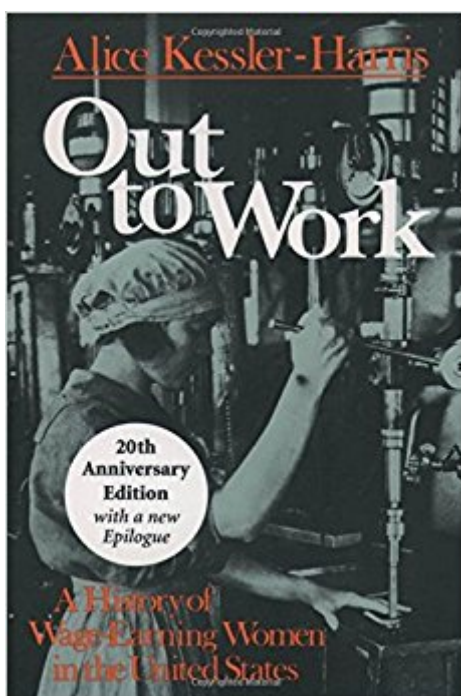


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# Out To Work: A History Of Wage-Earning Women In The United States, 20th Anniversary Edition



## Synopsis

First published in 1982, this pioneering work traces the transformation of "women's work" into wage labor in the United States, identifying the social, economic, and ideological forces that have shaped our expectations of what women do. Basing her observations upon the personal experience of individual American women set against the backdrop of American society, Alice Kessler-Harris examines the effects of class, ethnic and racial patterns, changing perceptions of wage work for women, and the relationship between wage-earning and family roles. In the 20th Anniversary Edition of this landmark book, the author has updated the original and written a new Afterword.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for the Previous Edition: "Impressive and deftly written....An example or two cannot do justice to the variety of materials and ideas the author draws together to explain how women workers have functioned as a low-paid reserve force, and why, as wage work became the rule rather than the exception in the 20th century, they found themselves in marginal jobs stereotyped as feminine."--The New York Times Book Review "Comprehensive and packed with information."--St. Louis Post-Dispatch "Without a doubt the single best survey of transformation of women's paid and unpaid work from the colonial period to the present."--American Historical Review

Alice Kessler-Harris is the R. Gordon Hoxie Professor of American History at Columbia University, where she also teaches in the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. She is the author of A

Woman's Wage, Women Have Always Worked and In Pursuit of Equity.

I've been reading US women's history for a couple of years now, working on background for a novel, and I have seen nothing that matches this book for careful, detailed exposition of the role of women in the workplace. I'm most familiar with the period from 1880 to 1910, and Kessler-Harris covers that era thoroughly and convincingly. Reading about the earlier years, though, has greatly increased my understanding of the period I've been studying. Kessler-Harris shows how paternalistic beliefs about "woman's place," and views of women as weak and basically stupid, have from the beginning deeply influenced the lives of women of all classes, but she also shows how even the development of new machinery in factories was shaped by the needs of employers to find cheap workers--who were, of course, women. I wish women would read this book. Talk about consciousness-raising! Having done a good deal of historical research with primary sources, on other subjects and in other periods, I know Kessler-Harris has been thorough and conscientious. She also writes very well. I'm going to buy the new edition, because whatever she has to say will be fascinating.

all good

I read this for class. It was full of all of the information I needed for my report in women's studies, but I did not find the author's voice to be particularly engaging.

Great transaction. Will use again.

This excellent book describes how women have always worked in what is today the USA. Well written with good examples it tells the story of how women moved from working primarily at home industries through early factory days (and how factories were made acceptable and then degraded into sweat shops and worse). It continues the story through the 19th and 20th centuries, discussing how often public perceptions and rhetoric conflicted with actual work practices. I am very glad it is out in a new edition and that a new generation will have easy access to it.

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