



Single Women in 20th Century America – A timeline

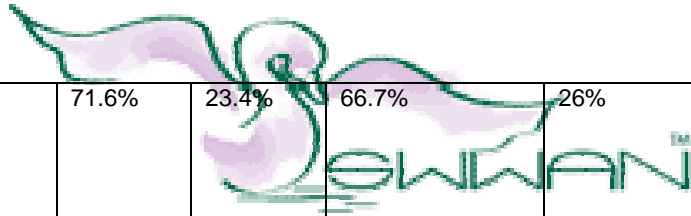
Year	% of Men's Salary ³	% of Pop ⁴	Single Working Women as % of All Single Women ⁴	% of Female Labor Force ⁴	Median age to marry ⁴	Perspective	Milestones ⁵
1900		31.2%	43.5%	66%	21.9	A typical job a single woman might have would be working in a factory from 7 to 9 for five days and then Saturdays til midnight. Women were grateful just to have Sundays off. Exhausted and poor.	1903 The National Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) is established to advocate for improved wages and working conditions for women.
1910		29.7%	51.1%	60%	21.6	Bachelor Girl Social Club—believed in women's rights and enjoyed their freedom and independence.	1919 The federal woman suffrage amendment, originally written by Susan B. Anthony and introduced in Congress in 1878, is passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is then sent to the states for ratification.
1920		27.3%	46.4%	77%	21.2	The nation is officially urban. The flapper look was "bold."	1920 The Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor is formed to collect information about women in the workforce and safeguard good working conditions for women. 1921 Margaret Sanger founds the American Birth Control League, which evolves into the Planned Parenthood Federation of America in 1942.
1930		26.4%	50.5%	54%	21.3	Hard times bring unemployment and food rations. Both men and women suffered severe hunger, deprivation and many children were separated from families who could not care for them.	1936 The federal law prohibiting the dissemination of contraceptive information through the mail is modified and birth control information is no longer classified as obscene.
1940		25.8%	45.5%	49%	21.5		War dictated abstemiousness. Women filled many non-traditional jobs while men served in the Armed Forces. Rosy The Riveter was a cartoon icon of a strong woman working in a factory doing a "man's job." Later in the decade women began welcoming soldiers home and—increasingly—marrying them and starting the leading edge of the Baby Boom.
1950		18.5%	46.3%	32%	20.3	Aftermath of WWII. The U.S. is awash in prosperity. "Two chickens in every pot." More women are marrying and at earlier ages. The Baby Boom begins in earnest.	Women are
1960	60.7%	17.3%	42.9%	24%	20.3	With the advent of the pill women begin to enjoy sex outside marriage in greater numbers. A new job choice—stewardess— <i>requires</i> that applicants be	1960 The Food and Drug Administration approves birth control pills. 1961



						<p>single and female.</p> <p>Women's salaries were an average of 60.7% of men's.</p>	<p>President John Kennedy establishes the President's Commission on the Status of Women and appoints Eleanor Roosevelt as chairwoman. The report issued by the Commission in 1963 documents substantial discrimination against women in the workplace and makes specific recommendations for improvement, including fair hiring practices, paid maternity leave, and affordable child care.</p> <p>1963</p> <p>Betty Friedan publishes her highly influential book <i>The Feminine Mystique</i>, which describes the dissatisfaction felt by middle-class American housewives with the narrow role imposed on them by society. The book becomes a best-seller and galvanizes the modern women's rights movement.</p> <p>June 10, 1963</p> <p>Congress passes the Equal Pay Act, making it illegal for employers to pay a woman less than what a man would receive for the same job.</p> <p>1964</p> <p>Title VII of the Civil Rights Act bars discrimination in employment on the basis of race and sex. At the same time it establishes the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to investigate complaints and impose penalties.</p> <p>1966</p> <p>The National Organization for Women (NOW) is founded by a group of feminists including Betty Friedan. The largest women's rights group in the U.S., NOW seeks to end sexual discrimination, especially in the workplace, by means of legislative lobbying, litigation, and public demonstrations.</p> <p>1967</p> <p>Executive Order 11375 expands President Lyndon Johnson's affirmative action policy of 1965 to cover discrimination based on gender. As a result, federal agencies and contractors must take active measures to ensure that women as well as minorities enjoy the same educational and employment opportunities as white males.</p> <p>1968</p> <p>The EEOC rules that sex-segregated help wanted ads in newspapers are illegal. This ruling is upheld in 1973 by the Supreme Court, opening the way for women to apply for higher-paying jobs hitherto open only to men.</p> <p>1969</p> <p>California becomes the first state to adopt a "no fault" divorce law, which allows couples to divorce by mutual consent. By 1985 every state has adopted a similar law. Laws are also passed regarding the equal division of common property.</p>
1970	59.4%	20.6%	50.9%	23%	20.8	<p>Gloria Steinem promotes feminist truths—which come as a shock to most women raised during the 40s and 50s. <i>Cosmopolitan</i> magazine, brazenly addressed to the single woman looking for sex and love—in that order—reaches the height of its popularity in 70s and 80s. (Its first issue came out prior to 1900.)</p>	<p>1970</p> <p>In <i>Schultz v. Wheaton Glass Co.</i>, a U.S. Court of Appeals rules that jobs held by men and women need to be "substantially equal" but not "identical" to fall under the protection of the Equal Pay Act. An employer cannot, for example, change the job titles of women workers in order to pay them less than men.</p> <p>1971</p> <p><i>Ms.</i> Magazine is first published as a sample insert in <i>New York</i> magazine; 300,000 copies are sold out in 8 days. The first regular issue is published in July 1972. The magazine becomes the major forum for feminist voices, and cofounder and editor Gloria Steinem is launched as an icon of the modern feminist movement.</p>



							<p>1972 Mar. 22, 1972 The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is passed by Congress and sent to the states for ratification. Originally drafted by Alice Paul in 1923, the amendment reads: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." <i>The amendment died in 1982 when it failed to achieve ratification by a minimum of 38 states.</i> Also on Mar. 22, 1972 In Eisenstadt v. Baird the Supreme Court rules that the right to privacy includes an unmarried person's right to use contraceptives. June 23, 1972 Title IX of the Education Amendments bans sex discrimination in schools and any institution receiving federal financial assistance. The enrollment of women in athletics programs and professional schools increases dramatically.</p> <p>1973 As a result of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court establishes a woman's right to safe and legal abortion, overriding the anti-abortion laws of many states.</p> <p>1974 The Equal Credit Opportunity Act prohibits discrimination in consumer credit practices on the basis of sex, race, marital status, religion, national origin, age, or receipt of public assistance. In Corning Glass Works v. Brennan, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that employers cannot justify paying women lower wages because that is what they traditionally received under the "going market rate." A wage differential occurring "simply because men would not work at the low rates paid women" is unacceptable.</p> <p>1976 The first marital rape law is enacted in Nebraska, making it illegal for a husband to rape his wife.</p> <p>1978 The Pregnancy Discrimination Act bans employment discrimination against pregnant women. Under the Act, a woman cannot be fired or denied a job or a promotion because she is or may become pregnant, nor can she be forced to take a pregnancy leave if she is willing and able to work.</p>
1980	60.2%	23%	64.4%	26%	22	<p>Feminism bears fruit, female pay begins to rise, and single women become a much larger proportion of the female workforce—and women begin to marry several years later. in 1980 a single working woman's mean salary was \$7,206.</p>	<p>1983 Mississippi ratifies the Women's Suffrage amendment—<i>sixty-four years after it passed as a federal law.</i> 1984 Contributors establish EMILY's List (Early Money Is Like Yeast) as a financial network for women running for national political office—significantly increasing the number of women elected to Congress. 1986 Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson, the Supreme Court finds that sexual harassment is a form of illegal job discrimination.</p>



1990	71.6%	23.4%	66.7%	26%	23.9	The Women's Movement is ancient history to most single women. This is the decade where "women can have it all"—including marriage if desired. Women continue to tend to delay marriage. In 1990 working women's mean salary was \$13,656.	1992 In <i>Planned Parenthood v. Casey</i> , the Supreme Court reaffirmed the validity of a woman's right to abortion under <i>Roe v. Wade</i> . The case successfully challenged Pennsylvania's 1989 Abortion Control Act, which sought to reinstate restrictions previously ruled unconstitutional. 1994 The Violence Against Women Act tightens federal penalties for sex offenders, funds services for victims of rape and domestic violence, and provides for special training of police officers.
2000	73.3%	24.1%	68.9%	27%	25.1	With the dawn of the new millennium, as female pay continues to escalate, single working women are an increasing proportion of all single women—and increasingly choosing the single lifestyle, including single motherhood. In 2000 working women's mean salary was \$21,023.	
2001	76.3%	24.7%	68.1%	27%	25.1	in 2001 working women's mean salary was \$22,275.	
2002	76.6%	25.2%	67.4%	27%	25.3	21,527	
2003	75.5%				25.3	21,637	

As the 21st century dawned, women began remaining single in greater numbers. Today 51% of women in the U.S. are unmarried, whether by choice or by chance. For some single women the pay gap is far less an issue than it used to be. And while the highest seats of power and influence are still rarely occupied by women (especially single women), great strides have been made.

Sources:

- ¹ Bachelor Girl by Betsy Israel, Harper Collins
- ² U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements
- ³ U.S. Women's Bureau and the National Committee on Pay Equity
- ⁴ U.S. Census Bureau
- ⁵ <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/womenstimeline1.html#WHM-1900>