

Edith Abbott

Women in Industry

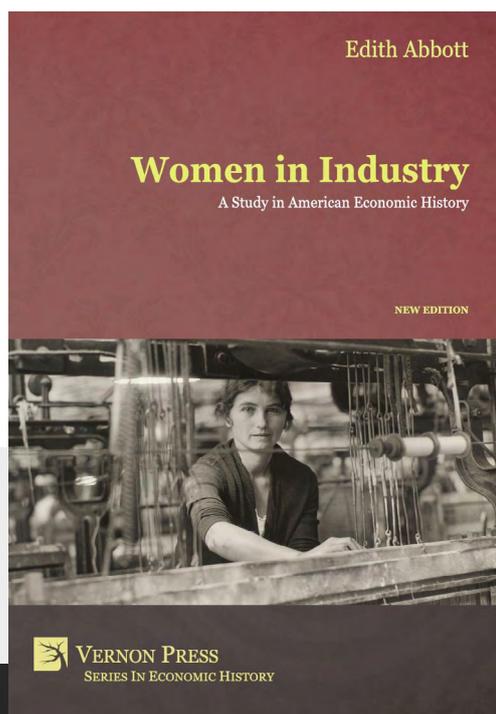
A Study in American Economic History - New Edition

SERIES IN ECONOMIC HISTORY

Summary

Women in Industry is a critical examination of labor history of women in the United States from colonial times to the turn of the 20th century. Since its first publication a century ago, it has received hundreds of citations and had a formative influence in fields as diverse as labor history, gender studies, and economic history methodology. Women in Industry examines working conditions, wages and other forms of compensation across industries and professions. While firmly rooted in economics, Abbott does not overlook the social causes and implications of shifting patterns of female employment nor the organized opposition such changes attracted by established interests. Using masses of carefully compiled evidence, Abbott's work forcefully made the point that, contrary to popular belief, women did not suddenly replace men in industrial employment sometime in the 19th century. Rather, women and children were a regular and prominent feature of American industries in general and manufacturing in particular. Forming the first comprehensive account of female employment in a developing manufacturing economy, Abbott's extensive primary research and dispassionate interpretation make this essential reading for students of economic history. Academically rigorous yet accessible, Women in Industry remains unsurpassed

in the reach of its coverage and the depth of its scholarship: It is fairly recognized as a timeless work and a source of inspiration for contemporary economic historians everywhere.



About the author

Dr. Edith Abbott (1876-1957) was born in Grand Island, Nebraska. Trained as an economist (University of Nebraska, University of Chicago and London School of Economics), Abbott was a prominent author, social worker and educator. Abbott became known as the “passionate statistician”, a testament to her distinguished scholarly work and conscientious commitment to the improvement of social conditions. In her writing, Abbott stressed the essential need of a public welfare administration, the need for a more humane social welfare system, the responsibility of the state in relation to social problems, and the social aspects of legislation.

Having made several seminal contributions to economic history and social work, Abbott's ideas and influence extended to the formulation of social policy, reflected in a string of legislative initiatives introduced throughout the 1930s. However, Abbott is perhaps best known for her contribution to the establishment and recognition of social work as a profession. At the time of Edith Abbott's death, Wayne McMillen of Social Service Review wrote, “History will include her name among the handful of leaders who have made enduring contributions to the field of education. Social work has now taken its place as an established profession. She more than any other one person gave direction to the education required for that profession. Posterity will not forget achievements such as these.”

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