a few.

They are very modest in regard to their literary ability, and either write under a "nom de plume" or keep their names hidden as much as possible.

Mrs. Sarah Robinson was, perhaps, the first woman writer of any note, and she wrote, "Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life".

This book is taken as authority on the early history of Kansas.

"The Squatter Sovereignty or Kansas in the 50's", was written by Mary C. Humphrey, and is interesting in depicting the pioneer life of Kansas.

Many other writers could be mentioned, who have written on nearly every subject from politics to religion.

Kansas has the honor of having the first woman coroner in the U. S. Dr. Mabel Spencer, of Manhattan, who acted as coroner in 1896 & 7. Kansas also claims Mother Bickerdyke whose

name is dear to many, many soldiers whom she nursed and cared for during the Civil War.

The value of woman's work must not be forgotten in regard to agriculture. Her place is fully realized but her worth cannot be estimated. Nearly every farmer's wife is an expert in something. One may know more about and can make better butter than her neighbor, another has more luck in raising chickens, one can have a better garden; nearly every woman excels in something and could they meet and tell each other their methods, and their experiences, a vast amount of good could be done. This could be accomplished in Farmer's Institutes could women only be persuaded to attend them. A farmer's wife, with her butter and eggs, virtually supports the whole family, often buying all the groceries and clothing. The Kansas women need more recreation, more enjoyment. Statistics show that a large percentage of the hopelessly insane in our asylums are farmer's wives. No wonder they lose their minds, toiling from day to day, perhaps never leaving home for

Weeks and weeks, being bound in by the four walls of -a Kansas kitchen.

On the Farmer's wife do we put our dependence. She is the support of the Kansas Commonwealth.

She rears children, who become statesmen, orators, writers etc.; who make our country's history; and to the Mothers do we give our admiration, our love, our respect, and our esteem; those women whose high daring, and stern fortitude have helped transform Kansas from a desert, into one of the fairest places on earth. Victor Hugo says, "He who has seen the sufferings of men has seen nothing.

Let him look upon the sufferings of women."

May the time soon come when a true history of the Women of Kansas will be written, giving them all the merit they deserve.

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