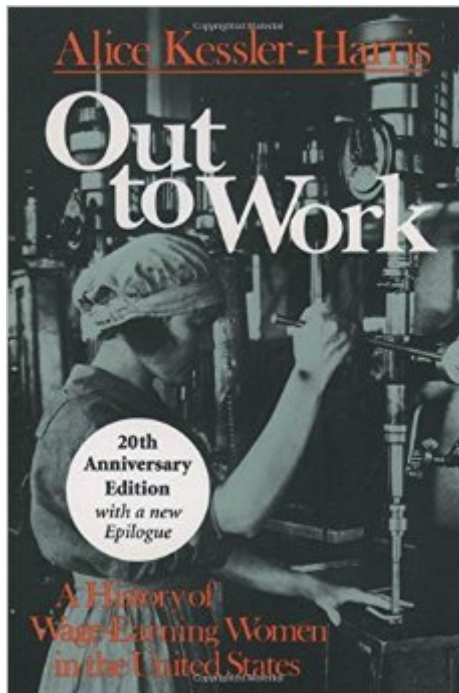


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# Out To Work: A History Of Wage-Earning Women In The United States, 20th Anniversary Edition



## 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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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

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.

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.

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.

Great transaction. Will use again.

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