

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 102 277

UD 014 865

TITLE We the American Women.
INSTITUTION Bureau of the Census [redacted], Suitland, Md.
PUB DATE May 73
NOTE 14p.; No. 4 in a series from the 1970 census
AVAILABLE FROM Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (\$0.45)

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.76 HC-\$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Age Differences; *Census Figures; College Attendance; Demography; Employment Patterns; *Females; Income; *Marital Status; Mothers; Occupational Surveys; *Population Trends; Sex Differences; *Socioeconomic Status; Voting; Working Women

ABSTRACT

The 1970 United States census counted a female population of 104,299,734. Of all the nations in the world, only three have larger female populations: China, India, and the Soviet Union. Females made up 51.3 percent of the United States population. Over 70 million American women are of voting age--that's nearly seven million more than the number of men of voting age in the United States. In 1950, only seven percent of women 18 to 24 were in college. By 1970, 20 percent of women in this age group were enrolled in college. In 1970 women made up 40 percent of the work force. The twentieth century emergence of the American woman from the status she historically held is a phenomenon dramatically illustrated in Census bureau data. She is becoming better educated, enabling her to move up the job ladder and increase her earning power. With her new independence, she lives alone in her own household if she chooses. The married woman is having fewer children, and the divorcee is remarrying sooner. And she is living longer to enjoy her new opportunities and freedoms. Clearly, the American woman will exert an ever more powerful influence on the destiny of the U.S. as a result of: her increasing participation in the labor force, her growing educational background, her majority in the electorate, and her wishes as to family size, which will determine the nation's future population growth. (Author/JM)

WE the american women

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Social and Economic Statistics Administration

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

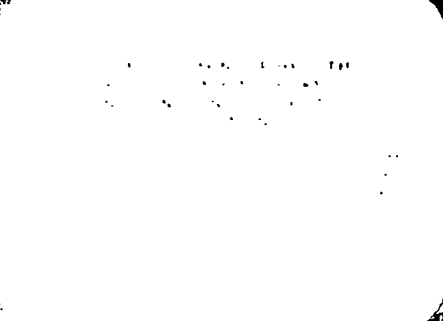


FEB 21 1975

ED1022277



UD 014865



WE the american women

The 1970 United States census counted a female population of 104,299,734. This is about equal to the total population of Japan. Of all the nations in the world, only three others have larger female populations: China, India, and the Soviet Union.

No. 4 in a series of reports from the 1970 Census.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A Profile Of Us

On April 1, 1970, there were 104,299,734 of us.
From day-old infants to centenarians, we made up
51.3 percent of the United States population.
By 1975 there may be about 111 million of us.
By 2000 there may be about 150 million of us.



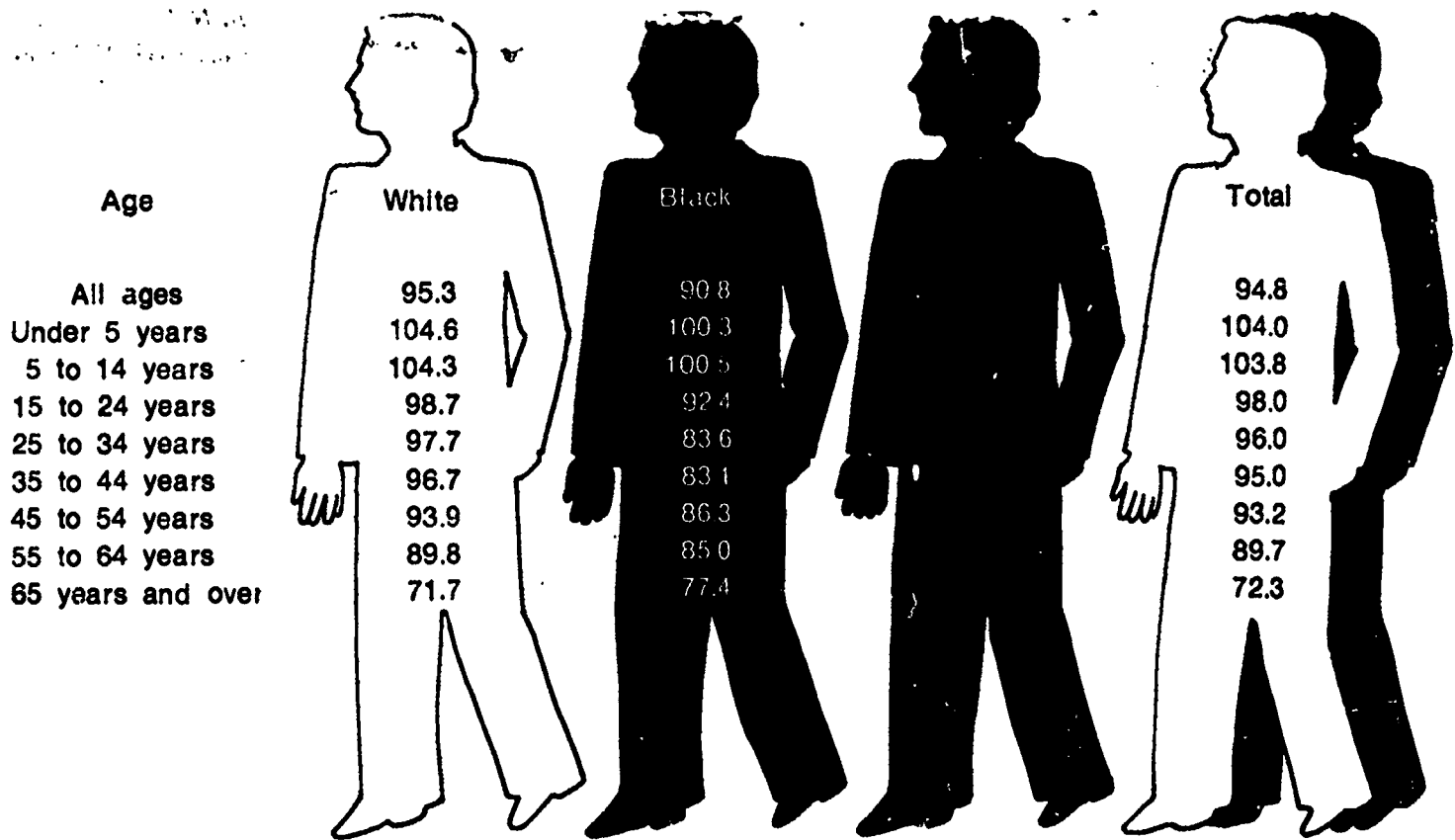
In America, from earliest times until the mid-20th century, we females were outnumbered by males. The shift in the ratio of the sexes occurred during the 1940's. The 1950 census was the first to show more females than males, about one-and-a-half million, or about 99 males per 100 females. By 1970, the difference was about 5.5 million, or about 95 males per 100 females.

More boys than girls are born every year (currently about 105 boys per 100 girls), and boys continue to outnumber girls through childhood and adolescence, according to census data. In the late teens the ratio is reversed, and among 19-year-olds there are 98 men per 100 women. As people grow older, the increase in the number of women over men accelerates so that among people 65 and older the ratio is 72 men per 100 women.

We women outnumber men simply because, from infancy through old age, females have a lower mortality rate.

Although the average life span of males has been increasing for generations, the span of females has been increasing at a faster rate. This has resulted in a widening gap between the longevity of males and females. For example, the average life expectation for boys born in 1900 was about 46 years; for girls born that year, about 48 years. Average life expectation for boys born today is about 67 years; for girls, about 74 years—the gap in longevity having increased from 2 to 7 years.

With both men and women living longer, we are increasingly getting to be a nation of older people. In 1820, the median age was about 17 years for both males and females; that is, half the people were younger and half older than that age. At the end of the 19th century, the median age had increased to 22.4 years for females and 23.3 years for males. Today, because there are more older women than older men, the median age for females is 29.3 years and for males, 26.8 years.



Women
A Potent Political Force

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Over 70 million American women are of voting age (18 and over)—that's nearly 7 million more than the number of men of voting age in the United States.

In the half century since we women gained the right to vote, our voting age population has increased by 35 million, while the male population of voting age has increased by 27 million.

The recent lowering of the voting age nationwide from 21 to 18 added nearly 11 million potential voters to the electorate, with women only slightly outnumbering men among these 18- to 20-year-olds.

As would be expected, since women, on the average, outlive men, there are upwards of 3 million more women than men among the 65-and-older population. In contrast, there are only 1 million more women than men among the population under age 35.

The Educated Woman

Young women today are far more likely to be college students than were their mothers. In 1950, only 7 percent of women 18 to 24 were in college. By 1970, 20 percent of women in this age group were enrolled in college.

About 5 million American women are college graduates, 2.8 million fewer than the number of American men with a college education. In postgraduate study, women also lag behind—1.6 million women are enrolled in graduate school, compared with 3.5 million men.

About 30 million girls and women 3 to 34 are in school: 14 percent of girls 3 to 6 are in nursery school or kindergarten, and virtually all girls 7 to 15 are in grammar or high school. Most girls 16 and 17 years old (95 percent) are in high school, and a few (4 percent) are in college.

The proportions of boys in school are about the same for each group through age 17, but, after that, young men are more likely than young women to continue their education. For example, among young people 18 to 24, one out of three

men but only one out of five women are in college.

The table at the bottom shows that 30 years ago the median school years completed for both men and women 25 and older was little more than grammar school. Today it is 12.1 years for both, which means that more than one-half of all adult Americans have a high school education.



Median School Years Completed
By Race And Sex: 1940-1970
Persons 25 And Older

Census year	Total		White		Black		Spanish heritage	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1970	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	9.4	10.0	9.9	9.4
1960	10.3	10.9	10.7	11.2	7.7	8.4	.	.
1950	9.0	9.6	9.3	10.0	6.4	7.1	.	.
1940	8.6	8.7	8.7	8.8	5.4	6.1	.	.

* Data for Spanish Heritage not available before 1969.

The Working Woman

In 1900, when we made up only 20 percent of the Nation's work force, 36 percent of us were private household workers; 28 percent manual workers of one kind or another; and 19 percent farm workers. Only 8 percent were professional, technical, or similar workers; 4 percent clerical workers; and 4 percent sales workers.

By 1970, when we made up 40 percent of the work force, the proportion of women working on farms had dropped to less than 1 percent and the proportion in private households to 4 percent.

Great increases occurred in clerical occupations, in service occupations outside the household, and in professional, technical, and related work.

Today, about one-third of all employed women are working as bookkeepers, secretaries, typists, file clerks, and the like. About 17 percent are service workers: beauticians, waitresses, attendants, and so forth. Another 16 percent are professional, technical, and kindred workers, such as teachers, nurses, technicians, physicians, and lawyers. Two-fifths of the women in this last category are elementary or secondary school teachers.

The following table shows the distribution in 1970 of employed women 16 and older among selected major occupation categories.

Jobs Women Hold

Occupation	Total	White	Black	Spanish heritage
Total employed	28,929,845	25,252,734	3,309,080	989,810
Professional and technical workers	4,349,927	4,110,060	373,713	94,589
	15.7%	16.3%	11.3%	9.6%
Sales workers	2,140,994	2,037,977	84,103	58,990
	7.4%	8.1%	2.5%	6.0%
Clerical and kindred workers	10,104,508	9,308,904	684,310	297,055
	34.9%	36.7%	20.7%	30.0%
*Operatives, except transport equipment	4,014,214	3,421,862	533,160	234,399
	13.9%	13.5%	16.1%	23.7%
Service workers, except household	4,789,362	3,877,059	843,018	183,030
	16.6%	15.3%	25.5%	18.5%
Private household workers	1,113,909	506,896	592,226	40,080
	3.8%	2.0%	17.9%	4.0%

Workers who operate machines and do similar kinds of work

Percent Of Married Women Husband Present, In The Labor Force
By Age And Race: 1970-1940

Age	1970			1940		
	Total	White	Black and other races	Total	White	Black and other races
Total, 16 years and over	39.2	38.2	49.8	13.8	12.5	27.3
16 and 17 years	20.8	20.6	21.9	6.1	4.2	13.4
18 and 19 years	39.4	39.6	37.4	10.3	8.7	18.6
20 to 24 years	46.3	45.7	51.9	17.3	16.2	25.7
25 to 29 years	37.6	35.9	53.9	18.5	17.1	31.1
30 to 34 years	38.4	36.5	55.3	17.6	16.3	31.8
35 to 44 years	45.6	44.4	56.7	15.3	13.8	30.5
45 to 54 years	47.3	46.7	54.3	11.1	10.1	25.5
55 to 59 years	39.9	39.5	45.8	8.0	7.3	20.7
60 to 64 years	27.6	27.1	34.1	5.8	5.2	17.1
65 years and over	8.0	7.6	12.9	2.8	2.4	9.9

The Working Mother

Great numbers of today's young women are successfully combining careers outside the home with the time-honored roles of wife, mother, and homemaker.

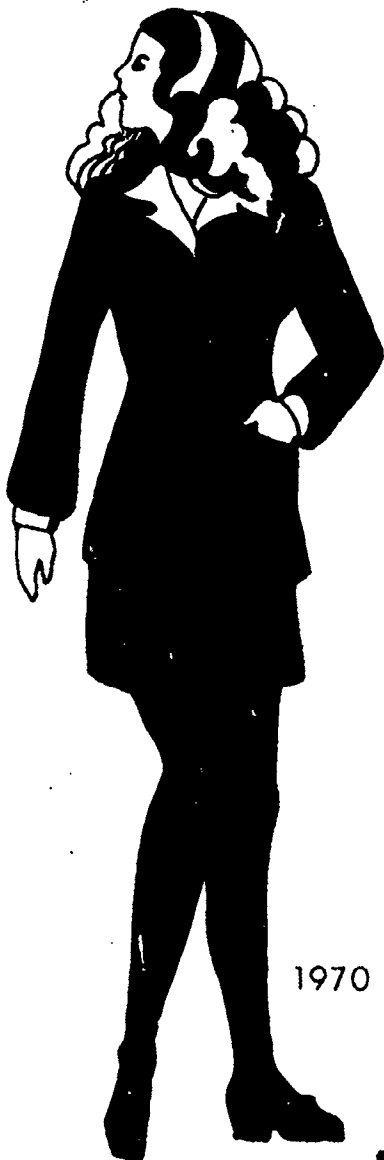
It was customary for women of earlier generations to work only until they married or had children, and then to permanently drop out of the labor force. Now they are seeking work again when their children enter school and are continuing to work until retirement age.

The table at the bottom of page 6 shows that, although differences exist between married white women and those of Negro and other races in the extent to which they work, the striking fact is that the proportion of married women in the labor force at all ages is rising in both groups. (The term, "Husband Present," means that these women are living with their husbands, and are not separated, divorced, or widowed.)

Percentage Of
The Work Force
1900-1970



1900



1970

8



For women who work full-time, the average annual income is \$5,700, or 59 percent of the \$9,630 average for men who work full-time.

These are median incomes for 1971, when the median family income was \$10,285, highest in U.S. history. However, for families with female heads, median family income was \$5,100, or 47 percent of the \$10,930 median for families with male heads.

Family incomes are on the rise chiefly because the number of earners, especially women, in families has been increasing. When the wife worked, median income of husband-wife families in 1971 was \$12,850, compared with \$9,740 when she did not.

A major reason for more women being in the labor force is their rising educational level, which prepares them for better jobs. The table below illustrates the monetary advantages of education. For women who were year-round full-time workers in 1971, the \$9,162 median income of college graduates was more than double the \$4,400 median of women who had completed only 8 years of school. On the other hand, for men who were year-round full-time workers, the \$14,350 median income of college graduates was 83 percent greater than the \$7,840 for men who had completed only elementary school.

Some Of Us Are Poor

About 14.8 million American females—from infants to the elderly—were below the officially established low-income or poverty level in 1971. They made up 58 percent of the Nation's 25.6 million poor. Five million of these females were in families headed by women. Another 3.6 million were living alone or with nonrelatives, 2.1 million of them 65 or older.

(The poverty threshold—the annual income level that separates "poor" from "nonpoor"—was set at \$4,137 in 1971 for a nonfarm family of four; for a nonfarm person living alone or with nonrelatives, at \$2,040.)

Between 1970 and 1971 there was an increase from 37 to 40 percent in the proportion of poor families with a woman as head, with a corresponding decrease in percentages of poor families with a man as head.

Families headed by women account for a growing proportion of poor families because women are far less likely to work than men who head poor families. Of the 1.9 million women heads of poor families, only 41 percent worked at least part of the time in 1971, in contrast to 77 percent of the 2.4 million men heads of poor families.

Most women heads of poor families are not working because they are not able to leave their children and other household responsibilities to go to work. In fact, three-fourths of the women heads of poor families who were not working in 1971 gave "keeping house" as the main reason they were not working.

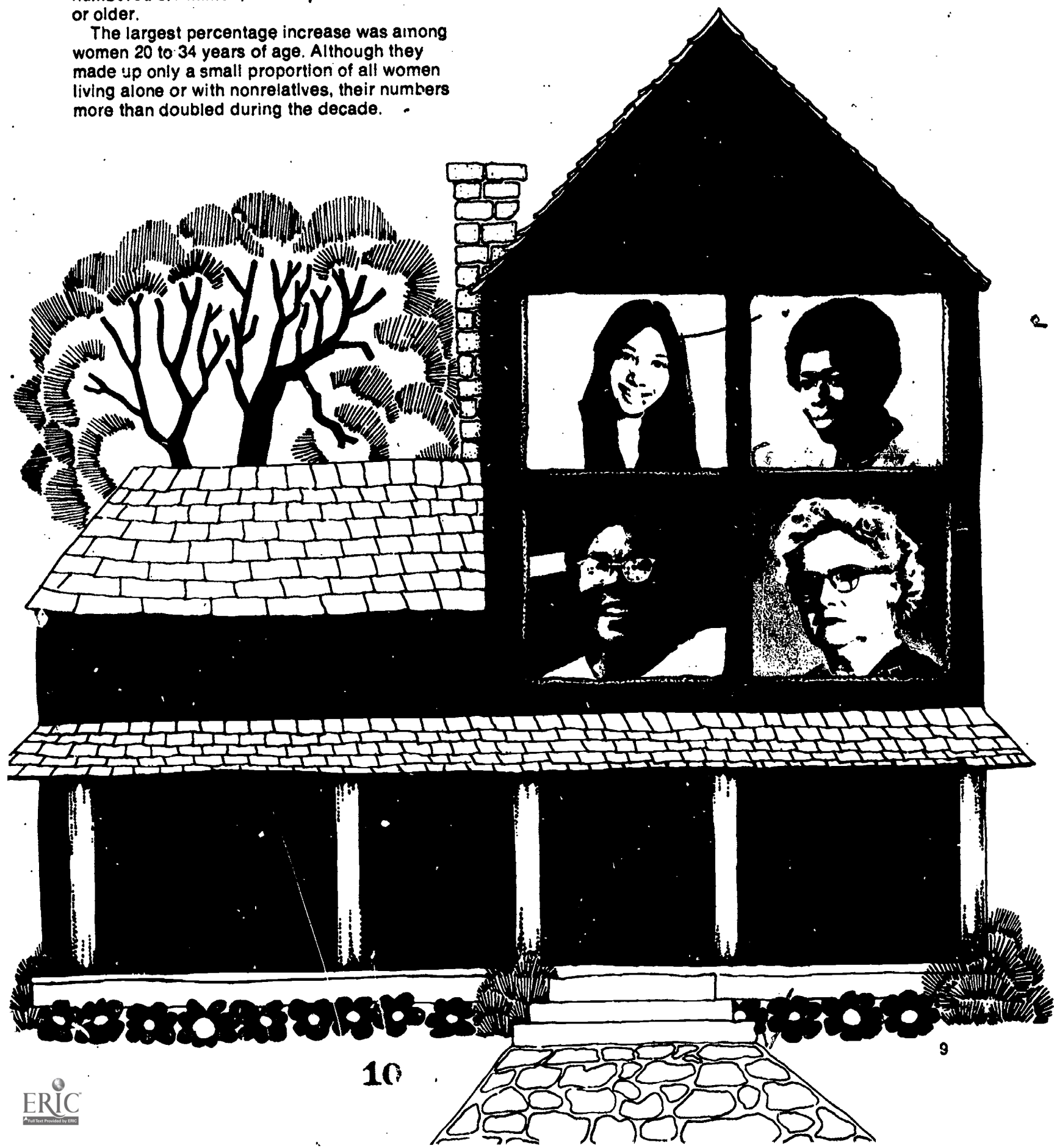


A Home Of Our Own

More and more women—the young single woman, the widow, the divorcee, the older woman who no longer has a family to care for—are living alone or sharing living quarters with nonrelatives. These women numbered 7.7 million in 1970, and half were 65 or older. In 1960, they numbered 5.1 million, and 45 percent were 65 or older.

The largest percentage increase was among women 20 to 34 years of age. Although they made up only a small proportion of all women living alone or with nonrelatives, their numbers more than doubled during the decade.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



When We Marry

During the 1950's young women were marrying, on the average, shortly after their twentieth birthday, but in the early 1960's they began to show an inclination to remain single a little longer. Women (and men, too) are now about a half-year older when they first marry than were their counterparts a decade earlier. The average age at first marriage for women was 20.8 years in 1970; for men, 23.2 years. In 1960 it was 20.3 years for women and 22.8 years for men. And the proportion of women remaining single into their early twenties has risen by nearly one-third since 1960.

Even though there are fewer men than women of marriageable ages, women today are far less likely to remain spinsters than were their grandmothers. In 1920, 11 percent of women age 44 had never married. However, in 1970, only about 5 percent of women that age were still spinsters.

During the 1960's, when the children born in the post-World War II baby boom years were starting to marry, marriages increased about one-third annually, and since 1968 the number has exceeded 2 million each year. However, the number of marriages in one year is no longer a reliable basis for projecting the number of births in succeeding years because of the widespread use of family planning.

Along with changes in life style there have been changes in attitudes towards family size. Census Bureau surveys taken in 1967 and 1972 demonstrate this change. The earlier survey found that the average number of births expected by wives 18 to 39 years old was 3.1. Five years later, wives in the same age group expected to have, on the average, only 2.7 children. During the same period, the average number of births expected by wives 18 to 24 years dropped from 2.9 to 2.4. The proportion expecting two or fewer births rose from 44 to 70 percent.

The ability of women to control the size of their families is having a profound effect on the birth rate (births per 1,000 population), which in 1971 dropped to 17.2, lowest ever recorded in U.S. history.



The Divorcees

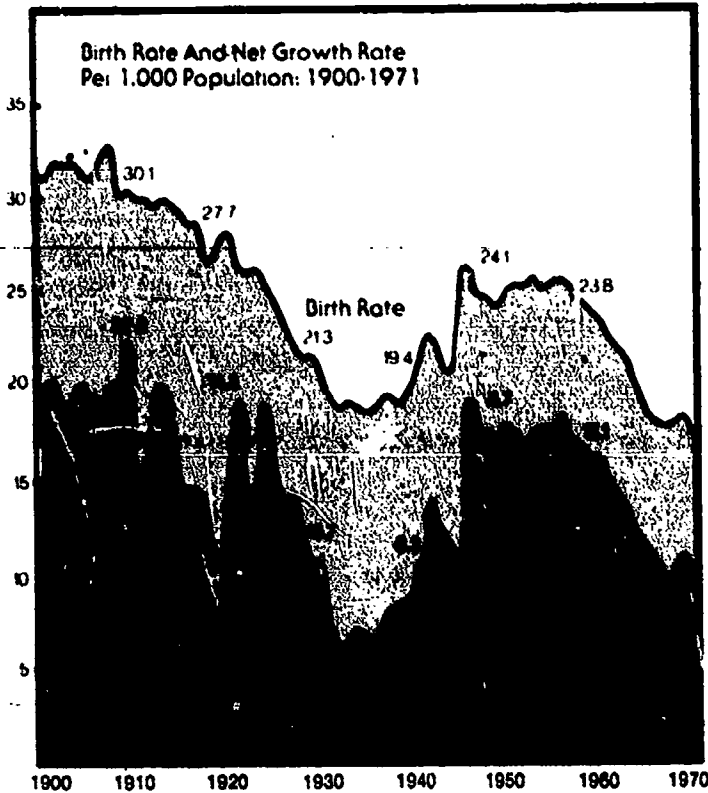
One of the forces behind the recent rise in the number of marriages was the upturn in divorce and subsequent remarriage during the 1960's and early 1970's. During this period, the annual number of divorces rose 80 percent and the annual number of remarriages nearly 60 percent.

Since the mid-1950's, the proportion of women whose first marriages ended in divorce has increased sharply. Of women married or formerly married, about 11 percent who were 30 to 34 years old in 1955 had ended their first marriage in divorce by that year, while 16 percent who were 30 to 34 in 1970 had ended first marriages in divorce by 1970.

Moreover, there is some evidence that a woman divorced today who remarries is likely to do so sooner after divorce than one divorced a decade ago. According to a 1967 Census Bureau survey, during the period 1960-1966, one-half of the divorced women who remarried had done so by the end of the third year of divorce. In contrast, during the period 1950-1959, it was the end of the fifth year of divorce before one-half of the divorcees who remarried had done so.



Our Growth Rate Follows Our Birth Rate



The U.S. birth rate, which rose during the period between the late 1930's and late 1950's, has since then reverted to its historical downward trend. If young wives expect to have fewer children, as they have recently indicated, it follows that the birth rate will continue to decline, resulting in a diminishing population growth and possibly a cessation of growth. However, if families in the future choose to have more children, the rising birth rate would bring a rising growth rate.

Summing Up:

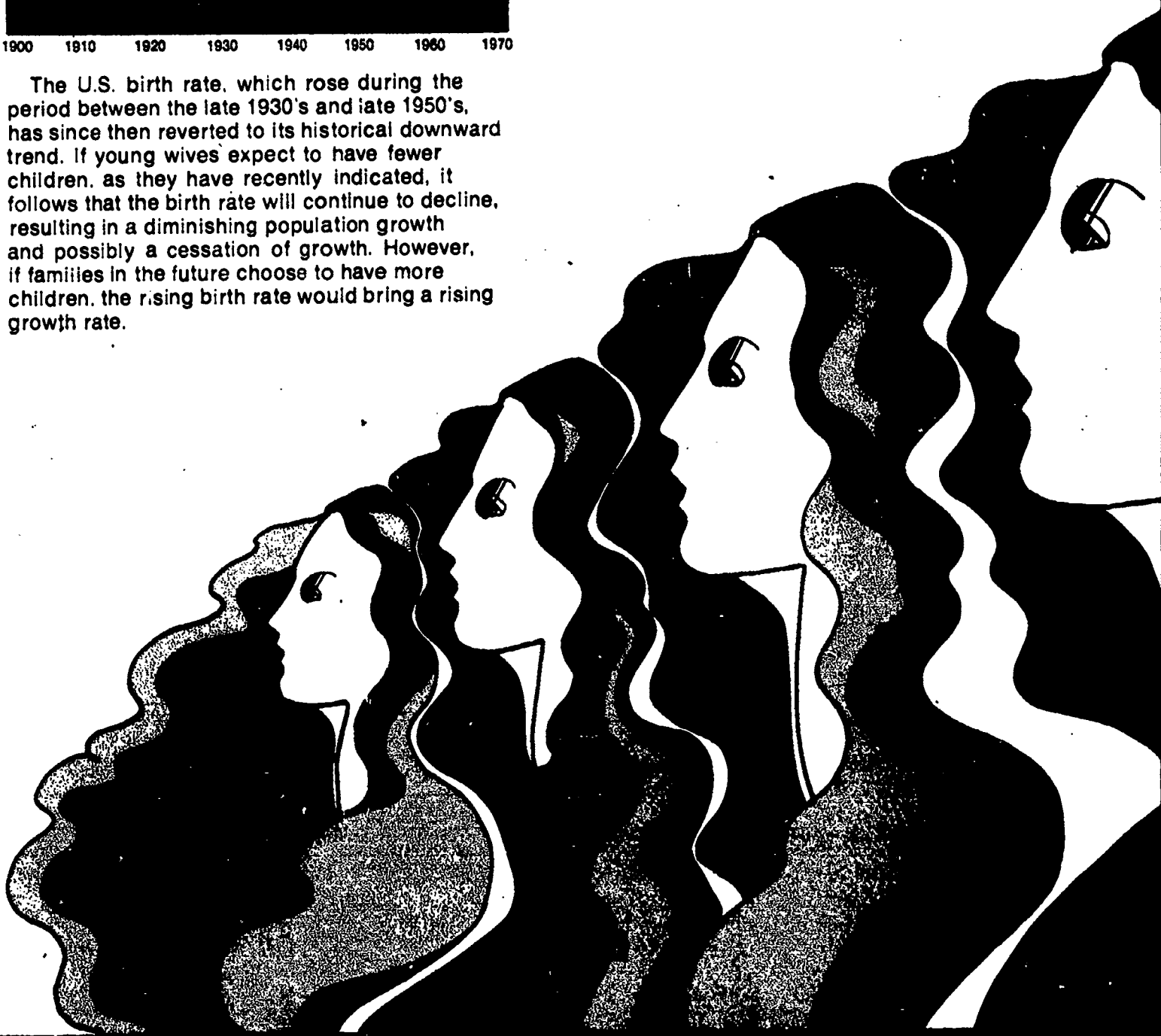
The 20th century emergence of the American woman from the status she historically held is a phenomenon dramatically illustrated in Census Bureau data.

She is becoming better educated, enabling her to move up the job ladder and increase her earning power. With her new independence, she lives alone in her own household if she chooses. The married woman is having fewer children, and the divorcee is remarrying sooner.

And she is living longer to enjoy her new opportunities and freedoms.

Clearly, the American woman will exert an ever more powerful influence on the destiny of the United States as a result of:

- Her increasing participation in the labor force,
- Her growing educational background,
- Her majority in the electorate,
- Her wishes as to family size, which will determine the nation's future population growth.



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Frederick B. Dent, Secretary

Social and Economic Statistics Administration

Joseph R. Wright, Jr., Acting Administrator

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Robert L. Hagan, Acting Director

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

John J. Casserly, Chief

This report was prepared
by the Public Information
Office, Bureau of Economic
Research and Education

March 1973

For sale by the
Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

Price: \$1.00

BEST COPY AVAILABLE