

# The Changing Lives of American Women

<b>The Changing Family</b>			
	<b>Age of First Marriage</b>		<b>Average Household Size</b>
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
1790	--	--	5.79
1890	26.1	22.0	4.93
1900	25.9	21.9	4.76
1910	25.1	21.6	4.54
1920	24.6	21.2	4.34
1930	24.3	21.3	4.11
1940	24.3	21.5	3.77
1950	22.8	20.3	3.52

<b>Age of Mothers at Various Stages of the Family Life Cycle</b>			
	<b>1880</b>	<b>1920</b>	<b>1950</b>
Age of first marriage	22	21	20
Birth of first child	23	23	23
Birth of last child	34	31	30
Marriage of last child	55	54	51
Death of one spouse	56	65	66

## **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Describe the basic changes that have taken place in the timing of key events of women's lives.
2. How have these changes in your view altered the nature of family life?

<b>Changes in Birth Rate</b>	
1800:	7-8 children per mother
1900:	3.5 children per mother

<b>Changes in Divorce Rate</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Percentage of those married in that year that eventually divorced</b>
1870	8%
1890	10%
1900	12%
1920	18%
1930	24%
1940	26%
1950	30%
1960	39%
1970	48%

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What factors, in your view, contributed to the decline in the birth rate?
2. Has the divorce rate risen sharply or gradually? What factors might have contributed to the increasing divorce rate?

<b>Women in the Labor Force</b>		
	<b>1900</b>	<b>1930</b>
Percentage of women in the labor force	20.6%	24.8%
Proportion of labor force made up of women	18.1%	21.9%

<b>Occupational Distribution of Women Workers</b>		
	<b>1900</b>	<b>1930</b>
Professionals	8	14
Managers	1	3
Clerical and sales	8	28
Skilled artisans	1	1
Operatives and laborers	26	19
Domestic Servants	29	18
Other Service Workers	7	10
Farmers	6	2
Farm Laborers	13	6

## **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What proportion of women worked in 1900? in 1930?
2. How did the occupational distribution of women workers change over time?