

UNLACING THE CORSET, UNLEASHING THE VOTE: WOMAN SUFFRAGE & ITS IMPACT ON CULTURE & SOCIETY IN WINDHAM COUNTY, CT — A VIRTUAL EXHIBIT

Curated by Kira Holmes, Chelsey Knyff, and Beverly L. York, 2020-21

The exhibit *Unlacing the Corset, Unleashing the Vote* ran from February 15, 2020 through June 30, 2021. The exhibit observed the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. Sometimes called the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, the 19th Amendment extended suffrage — the right to vote — to most American women. Because the Museum was closed to the public during the Coronavirus / COVID-19 Crisis, we created a “virtual” version of this exhibit, which is presented below. It was our first attempt to construct a “complete” virtual exhibit — one that included not only the exhibit display boards, but also images of all of the objects exhibited and the captions that accompanied them.



Introduction

Unlacing the Corset, Unleashing the Vote

This exhibit uses stories, fashion, undergarments, and photos to explore a collective of Connecticut women's experiences in the century since the 19th Amendment — the Susan B. Anthony Amendment — in 1920 gave Connecticut women the right to vote. The emphasis is on the mill towns of the northeast. We start our journey in the late nineteenth century and continue to the early twenty-first. We walk the path of suffrage, for gaining the vote led to cultural changes, expanded civil liberties, and a continuing fight for equality. We focus on fashion, for political empowerment is reflected in increasing choices about clothing, styles, and comfort.

Our everyday lives, may it just be what we wear underneath, form the basis of our empowerment.

Our mannequins are all created differently, just like you and me. Stand tall like our mannequins!



Susan B. Anthony.
Public domain. Public relations portrait of Susan B. Anthony as used in *History of Woman Suffrage*, c. 1855, engraved by G. E. Perne & Co., New York. <https://archive.org/stream/historyofwomensuff1stanuoft/page/n693/mode/2up>.

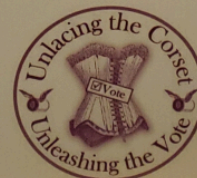
Curators:
Kira Holmes
Chelsey Knyff



Katharine Martha Houghton Hepburn.
Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/index.php?curid=20378407>.



Betty Tanti.
State of Connecticut. Taken from Thomas R. Beardsley, *Williamantic Industry and Community: The Rise and Decline of a Connecticut Textile City* (Williamantic: Windham Textile and History Museum, 1993), p. 126.



2020 was the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution. Sometimes called the Susan B. Anthony Amendment or the Woman Suffrage Amendment, the 19th Amendment provided voting rights to most American women. (Some women — living in progressive western states — had already achieved suffrage through state laws. Connecticut, however, was not one of those states, and prior to 1920 no Connecticut women could vote. Also, although the language of the 19th Amendment encompassed all American women, in reality non-white women would still struggle to attain voting rights for years to come.) Recently, the office of the Connecticut Secretary of the State challenged local museums, organizations, and municipalities to join in a statewide effort to observe the passage of the 19th Amendment. The Mill Museum has joined in, with our exhibit, *Unlacing the Corset, Unleashing the Vote*. The exhibit examines not only the impact of woman suffrage on Connecticut history and the lives of Connecticut women, but also the many social changes that accompanied it. Because we are a museum of textile history, we decided to focus on fashion and clothing. Our hypothesis is that suffrage empowered Connecticut women politically, socially, and culturally, and that with political power came greater

choice in choosing one's clothing. That choice meant a long-term movement towards less restrictive clothing, especially undergarments.

Unlacing the Corset, Unleashing the Vote was guest curated by Kira Holmes and Chelsey Knyff. Kira is a graduate of the M.A. in Public History program at Central Connecticut State University and works at Mystic Seaport. She lives in Killingly. She is the Vice President of the Mill Museum's Board of Directors and a member of the Killingly Historical Society's Board of Directors. Chelsey is an undergraduate student in History and Fashion. She is an accomplished seamstress and an expert in historical garments. She is Educator at Schiller's Sewing Center in Willimantic, CT, and she and her husband John own Bloody Historical, a company specializing in historic reenactments and recreations. Chelsey is also a consultant to Strawberry Banke in Portsmouth, NH. Kira and Chelsey were assisted in this exhibit by Beverly York, Jamie Eves, Andrea Ader, Michael Ader, John Knyff, Claire Lary, Suzanne LaTulipe, Hunter Oullette, Diana Perkins, Jaky Ray, Kenneth Rhodes, and Paula Sullivan. Partial funding came from grants from the Anne Wood Elderkin Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Willimantic Club of the Soroptimist International of America.

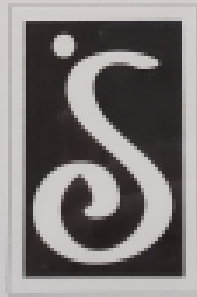
The Mill Museum
thanks the Anne Wood
Elderkin Chapter
of the Daughters of the
American Revolution
for generously supporting
this exhibit.



DAR

Daughters of the
American Revolution

The Mill Museum
thanks the Soroptimist
International of America,
Willimantic Club,
for generously supporting
this exhibit.



S O R O P T I M I S T[®]

Investing in Dreams

Early Twentieth-Century Origins



As the twentieth century dawned, Connecticut women increasingly questioned many of the standards of the old nineteenth century. Deeper analyses of big business practices appeared in journal articles examining factory standards. Social injustices sparked reform efforts, including a growing movement for racial and gender equality. Women formed and joined national and local organizations promoting woman suffrage and sex equality. Women like Fairfield's Mabel Osgood Wright and Hartford's Mary Townshend Seymour now served as officers in state and national organizations, such as the Connecticut Audubon Society and the Hartford chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and thus exercised leadership. They could now be employed as police matrons, assistant town clerks, school trustees, and public librarians. The United States joined World War I in 1917, which created opportunities for women to both protest and support the war effort, and to organize prominent woman suffrage demonstrations in Washington, DC. Connecticut women served in Europe during the War as doctors and nurses. The number of American women employed for wages rose from 2.6 million in 1880 to 7.8 million in 1910. In Connecticut, suffrage advocates campaigned by automobile tours, especially in Middlesex, Tolland, and Windham counties.

Above: Clothing remained restrictive, however, reflecting nineteenth-century values, as illustrated in the garments above. The two dresses are on loan from the the Windham Historical Society.



Above: A pair of lady's boots from more than a century ago, designed to show a minimum of flesh. The device surrounding them are the hoops for a hoop skirt, a heavy, uncomfortable, and restrictive garment.



Above: A fashion plate from a turn-of-the-century magazine. Hoop skirts were being replaced by bustles in the rear of the dresses.



Above: The classic hourglass silhouette embodied in early-20th-century women's fashion, with its narrow waist and flared hips. The hourglass silhouette owed much to hoops, bustles, and — especially — corsets.

Corsets Start to Come Off

Corsets had been an ubiquitous part of women's attire for many years. Originally, they were a transformation of stays. Stays came out in the Elizabethan time period, with many small tunnel seams holding reed or whale boning. These stays helped disperse the weight of the many petticoats worn at the time. Eventually, stays became jumps, which then became corsets. Corsets had spiral steel boning placed along the curves of the body and were laced from the middle of the waist out. This would sometimes even crack or break ribs to force the S-Curve shape. Corsets also had long, steel "busks" at the back and front to support the shape, and to aid in putting them on.

Corsets were normal women's wear up until World War I. During the Great War, women stepped into men's jobs. This included factory work and working alongside the army overseas. Women had to lose their corsets to more easily perform their duties. World War I has been labeled as demolishing our old social system and helping us get rid of old values and expectations of society. After the war, fashion designers tried to bring

back corsets, but women fought back. The concept of Haute Couture came out, as fashion designers began working hard on what to do with women's fashion. Women had become accustomed to more functional and comfortable styles and would not look back.

The first fashion designer accredited to fashion without a corset was Paul Poiret. He created fashion dresses with a similar S-Curve silhouette, but with a high waist and accenting the natural curves of the body. These fashion designs came out in the early 1900s, with the first styles being released in the 1910s. His styles did not catch on, however, until after the war.

The corset was not lost over night, however. Many women still clung to the old styles of fashion.





Timeline: Before 1920

1869: Isabella Beecher Hooker, Frances Ellen Burr, and others established the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association at Connecticut's first suffrage convention. The CSWA's purpose was to convince the Connecticut General Assembly to ratify the proposed woman suffrage amendment, establishing suffrage at the state level.

1872-1909: Women began to attend Wesleyan College in Middletown, CT.

1889: The Willimantic Normal School (now Eastern Connecticut State University) opened. The majority of the students were women.

1893: The Storrs Agricultural College (now the University of Connecticut) admitted women.

1898: New York native and Fairfield, Connecticut resident Mabel Osgood Wright organized and became the first President of the Connecticut Audubon Society. In 1905 Wright became the first woman to join the Board of Directors of the National Audubon Society.

1911: The Connecticut College for Women (now Connecticut College) was established in New London, CT.

1913: The Connecticut's Workers' Compensation Act was passed.

1914: In May, the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association held a suffrage parade in Hartford.

1917: The National Women's Party (NWP) was formed, and shortly after New Jersey native and later Connecticut resident Alice Paul and fellow members — representing

the so-called radical wing of the suffrage movement — protested in the streets for suffrage. During World War I the NWP organized suffrage protests in Washington, DC.

1917: Mary Townshend Seymour co-founded the Hartford chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

1918: World War I ended.

1919: The Women's National Press Club was established.



Connecticut Leader for African American and Women's Rights: Mary Townshend Seymour of Hartford

A civil rights leader from Hartford, Connecticut, Mary Townshend Seymour did much to advance the cause of suffrage and equality in Connecticut, including becoming the first African American woman in the United States to run for state office. She was born in Hartford in 1873, only a few years after the end of the Civil War, during the Reconstruction Era. Her parents died when she was young, and she was adopted by the family of Lloyd G. Seymour, an African American Civil War veteran and social activist. In 1891, she married Frederick Seymour, a member of the Seymour family.

Mary Seymour's political activism began in the 1910s, during the Great Migration, when many Southern African Americans were moving to Northern cities like Hartford, seeking better jobs and fairer treatment. The City reacted with alarm, proposing to segregate public schools by race. Mary and Frederick Seymour organized opposition to the plan. In 1917, they helped found the Hartford chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), then a fairly new organization. Mary became the chapter's spokesperson. In 1918 she was instrumental in organizing the

Hartford branch of the Circle for Negro War Relief, to aid African American soldiers' families during World War I. Soon after, she joined the American Red Cross, working with African American women tobacco packers, writing an article on the subject for the NAACP news magazine, *The Crisis*.

During the 1919-20 campaign to pass and ratify the Woman Suffrage Amendment, Seymour campaigned to make sure that African American women were included.

In the 1920 election, the first in which Connecticut women could vote, Mary Seymour ran for a seat in the Connecticut General Assembly. Although she lost, she became the first African American woman in the United States to run for state office.

Mary Seymour passed away in 1957. She is a member of the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame. To read more about Mary Townshend Seymour, visit <https://www.cwhf.org/inductees/mary-townsend-seymour>.

Connecticut Leader for Environmentalism: Mabel Osgood Wright

Connecticut's earliest environmentalists were almost all women, and organizing the Connecticut Audubon Society gave them the opportunity to become leaders in the growing movement to preserve nature, Connecticut's pastoral environment, and — especially — birds. The Nutmeg State has been a home for many species of birds. It is located midway along the east coast flyway, the air route many bird species use to migrate between their northern summer breeding grounds and southern winter habitats. Some bird species summer in Connecticut, others winter here, and still others stop off for rest and food on their way north or south — especially in the food-rich estuarine salt marshes at the mouth of the Connecticut River and along Long Island Sound. And because Connecticut has been a refuge for birds, for more than a century it has also been a home for environmentalists, ornithologists, birders, and bird watchers.

One of the first — and perhaps the most influential — Connecticut environmentalist was Fairfield's Mabel Osgood Wright, a native New Yorker attracted to Connecticut by its pastoral environment of family farms, traditional villages, open fields, woods, marshes, and abundance of birds — all in welcome contrast to the stark brick-and-concrete artificiality of the sprawling metropolis where she spent her winters. Born in 1859 in New York City, Wright was the youngest daughter of Ellen and Samuel Osgood, typical nineteenth-century upper-class New Yorkers. Samuel was a minister, the pastor of the Church of the Messiah, New York's oldest Unitarian church. Like many New Yorkers, he was also an immigrant, a transplanted New Englander. He was well educated and worldly, a student and protégée of Henry Ware and William Ellery Channing, and a graduate of Harvard Divinity School. He was a man of letters, the author of six volumes of essays and sermons, a frequent contributor to some of the country's leading

magazines and journals, and friends with William Cullen Bryant, George Bancroft, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and other prominent literati. Like many educated Americans of his day, Samuel was deeply interested in natural history. He would be Mabel's greatest influence as an ornithologist, writer, intellectual, and naturalist.

When Mabel was born, her family resided in lower Manhattan, on Eleventh Street, only a short walk from Samuel's church. Choked by rapid growth and industrialization, by the mid-1800s New York City was already becoming crowded, polluted, noisy, and artificial. Wild plants and animals, woods, marshes, clean water, and even farmland were fast disappearing, replaced by brick buildings, streets, wharfs, and sewers. Not surprisingly, in 1850 Samuel, like many other well-to-do New Yorkers, decided to rent a country retreat, where he could find the kind of pastoral environment that he had known in his youth in New Hampshire, but was now becoming scarce on lower Manhattan. He found it in Fairfield, Connecticut, a quiet, traditional, rural, Yankee-fied community on Long Island Sound, and within easy commuting distance from New York by train. Samuel enjoyed the quiet summers in Fairfield, and seven years later purchased eight acres there and built a house of his own, which he called Mosswood. Mabel grew up shuttling between two ecosystems: pastoral Fairfield and industrial New York. She would be shaped by both.

Mabel shared Samuel's love of letters, pastoral living, writing, and nature. Yet both her father and her husband (James Osborne Wright, a fellow intellectual and nature lover whom she married in 1884, four years after Samuel's death) discouraged her from writing, which both men considered outside of women's proper sphere. It was not until 1890 that Mabel became liberated enough to publish her first nature essays in the New York Times and New York Evening Post – and even then, anonymously and in secret from James. These essays described the pastoral environment of Mosswood, which she and James had inherited from Samuel. For the rest of her life, Mabel continued to commute between New York and Fairfield, as much a part of one ecosystem as the other. In 1894 Mabel collected eleven of her Fairfield essays in a slender volume, *The Friendship of Nature: A New England Chronicle of Birds and Flowers*. This time, her name appeared on the cover. The book sold well and earned critical praise. James was pleased, and Mabel no longer had to write in secret. The female naturalist had come out of her closet.

The next year, 1895, Mabel published her most important book, *Birdcraft*, a field guide to birds. As she recalled later, until then “it was well-nigh impossible to obtain any inexpensive handbooks upon birds, flowers, trees, stars, or any other of the objects that set the Nature lover's mind at work, that were at once accurate and yet written in a style suited to popular consumption.” *Birdcraft* filled the need. It became the principal field guide to North American birds, and remained so for four decades, until it was finally supplanted by Roger Tory Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds*, the first edition of which appeared in 1934. The sixth and final edition of *Birdcraft* was published posthumously in 1936. Using natural history techniques, Wright provided a catalog of

birds arranged in taxonomic order. She added descriptions of their appearance, songs, and behavior, based on her own personal observations in Fairfield. Although based in part on several years of research at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, it was the combination of careful scholarship and field observations that made *Birdcraft* so valuable. In 1901 Wright published a similar field guide to plants, *Flowers and Ferns and Their Haunts*. Both books achieved quick critical and financial success.

At the same time, Wright also began writing nature books for children. In addition, she organized children's bird classes at her homes in Fairfield and New York, and led field trips to various bird habitats. Her children's books resembled those of the Scottish-born and Canadian-bred naturalist and artist Ernest Thompson Seton, who had a home in Greenwich, Connecticut, only a few miles from Mosswood. Both writers blended fact and fiction into exciting and sentimental stories that appealed to children. Seton even illustrated one of Wright's books. Her children's books drew Wright into an acrimonious "nature faker" debate, begun when President Theodore Roosevelt used his bully pulpit to lambast the popular nature writer William J. Long for publishing fanciful, imagined, and unrealistic animal stories and passing them off as true fact. Because Seton's animal stories were also sentimental, he had against his will been pulled into the controversy, despite his much greater attention to proper science and observation. To protect herself against similar attacks, Wright became a vocal critic of Long and the "nature fakers," even as she continued to publish her fictional animal stories for children. She also wrote a series of novels for adults, which were generally panned by critics.

Wright was a skilled photographer as well as a best-selling writer, and she used her photos to illustrate some of her books. She used dry glass plates, first marketed in the 1870s, rather than the simpler, easier-to-use celluloid film introduced by Kodak in the late 1880s. She employed a horse and buggy to lug her large-view camera, glass plates, and heavy tripod around Fairfield. She developed the negatives herself at Mosswood, producing more than 400 images of rural life, nature, and scenic vistas. In the 1920s she began taking "colonial revival" photos in the Wallace Nutting style, using costumed models to reenact tableaux from Fairfield's colonial history. Like many Progressive-Era East-Coast naturalists, Wright often mixed natural history with dreamy nostalgia for a vanishing pastoral past.

This kind of "pastoral preservation," although largely absent from the writings and ideas of John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, Theodore Roosevelt, and other early conservationists who remain well known today, was nonetheless commonplace among turn-of-the-century progressives, and was often present in the thinking of John Burroughs, Liberty Hyde Bailey, Wright, and other once-influential thinkers and activists who have since been mostly forgotten. At its core, pastoral preservation identified nature less with wilderness, as Muir did, and more with rural life. In Wright's mind, the birds she loved could coexist with humans in a traditional countryside of fields, manicured woodlands, and pocket marshes. "Man's kingdom is a bit of ground

and his birthright a resting-place on the earth's bosom," she wrote in *The Friendship of Nature*. "Out of the ground grow the trees that hang their leaves in the wind to shelter him, the flowers that unfold in the sun, the ferns that deepen the silence in the shadowy byways.... Above this bit of ground is a scrap of sky ..., and on the ground, in the trees, and in the sky, are the birds...."

It is not surprising, then, that Wright never became identified with wilderness preservation on a grand scale. Instead, she focused her conservation efforts locally, organizing the Connecticut Audubon Society. After a few false starts in the 1880s, the Audubon movement in the United States took off in 1896-98, when bird lovers organized state Audubon societies in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, New Hampshire, Illinois, Maine, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Rhode Island, the District of Columbia, and Connecticut. The Connecticut society was formed when Wright and twelve other women met in Fairfield in January, 1898. Wright came up from New York for the meeting. She was elected state president, a position she held for the next 26 years.

The new Audubon Society of Connecticut (now the Connecticut Audubon Society) had several goals: discouraging the use of feathers and dead birds as ornaments, protecting eggs, establishing a bird day in the public schools, and encouraging the study of natural history. It grew rapidly, attracting large numbers of women and school children. Wright not only spearheaded the Connecticut society's programs, she also became active on the National Association of Audubon Societies (now the National Audubon Society), serving on the Board from 1905 until 1928. One contemporary referred to her as "the most influential woman in the Audubon movement."

Wright also strove to create a bird sanctuary in Connecticut. Joining with several other Fairfield women, in 1914 she convinced Annie Burr Jennings, a Fairfield resident and heiress to the Standard Oil millions, to finance the purchase of a ten-acre plot in Fairfield directly across the street from Mosswood. The new sanctuary was named Birdcraft, after Wright's 1895 field guide. Originally a mixture of woodland and pasture, the sanctuary was allowed to revert to forest. Nevertheless, it would be an artificial environment, carefully sculpted to attract birds. It was surrounded by a cat-proof fence, and had stone gateposts, a residence for a caretaker, a museum, trails, an artificial pond, and birdbaths and birdhouses. Songbird species were encouraged. Other birds, dubbed "problem species," were not. Within a year, Birdcraft Sanctuary and its policy of "birdscaping" had become a model for bird sanctuaries in other states. It is still in existence.

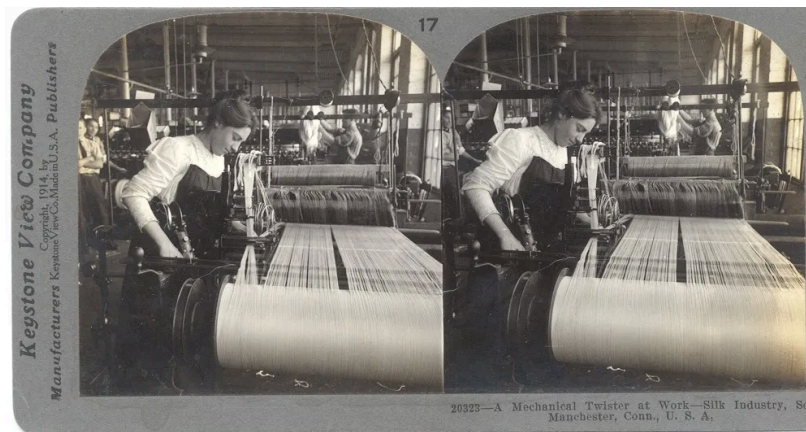
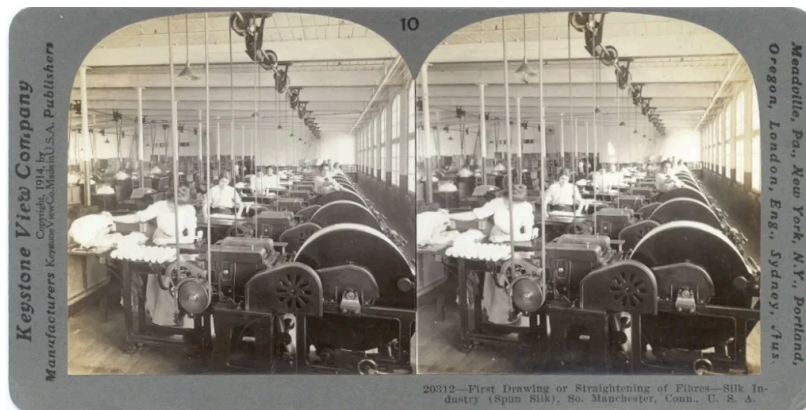
Wright died in 1934. Although mostly forgotten today, she was perhaps Connecticut's most significant naturalist. The Connecticut Audubon Society and Birdcraft Sanctuary are her most important legacies. Unlike John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt, who are associated more with wilderness preservation, she was a representative of pastoral

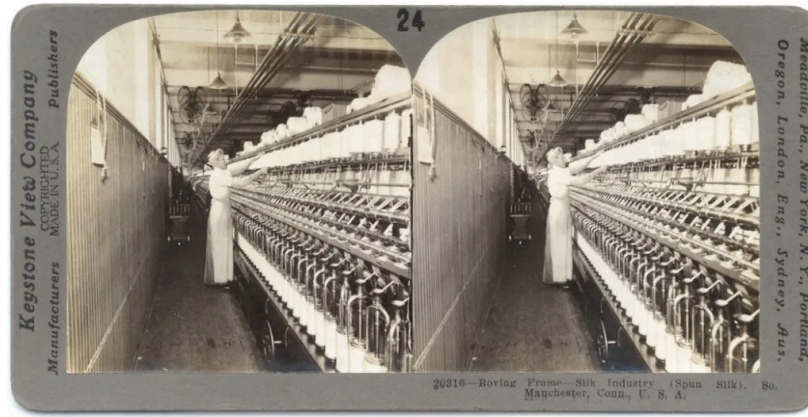
preservation, the Progressive-Era attempt to save traditional agrarian ecosystems in the belief that they offered spaces where nature and humans could coexist peacefully. It was not a surprising position for someone whose points of reference were New York City and turn-of-the-century Fairfield, for someone who was a product of both metropolitan New York and pastoral Connecticut.



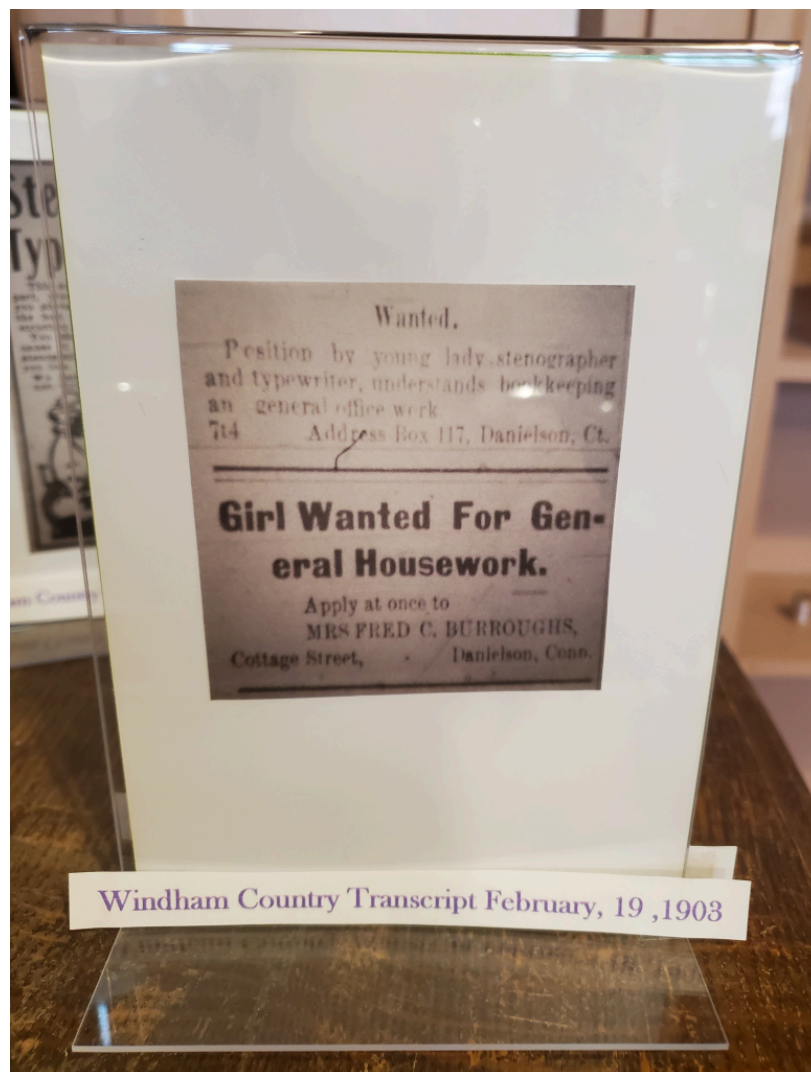
Women in the Labor Force: Early 20th Century

Even in the early twentieth century, women comprised an ever greater proportion of the labor force. Although paid less than men for the same or similar work, the very fact that women commanded wages added to their economic — and political — power. Early twentieth-century women worked in all sorts of occupations: secretaries, stenographers, shop clerks, telephone operators, and especially factory laborers. Factory work required that workers wear less restrictive clothing — including underclothes — than the garments worn by middle class women that produced the hourglass silhouette. Workers' skirts were a bit shorter, reaching to the lower calf rather than the shoe tops, so as not to be hazardous in the dangerous, dirty factory environment. Sleeves often were rolled up. And, of course, bulky hoop skirts and bustles were dispensed with. The three stereographs below, from the Mill Museum's collection, were taken in the Cheney Silk Mills in Manchester, CT, in 1914, and make it clear why less restrictive clothing was necessary. The wearing of pants, however, was still decades away.





Newspaper advertisements from the early 1900s give evidence both of women's employment and their buying power. Below are advertisements from the *Windham County Transcript*, published weekly in Danielson, CT. They include 1903 want ads for stenographers, typists, and housekeepers; a 1907 ad for stenography and typewriting courses at the New London Business College in New London, CT; and a 1920 ad for women's eyeglasses.



Stenography Typewriting

This school fits you to be an expert, practical stenographer. Places you above a plodder by teaching you the best method by individual instruction.

You should choose this school because it will make you a better stenographer—take less time—cost you less.

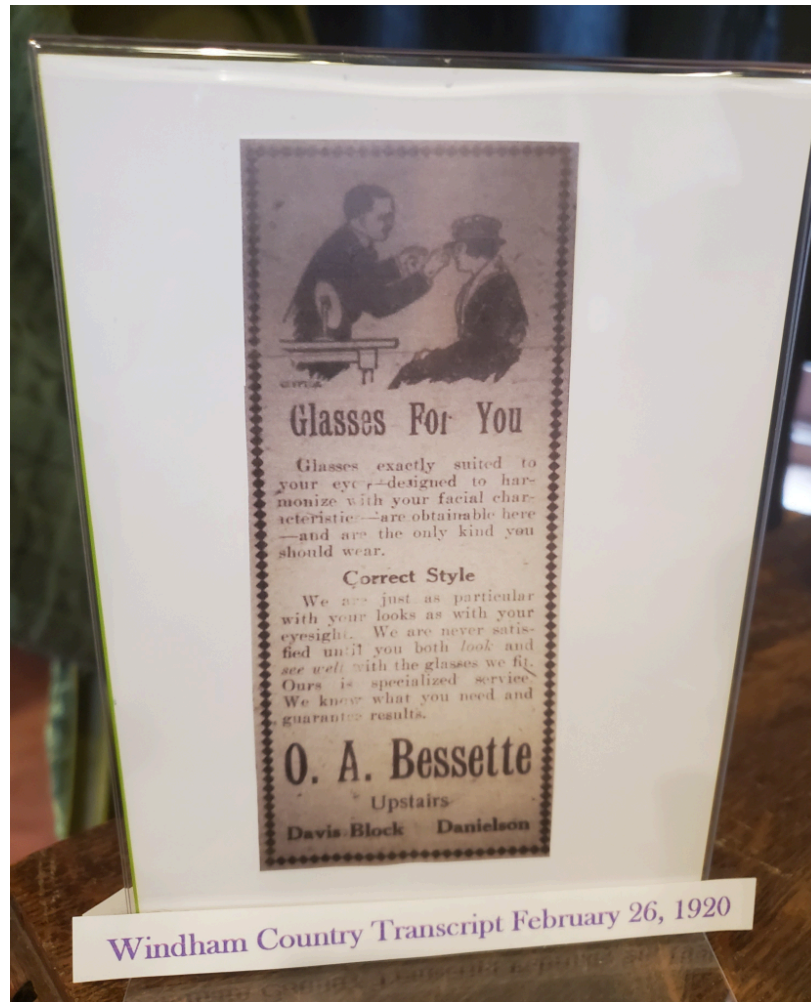
We teach Book-keeping, Business Practice, Stenography, English, Arithmetic, Typewriting, Commercial Law, Penmanship.



New London
Business College.

New
London.
R. A.
SAUNDERS,
Principal.

Windham Country Transcript April 12, 1917



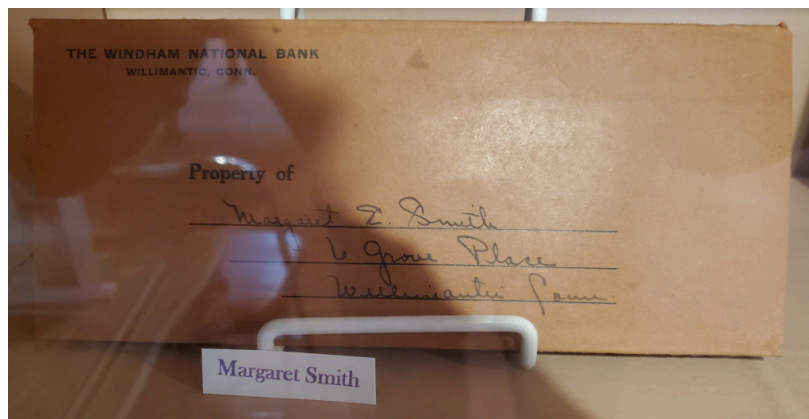
Connecticut Leaders for Women's Rights: The Smith Sisters of Willimantic

Early twentieth-century women had access to more education than their nineteenth-century forebears, which in turn meant greater access to middle-class jobs. Even immigrant women sometimes achieved upward mobility into the middle class. (Such opportunities, however, were available almost exclusively for white women. Women of color still struggled to escape menial labor.)

By the early 1900s, Irish Americans had become well established in Connecticut mill cities like Willimantic. Irish American men could use sports, small business ownership, volunteer fire fighting, and politics to move up the social ladder. For Willimantic's Irish American women, however, the route to the middle class came through education: graduating from Windham High School; perhaps attending a business school in Hartford or New London, or the Willimantic Normal School (a teacher's college); finding work as a bank teller, stenographer, or teacher (low-paying but higher status occupations); and perhaps culminating in a good marriage to a middle class man. The fact that upward mobility so often hinged on marriage frustrated many women.

This story of Irish American women's upward mobility is illustrated in the example of Willimantic's Smith family. William Smith was born in Ireland, came to America as a

boy, and in his late teens found his way to a job in a cotton mill in Willimantic. He volunteered for service in the Union Army during the Civil War and was badly injured. Smith returned to Willimantic marry his sweetheart, an Irish American immigrant woman named Maggie Bradshaw. He took a job as a night watchman in the cotton mill. Two children were born, and then Maggie died. In the ensuing years, the Smith family lived in near poverty, moving from address to address in Willimantic. Both children grew up. William and Maggie's daughter, Mary Smith, married into a prominent local Irish American family, the Meehans. Their son, William C. Smith, found success in ethnic and religious organizations, amateur music productions, and ownership of a barber shop. He, too, married, and his three daughters all graduated from Windham High School. Margaret E. Smith took a job as a teller at Windham National Bank (a middle-class job), carried for her cognitively handicapped brother until he died, and then married a male teller at the same bank. Pauline Smith went on to graduate from the Willimantic Normal School (now Eastern Connecticut State University) and got a job teaching physical education and dance in New Haven. Mary Norberta Smith also attended the Willimantic Normal School. In the 1910s, most of the students at the Willimantic Normal School were women, while eight miles away most of the students attending the Connecticut Agricultural College (now the University of Connecticut) in Storrs were men. The two colleges arranged joint dances for their students. At one dance, Norberta met Julian Norton. They dated and eventually wed. Norton's family owned Lake Compounce Amusement Park. In time, Mary Norberta Smith Norton, the granddaughter of impoverished Irish immigrant cotton mill workers, would manage one of the largest amusement parks in New England.

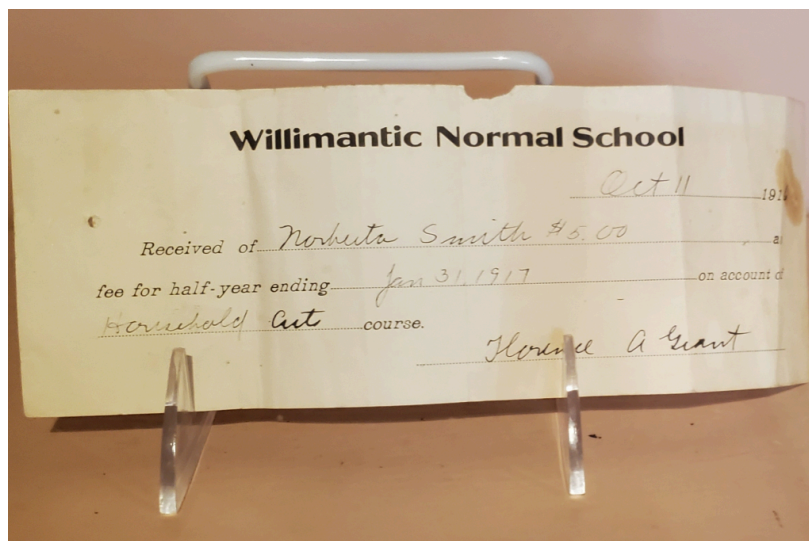
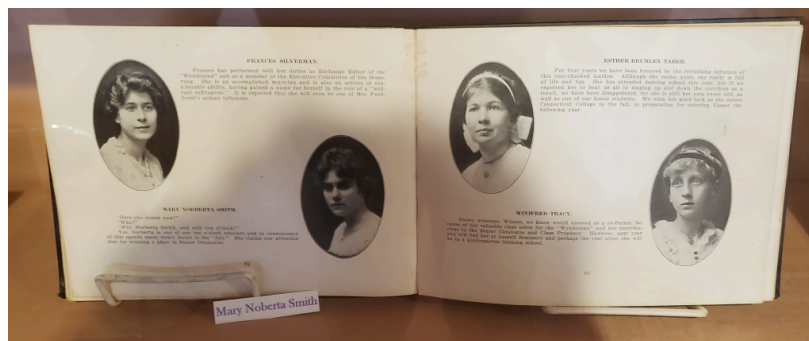
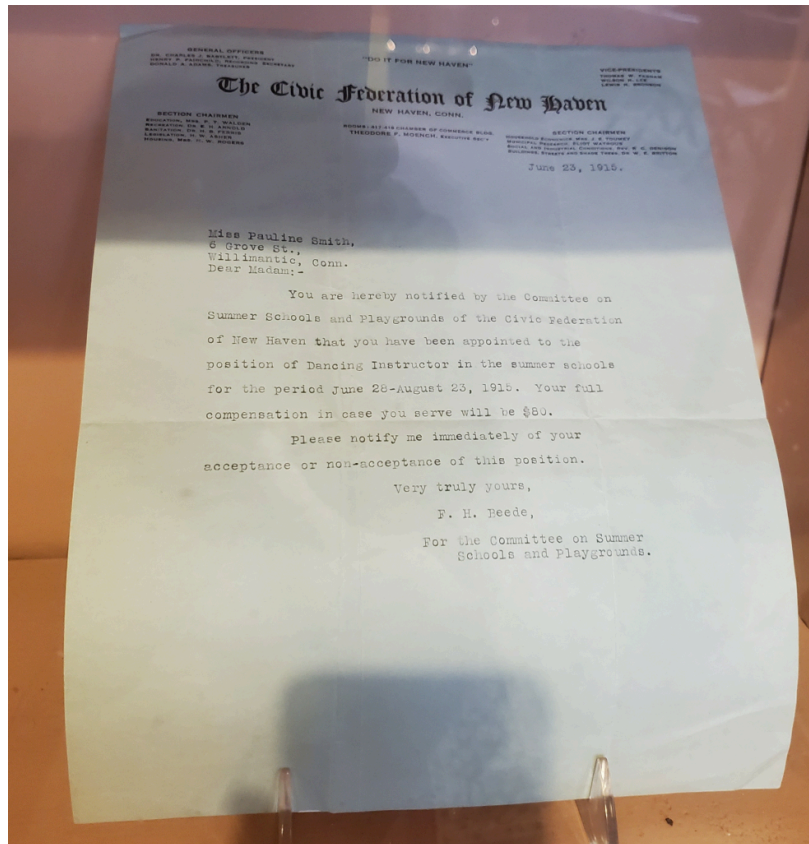


WILLIMANTIC, CONN.
at the close of business, June 30, 1955

RESOURCES		LIABILITIES	
United States Securities	\$5,316,187.00	Capital Stock	\$100,000.00
State and Municipal Bonds	1,451,194.41	Surplus	500,000.00
Other Bonds	401,669.00	Undivided Profits	233,317.58
Stock, Federal Reserve Bank, Boston	18,000.00	Reserve for Contingencies	100,000.00
Loans and Discounts	2,625,690.65	Reserve for Dividend	4,000.00
Less Reserve		Demand Deposits	6,632,805.40
Reserve with Federal Reserve Bank of Boston	919,556.80	Savings Deposits	5,041,191.57
Cash and due from Banks	1,818,202.92	Cashier's Checks, etc.	59,717.28
Banking House, Furniture and Fixtures	124,638.07	Other Liabilities	4,107.02
Total,	<u>\$12,675,138.85</u>	Total,	<u>\$12,675,138.85</u>

MEMBER FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

Pauline Smith



Suffrage Comes to Connecticut

The Movement for Woman Suffrage

The American Woman's Suffrage Movement started in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the first Women Rights Convention. Many women and some men attended and signed their names to the "Declaration of Sentiments." A few years later, Stanton teamed up with Susan B. Anthony, and over many decades they inspired thousands of women to join the National Woman Suffrage Association, which later became the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Many of the early suffragists passed away before the twentieth century, when other, younger women picked up the torch and carried on their work.

The suffragists formed various organizations, and argued about which strategies would best achieve the right to vote and participate in government. Alice Paul, a militant suffragist, led the National Woman's Party, which organized parades, speaking tours, and the Silent Sentinel. The 72-year movement finally succeeded in 1919, when Congress approved the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, sometimes called the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. The Amendment was ratified by 36 states (3/4) and signed into law in August 1920, just in time for women to vote in the 1920 Presidential election in November.



Lucretia Mott: By Billy Hathorn - Own work, CC0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1600800>

Elizabeth Cady Stanton: By Henry Bryan Hall, Jr. - [1] Eminent women of the age[2], Hartford, Conn: S.M. Betts & Company, 1869, OCLC 1005730, page 333, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=19040164>



Susan B. Anthony: Engraved by G.E. Perine & Co., NY - <https://archive.org/stream/historyofwomensuff1stamodt/page/t603/mode/2up>, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=13251802>



Alice Paul: By Henry Bryan Hall, Jr. - [1] Eminent women of the age[2], Hartford, Conn: S.M. Betts & Company, 1869, OCLC 1005730, page 333, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=19040164> By Harris & Ewing (photographic firm) Adam Cuerden-Restoration-This image is available from the United States Library of Congress's Print and Photographs division under the digital ID hcc.06766, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=37503087>



The 1920s

In the decade following the passage of the 19th Amendment, the American economy boomed. Factories churned out unprecedented quantities of affordable consumer goods, such as radios and automobiles. The credit system provided middle class and even some working class Americans with more buying power than ever before. Luxury consumer goods and devices assisted with housework, allowing more leisure time. World War I ended, and the whole country celebrated, leading to the decade's nickname, the Roaring Twenties. Despite a "Return to Normalcy" in federal politics, much of the progressive reform spirit of earlier decades remained, still driving change in women's lives. The Women's Christian Temperance Union achieved its goal of Prohibition with the 18th Amendment, which in turn spawned a subculture of bootleggers, speakeasies, and flappers. Young women continued to challenge

traditional gender norms. New fashions temporarily moved away from the traditional hourglass silhouette, featuring shorter skirts and less restrictive garments.



Timeline: 1920s

1920: The 19th Amendment was ratified, giving women the equal right to vote as men.

1921: Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association voted to dissolve on June 3. It had achieved its mission of enacting woman suffrage.

1923: The National Woman's Party proposed the Equal Rights Amendment. The Amendment was designed to provide women with the same rights as men in every state.

1924: The case of *Radice v. New York* denied waitresses the right to work night shifts, but allowed ladies' room attendants and entertainers to work at night.

1925: A mammoth strike occurred at the American Thread Company in Willimantic, CT. Led by women, the strike sought to restore pay cuts and force recognition of the United Textile Workers Union. After nine months, the strike failed and the UTWU collapsed in Willimantic.





1920s Fashions

Silhouette: Straight dresses accenting the shoulders, or showing the shoulders; slight panniers or hip accents, low cut backs.

The first jumpsuits with pants are released, called “Garconnes” in French (translated as “men” or “boys,” although utilizing a feminine spelling). This was the beginning of gender elimination in fashion, and a trend that took off after women wore pants in World War I. It was considered to be beachwear and was a knit jumpsuit.

Dark colors, pastels, bright colors.

Wools, furs, cottons, linens, silks. Knit and jersey, beaded and sequined fabric.

The first ski suits for women with pants were released. Up until the end of the 1920s, women still skied in skirts.

Fashion designers, after the decline of the corset, had no idea what to accent in women’s clothing. Fashions took a turn and instead started to accent the shoulders rather than the waist, and add heavy bead work to gowns. Hips began to push out with organza-accented panniers and embroidery.



Connecticut Heroines of Women's Rights: Amy Hooker of New Britain and Willimantic, Labor Organizer

Amy Hooker was an early 20th-century Connecticut labor leader about whom little is known ... even though she appears in a song by state troubadour Hugh Blumenfeld!

“I saw Eugene Debs rise up on Wobbly legs
I heard Amy Hooker dressing down American Thread
They took up the strikers’ signs from back in 1925
When the cutbacks ate our grandparents alive.”
–From “How Long” by Hugh Blumenfeld

In 1925 Amy Hooker was 38, single, and the President of the Willimantic Textile Union Council, an affiliate of the United Textile Workers of America, a former craft union that had recently metamorphosed into an industrial union. She was about to lead one of the

bitterest, most divisive strikes in Connecticut history, and in the process stand up to one of the state's most powerful corporations.

Hooker was born (probably) in New Britain, CT, where she was baptized at St. Mark's on Sept. 9, 1887. Her father, Dwight Freeman Hooker, had worked as a joiner. Amy became a textile worker at an early age. The 1910 United States Census found her, 23 years old, living with her parents Dwight and Alice in Newark, NJ, and working in a factory making straw hats. She never went to school beyond the 6th grade, although she learned enough to be a union leader and later a private art teacher. In 1920 the Census recorded her living as a lodger in Scotland, CT, only a few miles from Willimantic, and unemployed. She subsequently showed up in several Willimantic street directories, living in the Thread City in the late 1910s, 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. She moved around a lot, residing in a series of low-rent, working-class apartments, almost all of them in older buildings later demolished in Willimantic's 1970s urban renewal.

Hooker was living in Willimantic in 1925 when the American Thread Company announced a 10% cut in the piece rates it paid its workers. The cut came on top of other cuts made a few years earlier, as ATCO attempted to bring wages back to pre-World War I levels. On Feb. 17, a delegation of workers affiliated with the United Textile Workers of America and led by Hooker (her title, according to the Willimantic Chronicle and Hartford Times, which reported on the event, was president of the Textile Union Council) met with plant manager Don H. Curtis. Curtis declined to rescind the pay cut. That evening, Hooker and other labor leaders called a "mass meeting" at Willimantic's Central Labor Hall. Four hundred workers — 1/6 of the factory's labor force — attended. They voted 320-80 to strike if the cut was not canceled. Two weeks of "determined" negotiations followed. On March 5, a second mass meeting at the Labor Hall, chaired by Hooker, unanimously voted to strike. They were promised support by Mary Kelleher, a UTWA organizer from Pennsylvania. The strike began on March 9 at 7:15 a.m. Over the next several months, ATCO replaced the 2,500 strikers with 1,700 replacement workers. By September, the strike was mostly over. The Union lost.

Tracing Hooker's movements before and after the strike is like chasing shadows — the 1920 Census showed her as unemployed; the 1930 Census recorded her living in Hasbrouck Heights, NJ (a suburb of Passaic, the scene of another bitter 1926-27 textile strike — one wonders if she went there to participate), with her older married sister Carrie and working at her old occupation as a straw hatter; and 1920s, 30s, and 40s Willimantic street directories failed to list any occupation for her (although such information was recorded for almost everyone else who was employed). Was she blacklisted in Willimantic after the 1925 strike failed, and had trouble finding work? Why had she come to Willimantic from New Jersey in the first place? Was it because, like many working class Americans, she was following friends and relatives? Her sister Mattie and brother Dwight also lived in Willimantic, although she never lived with them. Why did she return to New Jersey? Was it simply to reconnect with her sister, or was she somehow involved in the Passaic strike? Why did she come back to Willimantic in the 1930s? Did she perhaps live with a lover? No — the people who lived at the same

addresses as she did all changed with each move, and the majority were working class couples. Were her friends in the union taking care of her after the strike?

The 1925 ATCO strike was debilitating for the Union, Willimantic, and Hooker. It lasted nine months — or more, depending on how you measure these things — and involved thousands of workers. The union was fairly new at the ATCO mill, and most of its members were women and immigrants. Several of the women strikers were arrested for verbally abusing strikebreakers; in June Celia St. George, Jeanette St. George, and Caroline Kozek found themselves in court and fined \$10 for name calling. To protest the eviction of strikers from their tenements — and to dramatize that the evictions would leave families homeless — the union conducted a parade of baby carriages. In June, the UTWA also erected tents on the outskirts of Willimantic, to house evicted strikers. In July the UTWA ominously threatened a general strike against ATCO's other plants — and perhaps even other textile factories — if no further progress occurred, although the general strike never materialized. Evictions began in earnest that month, with deputy sheriffs removing furniture from the homes of strikers Joseph Aubin, Moise Morrisette, Nelson Chamberland, Marie Theroux, and William Chalifoux. None of the evicted families opted to move into any of the twenty tents the UTWA had erected, which as of July 16 were occupied by only “two or three caretakers.” Tempers frayed. When a state police officer claimed to have been “manhandled” by strikers, Willimantic Police Chief Allan MacArthur ordered that all parades and marches cease. Amy Hooker organized a committee of herself, two women strikers, and three men to beg MacArthur to rescind his decision. He did, but only after Hooker promised that pickets would stay on the sidewalks, and confine all parades to the morning hours. In September, the UTWA opened a commissary store at 166 Jackson St. in Willimantic to provide food and clothing for strikers and their families.

ATCO's strategy of hiring replacement workers proved successful. The plant reopened on May 11, 1925, after having been closed for two months, and production continued throughout the rest of the strike. As the months dragged on, the union's position grew increasingly weak. By the end of September, it was clear that the strikers had lost and that management had won. A few of the strikers returned to work. Others remained in the area, but took new jobs with other companies. But most simply moved away and never came back. In July the next year, plant manager Don Curtis announced the strike over. Hooker and Mary Kelleher insisted that it was still on, but if it was, it was in name only. In August, 1933, the UTWA officially declared the strike over. The 1700 to 1800 workers then at ATCO — some strikebreakers, some former strikers like who asked for their old jobs back — did not belong to a union. The union was broken. When in 1934 a general textile strike occurred on the east coast of the United States from Maine to Georgia — and involved several smaller mills in Willimantic — ATCO was not involved. “In Willimantic,” declared the Hartford Courant, “the large American Thread Company mills with 1800 employees have not been unionized.” The 1934 strikes, too, failed. The UTWA would not return to ATCO's Willimantic plant until the 1950s, and by then Connecticut's textile industry was already in sharp decline.

There is only one known photo of Amy Hooker, taken many years later. She is the older woman on right. This photo — of Amy standing next her niece Mildred Bartholomew — was probably taken sometime around 1950, when she was 63 and living with her sister Carrie Hooker Varley in Hebron, CT. At the time Amy was unmarried (in fact, she never married), taught art to private pupils, was active in the Grange organizing musicals and first aid training, and was otherwise leading a quiet life. Who would know that, a quarter of a century earlier as a young woman of 38, as President of the Willimantic Textile Council — an affiliate of the United Textile Workers of America — she stood on picket lines in Thread Mill Square and the stage of the Gem Theater and — in words of one-time Connecticut State Troubador Hugh Blumenfeld — “dress[ed] down American Thread.” She paid a great price for her temerity, never again finding employment in the Thread City. A quiet life. Except for 1925, when she led a union, organized pickets, headed marches down Willimantic’s Main Street, bargained with plant managers, police chiefs, and mayor, and stood on a stage in Willimantic’s Gem Theater rallying thousands of angry workers. Even quiet people have their day.



Above: Amy Hooker (right) with her niece Mildred Bartholomew (left), c. 1950.



Above: Strikers (mostly women) picketing the American Thread Company plant in Willimantic, CT, 1925. Photo from the Hartford Times.



Above: Mill Museum volunteers and Willimantic community members reenact the picket line from the 1925 ATCO Strike.

Connecticut Heroines of Women's Rights: Margaret Dubina of Willimantic, Mill Worker

Margaret Dubina gave false statements about her age to her first employer, the Turner Silk Mill on Valley Street in Willimantic. The legal age to work in the textile industry was 16 and she was only 13. She had to wear high heels in order to reach the pedals on the machinery. Unfortunately, the mill closed circa 1916, and then she found work at the American Thread Company. Dubina believed it was a better experience, with fewer hours and cleaner working conditions, so she found it surprising when fellow workers went on strike in 1925, but in solidarity she went on strike, too. She was the interpreter for weekly strike meetings and informed the Polish American mill workers of progress and results. She worked alongside Mary Kelleher and Amy Hooker, as well as a few others. The three traveled to sister mills, hoping to build sympathy among mill workers in Fall River and Holyoke, MA. However, the other mills did not join the strike. Dubina fundraised by selling flowers for money to support unemployed strikers, and built up support among other unions in Willimantic. In her mind, by 1927 the strike was over, and she moved on to work at the Holland Silk Mill on Valley Street.

The 1930s

In 1929, the stock market crashed, leading to the Great Depression of 1930-37. Textile workers responded to layoffs and cutbacks by striking, as they had done in the 1920s. But like the 1920s, the strikes failed. Textile workers continued to lose their jobs as the Depression deepened. During these times, Americans continued to turn to radio (which had become popular in the 1920s) for entertainment, news, and stories of hope, scientific advances, and possible jobs. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt established weekly women's press conferences to ensure that news organizations kept at least one female reporter on staff, and so that women's viewpoints would be aired. Many unmarried women found themselves denied employment in public schools and in banks. Industrial jobs for women became more scarce. However, the number of women in clerical positions rose, despite the Depression. President Franklin D. Roosevelt instituted the New Deal, a series of social and economic programs designed to bring the country out of the Depression — programs that Governor Wilbur Cross implemented on the state level in Connecticut. Two devastating floods struck Connecticut, in 1936 and again in 1938. Governor Cross used FDR's new programs to support the victims, and the Red Cross assisted in helping to feed the hungry and homeless.



Timeline: 1930s

1932: Hattie Wyatt Caraway of Arkansas became the first woman elected to the U. S. Senate.

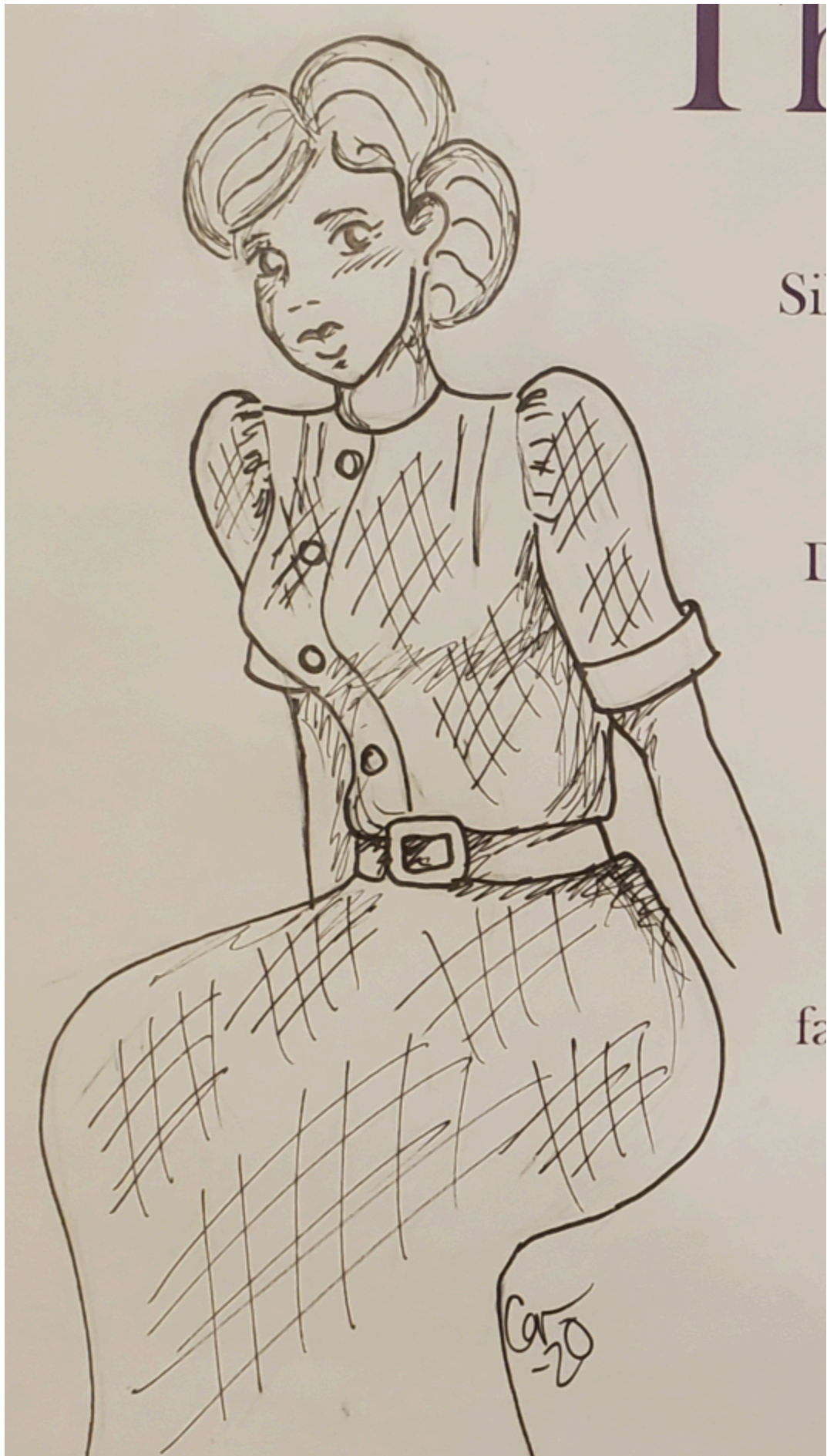
1932: Congress enacted the Economy Act, prohibiting two people in the same household from holding government jobs.

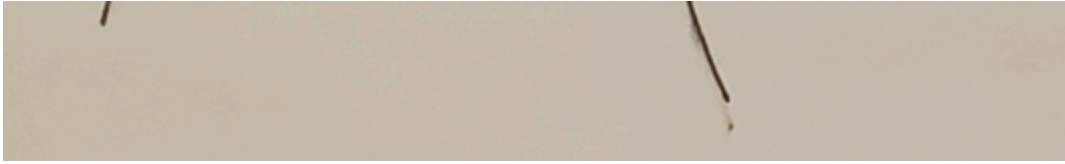
1933: President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Frances Perkins to be the first female Cabinet officer. She was Secretary of Labor.

1936: The Supreme Court case *United States v. One Package of Japanese Pessaries* permitted the use of birth control for medicinal purposes.

1937: Congress repealed the Economy Act.

1938: The Fair Labor Standards Act (also known as the Wagner Act) established a federal minimum wage without regard to sex.





1930s Fashions

Silhouette: Slim long dresses. Narrow waists. Smaller hats and thin belts.

The first uses of zippers in couture dresses in 1935.

Dark colors, print fabric. Print fabrics allowed simpler dresses to look more unique and decorative, and more affordable.

Wools, furs, cottons, linens, silks. The first use of synthetic fabrics and fashions. Many dresses were born out of simplicity.

Fabric began to be cut on the bias, allowing more dramatic draping of fabric. The biggest name fashion designed during this decade was Coco Chanel. She was one of the first female fashion influencers and designers.



The 1940s

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, the United States fought in World War II. Many men joined the armed services, which created a need for women to fill the jobs formerly occupied by men. In greater numbers, women took employment in offices, factories, and military bases. Female journalists covered front-page stories abroad and at home, reporting on how the War had changed America. Approximately 127 women were military correspondents. The Women's Division of Connecticut War Finance monitored the sale of war bonds. In Norwich, a group formed and offered a "bond wagon" to people who could not make it to the bank. Unfortunately, after World War II ended in 1945, many Americans wanted to return to "normalcy," where middle class women would "go back" to working only in the home. However, the changes of

the War years led women more than ever to question old social norms and inspired hunger for more education and professional equality.



Timeline: 1940s

1941: Pearl harbor was attacked.

1941: United States entered World War II.

1944: 350,000 U.S. women joined ancillary military units, and 1/3 of American women worked in the civilian labor force.

1945: World War II ended.

1946: Benjamin Spock published Baby and Child Care.

1947: In *Fay v. New York*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled women could choose whether or not to serve as jurors, but that women were equally competent as men to serve.





1940s Fashions

Silhouette: Square padded shoulders, slimline, A-line skirts past the knee, heavy shoes.

Fashion did not alter or change much during this period. the world was thrust into war. Many fashion designers fled the now German-occupied Paris, and hid. Women began working in factories, so many fashions like coveralls came about, or the female style “Ike” jackets.

Light pastels and earthy tones.

Wools, furs, cotton, linen. Silks were now being used in time of war for parachutes. After the war, by 197 silk returned as a favorite material.

Both the Army and Navy worked with fashion designers such as Coco Chanel and many others to design their uniforms in the early 1940s. They tried to keep it set to current trends, with a less “distracting” look. It was decided that pockets should be fake on uniform jackets, because a woman with things in her pockets was unbecoming.





CONNECTICUT EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DIVISION
U. S. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Feb 25 43 BUSINESS AND
TECHNICAL BRANCH

MONTHLY BULLETIN

FEBRUARY - 1943



"FINGERS OF DESTRUCTION"

THIS MONTH:

Womanpower Mobilization

These "Others"

This Thistle of Absenteeism

Situation in The State

Personnel Management

Demographic Changes in the 1940s

The population of Connecticut, which saw major growth at the beginning of the 20th century, but had stagnated during the grim years of the "Dirty Thirties," boomed during the wartime and immediate postwar years of the 1940s. Altogether, between 1900 and 1950, Connecticut's population had more than doubled — an increase of 121% in just half a century! The biggest growth came in the most urbanized counties:

Hartford, Fairfield, and New Haven. The smallest growth came in the rural counties of Windham and Litchfield. Growth was slow generally east of the Connecticut River, as many old textile mill towns experienced especially slow growth. The three images below, from a 1952 University of Connecticut study, document the changes.

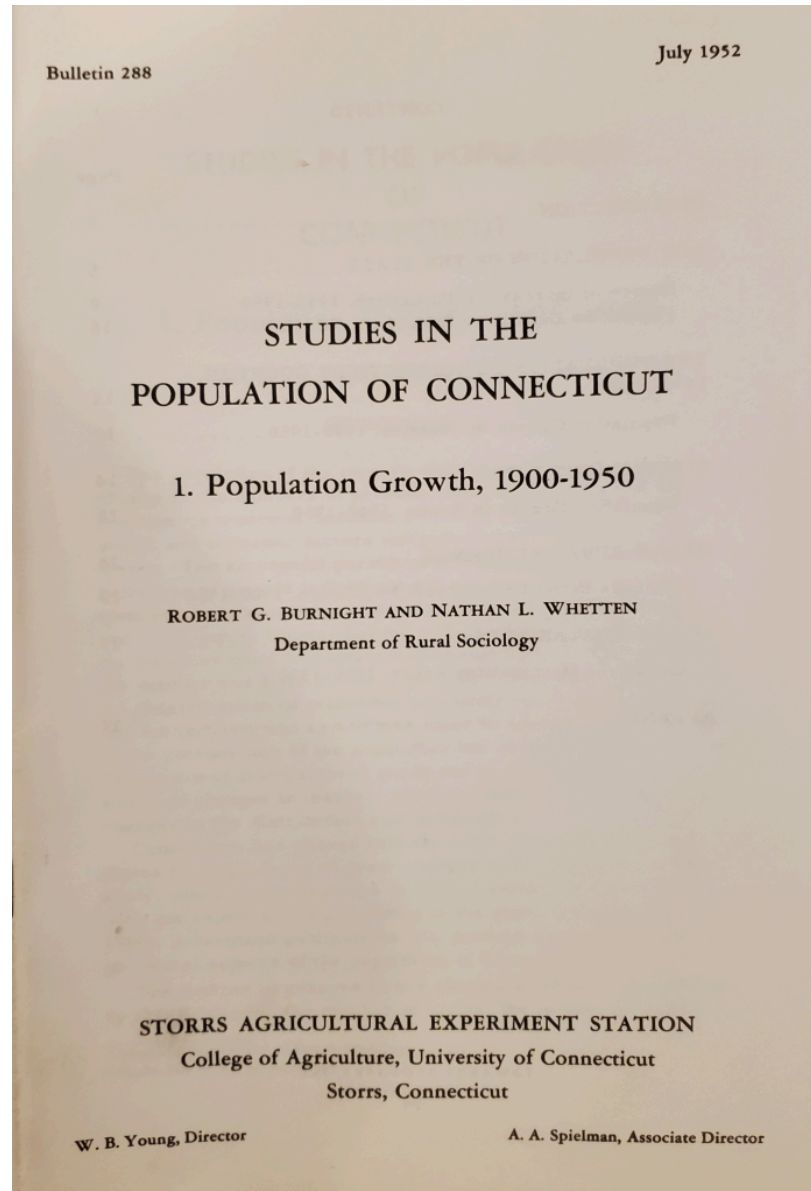


TABLE 3

Percentage Increase in Population of Counties, by Decades,
Connecticut, 1900-1950

County	1940-50	1930-40	1920-30	1910-20	1900-10
The State	17.4	6.4	16.4	23.8	22.7
Fairfield	20.5	8.2	20.5	30.8	33.2
Hartford	19.9	6.9	25.3	34.3	12.8
Litchfield	13.6	5.4	8.3	8.5	10.3
Middlesex	20.2	9.0	8.1	4.2	9.3
New Haven	12.7	4.5	11.6	23.1	25.3
New London	15.6	5.3	13.7	14.6	10.3
Tolland	40.3	11.2	5.3	2.9	7.9
Windham	9.8	4.0	2.4	9.2	3.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

The most populous counties, Fairfield, Hartford, and New Haven, had their highest rates of increase during the earlier part of the period and the remaining counties during the last decade. Although no county experienced either a constant rate of increase or an increasing rate of increase over the entire period, Middlesex and Tolland Counties experienced increasing rates of growth during each decade since 1910. The 1930 to 1940 decade, covering depression years and characterized by generally low birth rates, was a period of relatively low rates of population increase for the other counties. Windham County, however, experienced an even lower rate of growth during the previous decade, 1920 to 1930.

Population Growth in Counties, 1940-1950

Tolland County had the greatest proportional increase, 40.3 percent, during the past decade.^{1a} Hartford County, however, had the largest numerical increase, 89,472 persons, a gain which was approached by that of Fairfield County whose population increased by 85,958 persons. Windham County, in contrast, had only 5,526 more residents in 1950 than in 1940 which was a gain of but 9.8 percent (Table 4).

1a. In 1950, for the first time, students of colleges and universities were enumerated in the place in which they were living while attending school. Approximately 4,300 students attending the University of Connecticut were enumerated in Tolland County; excluding this number Tolland County experienced a population increase of 19 percent between 1940 and 1950.

THE POPULATION OF CONNECTICUT COUNTIES,
1900-1950

Connecticut is divided into eight counties, three of which in 1950, Fairfield, Hartford, and New Haven, each had a population of over one-half million persons. New Haven County, with 545,874 persons, had the largest population. Four counties in 1950, Litchfield, Middlesex, Tolland and Windham, each had fewer than 100,000 inhabitants; Tolland County, with 44,709 persons, was the smallest county in population. New London County had a 1950 population of 144,821 persons.

TABLE 2
Population of Counties, Connecticut, 1900 and 1950

County	Population		Increase 1900-1950	
	1950	1900	Number	Percent
The State	2,007,280	908,420	1,098,860	121.0
Fairfield	504,342	184,203	320,139	173.8
Hartford	539,661	195,480	344,181	176.1
Litchfield	98,872	63,672	35,200	55.3
Middlesex	67,332	41,760	25,572	61.2
New Haven	545,784	269,163	276,621	102.8
New London	144,821	82,758	62,063	75.0
Tolland	44,709	24,523	20,186	82.3
Windham	61,759	46,861	14,898	31.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

All of the counties of the state experienced increases in population between 1900 and 1950. The differences in the increases among them for this 50-year period, however, were quite large. Hartford County had the greatest increase in numbers, 344,181 persons, and the highest rate of increase, 176.1 percent. Fairfield's rate of increase, 173.8 percent, was nearly as large, and New Haven County more than doubled in population. The remaining counties experienced lower rates of growth, the lowest of which was that of Windham County which increased by 31.8 percent and added only 14,898 persons over the 50-year period.

There was considerable variation in the population growth experiences of Connecticut counties between 1900 and 1950.

Connecticut Heroines of Women's Rights: Clare Boothe Luce

Clare Boothe Luce (1903-1987) rose from poverty to political power. When she was young, her father deserted the family. Anna, her mother, was very resourceful and, even though the family was in poverty, she sent her daughter to the finest schools, to enable her to build social networks. In 1923, Clare was married and had one daughter, but then divorced in 1929. She was hired by Vanity Fair and in 1934 was promoted to editor. The following year, Clare married Henry Luce, the publisher of Time, Life, Sports Illustrated, and Fortune magazines. During World War II, Clare traveled to England to pursue her love of politics and world events. She started reporting on the War in Europe and wrote about her personal disagreements with President Roosevelt's war tactics.

Soon she would have a say in shaping policy herself. In 1942, Clare was elected as a Republican as a Connecticut representative in the United States Congress, a first for a Connecticut woman. She was assigned to the Military Affairs Committee. During her two terms, she fought against Roosevelt's foreign and war policies. She believed in racial integration in the armed forces and was a strong supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment. Even though she did not pursue a third term, she supported Dwight Eisenhower's Presidential campaign. Eisenhower appointed her Ambassador to Italy, which made her the country's first female ambassador.