



Status and educational plans of Montanas married women graduates
by Ardis Armstrong Young

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE in Home Economics
Montana State University
© Copyright by Ardis Armstrong Young (1970)

Abstract:

Many married women college graduates are in need of ad-ditional study to regain, maintain and put to use their pro-fessional skills and knowledge. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the number of Montana's married women grad-uates desiring to do graduate work, whether their interest in further education is vocationally connected, and what problems they will encounter if they plan to return to school.

Montana's fifteen AAUW Branches participated in the study. Four hundred eighty of the estimated 990 eligible graduates completed the questionnaire. Personal data and information on the respondent's employment and volunteer status, her educational history and plans, were gathered.

The typical Montana woman graduate lives in a large town. She is married and has two children. She is between 40 and 44 years of age, employed at least part-time and en-joys her work. Increasing the family's income is her main reason for working and she earns between \$5,000 and \$8,000 annually. Although she is an active member of three organ-izations and a volunteer worker in her church, she does not think that more academic work would improve her effective-ness in this role.

Eighty-three per cent of the respondents had a bachelor's degree, 52 per cent receiving them from colleges in Montana. Forty-five per cent did their undergraduate work in the field of education. Very few with higher degrees changed curriculum to do graduate work. Although 62 per cent of the graduates live in college towns, only 11 per cent- are presently en-rolled in courses. Evidence was given that courses appro-priate for them are not available locally. Ten per cent of the 11 are attending classes on a part-time basis, with their goals divided between renewing teaching certificates and re-ceiving an advanced degree.

In testing the hypotheses, it was found that a signifi-cant percentage (78) did want to do graduate work. Thirty-five per cent had plans to begin within five years, while thirty per cent are indefinite as to when they will start. Evidence of whether the respondent's academic aspirations were related to vocational ambitions was inconclusive although there is a strong inference that there is a relationship.

The hypothesized need for more accessible course offerings, child care and financial assistance proved to be the most pressing problems of those desiring to return.

STATUS AND EDUCATIONAL PLANS OF MONTANA'S
MARRIED WOMEN GRADUATES

by

ARDIS ARMSTRONG YOUNG

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

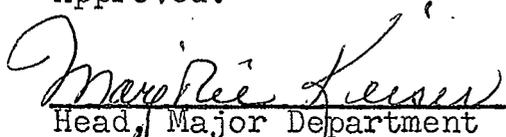
of

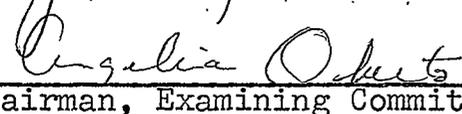
MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Home Economics

Approved:


Head, Major Department


Chairman, Examining Committee


Graduate Dean

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

June, 1970

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree at Montana State University, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by my major professor, or, in his absence, by the Director of Libraries. It is understood that any copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature Ardis A. Young

Date May 26, 1970

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Deep appreciation is extended to Dr. Keiser, Miss Oberto, Dr. Hossack and Dr. Swain for their friendship and encouraging counsel so generously given throughout this graduate program.

The writer is sincerely grateful to the Montana State University Home Economics Department for the assistantship which made graduate study financially possible. A special thanks is due the AAUW Branches in Montana for participating so willingly in this study.

In appreciation for their endurance and laughter, this writing is lovingly dedicated to Tom, Dana and Lisa.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
VITA	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
Importance of Study	1
Purpose of Study	2
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE	6
Modern Woman and Social Change	6
Woman's Present Status	10
Health and Age	10
Role Confusion	11
Employment	12
Leadership	13
Volunteer Work	14
Education	14
Potential of Mature Women	16
As Students	16
Interest	18

Specific Use	20
Home Life	21
As Individuals	22
Problems in Development of Woman's Potential	23
Distance and Residence	24
Counseling	25
Finance	25
Prerequisite Requirements	27
Child Care	28
Other Needs	28
Attitudes Toward Educating Women	29
CHAPTER III PROCEDURE	32
Selection of Sample	33
Method of Collecting Data	33
Distribution of the Questionnaire	34
CHAPTER IV RESULTS	38
Sample	38
Personal Data	40
Residence	40
Marital Status	41
Age of Graduates	42
Dependents	44
Employment and Volunteer Work	45

The Graduates as Workers	45
The Graduates as Volunteers	51
Education	53
Past	53
Present Educational Participation	57
Future Educational Plans	59
Problems in Planning	63
CHAPTER V SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	67
Summary	67
Conclusions	68
Evaluation of Hypotheses	69
Recommendations	70
For This Study	70
For Additional Studies	71
APPENDIX	72
A. Instructions for Administering the Questionnaire	73
B. Direct Mail Cover Letter	74
C. Questionnaire	75
SOURCES CONSULTED	82

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. Distribution of the Sample	39
II. Graduates with Dependents	45
III. Types of Jobs Held by Employed Women	47
IV. Reasons for Working Given by Employed Women and Those Seeking Employment	51
V. Locations of Colleges Where Graduate's Last Degree Was Received	55
VI. Respondents' Undergraduate Curriculum	56
VII. Graduates' Plans for Further Academic Work	60
VIII. Problems in Planning to do Graduate Work	66

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1a. Location of colleges and universities	36
1b. Location of AAUW Branches	37
2. Residence of Women Sampled	40
3. Marital Status of Women Sampled	41
4. Ages of Women in the Sample	42
5. Stages of "family life cycle" in which respondents fit	43
6. Employment status of women graduates in sampling	46
7. Amounts earned by graduates surveyed	48
8. Employment satisfaction among married women graduates	49
9. Reasons 10 per cent of graduates are not satisfied with present employment	50
10. Number of organizations in which graduates are active members	52
11. Opinion of graduates as to whether more aca- demic work will improve effectiveness of volunteer work	53
12. Highest degree received by graduates	54
13. Graduates present participation in academic work	58
14. Types of programs in which the 11 per cent of the graduates, now taking academic courses, are enrolled	58
15. Graduates reasons for continuing their educations	61

16. Circumstances that might cause 22 per cent of
the graduates to do advanced academic work . . . 62

ABSTRACT

Many married women college graduates are in need of additional study to regain, maintain and put to use their professional skills and knowledge. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the number of Montana's married women graduates desiring to do graduate work, whether their interest in further education is vocationally connected, and what problems they will encounter if they plan to return to school.

Montana's fifteen AAUW Branches participated in the study. Four hundred eighty of the estimated 990 eligible graduates completed the questionnaire. Personal data and information on the respondent's employment and volunteer status, her educational history and plans, were gathered.

The typical Montana woman graduate lives in a large town. She is married and has two children. She is between 40 and 44 years of age, employed at least part-time and enjoys her work. Increasing the family's income is her main reason for working and she earns between \$5,000 and \$8,000 annually. Although she is an active member of three organizations and a volunteer worker in her church, she does not think that more academic work would improve her effectiveness in this role.

Eighty-three per cent of the respondents had a bachelor's degree, 52 per cent receiving them from colleges in Montana. Forty-five per cent did their undergraduate work in the field of education. Very few with higher degrees changed curriculum to do graduate work. Although 62 per cent of the graduates live in college towns, only 11 per cent are presently enrolled in courses. Evidence was given that courses appropriate for them are not available locally. Ten per cent of the 11 are attending classes on a part-time basis, with their goals divided between renewing teaching certificates and receiving an advanced degree.

In testing the hypotheses, it was found that a significant percentage (78) did want to do graduate work. Thirty-five per cent had plans to begin within five years, while thirty per cent are indefinite as to when they will start. Evidence of whether the respondent's academic aspirations were related to vocational ambitions was inconclusive although there is a strong inference that there is a relationship. The hypothesized need for more accessible course offerings, child care and financial assistance proved to be the most pressing problems of those desiring to return.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Importance of Study

The need for educated leadership in this country is at an all-time high. Population and pollution, increased technology and many other social problems leave in their wake a perplexed society. Only the most ingenious ideas will be able to bridge the gap between man and his environment. A nation utilizing only half of its creative power can never expect to meet this challenge.

There has been in the past decade a national awareness of the potential mature married women have for furnishing the additional leadership necessary as the world launches into a new age. Traditional attitudes and inadequate provisions must be eliminated and methods for developing this potential discovered.

Women who already have obtained college degrees and specialized training are the most likely candidates for leadership. Most of this training is obtained before marriage and/or the birth of children, and is often inadequate for re-entry into a professional field. Marriage at young ages, even for college students, is the current trend. Many college women do not have the opportunity to gain experience in their professions before their families are

started. Keeping up with change by taking coursework part-time while children are small (Rust proofing)¹ or updating skills and knowledge after the children are grown (Rust removal)² is essential to reactivating the mature woman's professional contributions. More formal education, coupled with the unique life experience she has, can make these contributions invaluable.

Few universities have extended their services to solve the problems these women encounter as they attempt to keep abreast of their field through further education. At a time when great effort should be made to encourage development of their potential, they are, in fact, discouraged by universities which ignore the differences in their life styles and make no effort to adapt policies to accommodate older women.

Purpose of Study

Montana and its people are unique. Still a rural state, without many of the problems urban living has thrust on the rest of the nation, Montanans are not prone to

¹Vera M. Schletzer, et al., Minnesota Plan for the Continuing Education of Women, (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis, 1967), pp. ii-iii.

²Ibid.

quick change or deviance from a conservative individualism. These qualities "won the West" and earned Montana's pioneers a peaceful neighborly pace in a rambling state. Montana has changed very little in comparison to its technological brother-states.

One of the few changes that has occurred, however, is causing some pain. Interpretation of the 1960 census data for the state reveals that only 51.7% of its population falls in the "productive" age bracket (18-64 years old).³ In a recent address, Governor Anderson said that only "49% of the state's people are of working age".⁴ This indicates that the number of productive citizens continues to fall. Young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are leaving the state at alarming rates, many taking with them valuable college educations. To correct this situation the state must create vocational opportunities and salaries that will induce young people to stay. Doing this, however, may require more time and money than the present 'producers' can afford. The most logical plan for supporting the state in

³Harald A. Pedersen, Montana's Human Resources, Age and Sex Distribution, Montana Agricultural Experiment Station Circular #234, (Bozeman: Montana State College, 1962), p. 8.

⁴Governor Forrest Anderson, dedication address at Eastern Montana College, Billings, Montana, November 2, 1969.

its present dilemma and also provide building power is to make the most efficient use of its more stable human resources. With more than half the population dependent on a minority for support and services, it seems the state "cannot afford to frustrate any talent".⁵

Women make up half the age group categorized as the 'producing minority'. Many married Montana women are entering the labor force. For the most part they are employed for a low-paying service or clerical work. The 16% in professions are predominantly teachers and nurses--vital professions--but low paying. Very few leadership positions in the state's government, business or professional organizations are held by women. Advanced education is needed by many to qualify them and give them the confidence to seek opportunities for leadership.

Only Eastern Montana College has a plan for encouraging attendance by mature women.⁶ This is partially be-

⁵President Lyndon Johnson in Report on Progress in 1966 on the Status of Women, by Interdepartmental Commission and Citizen's Advisory Council of the President's Commission on the Status of Women (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 87.

⁶Letter from Mrs. Jean Dimich, Coordinator, Continuing Education of Women, Eastern Montana College, Billings, Montana, October 21, 1969.

cause women's particular ambitions and problems have not been defined clearly enough to justify making changes. It is the purpose of this study to define the needs of Montana's married women concerning their advanced educations. The following hypotheses will be tested:

1. There is a large percentage of married women in Montana who would like to do graduate work.
2. There is a direct relationship between women wanting more education and their plans to use this education vocationally.
3. There is a large percentage who will need more accessible course offerings, child care services and financial aid.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Modern Woman and Social Change

America has begun to look at its women in a new light. Extensive evaluation of the present status of women is taking place. The potential she has for solving many social ills is being acknowledged. "There has been more word and deed on behalf of American woman...(since 1964)... than in her entire previous existence."¹ The tragic loss of ideas and energies resulting from religious adherence to a now inoperable concept of womanhood is plain to see-- even by the American woman herself.

Because of drastic changes in family functions, the traditional concept of woman's role began to lag shortly after the Industrial Revolution.² Woman's importance had been in her role as keeper of the hearth, rearer and bearer of children and full partner in economic provisions. Although she had few legal rights and her chores were physi-

¹Helen Colton, What's On Woman's Future Agenda? (Los Angeles: Family Forum, 1967), p. 8.

²Gerald R. Leslie, The Family in Social Context. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 255-285.

cally taxing, her role was clear-cut and the rewards were tangible.

When technology took the family to the city and father to the factory, it also canned the prize-winning beans, made lovely garments and later washed the dishes. Schools, churches and organizations left mother scarcely five years and four hours a day with her children. The company moved its employees and their families at will, making aunts and grandpas, with all their emotional bandages, a thing of the past.

Boys and girls began to be educated alike for all professions, but the girls were called on to choose between fruition of their training and marriage. Choosing the profession was extremely risky. Despite educations made available to women for nearly all professions, positions were granted to women in very few.

Suffragettes, despising these and other 'inequities' (witness the fact that the vote was denied to "criminals, lunatics, idiots and women"!) fought fiercely to secure the franchise for women and maintain them as equals with men. The thrust of this militant group missed its mark, however, by renouncing femininity in all its forms, with all its virtues. Their philosophy was too rigid to satisfy the majority of women and the country still valued large families

and grey grandmas.

Wars and depression sapped the nations' energies until the mid-forties. After holding the line on the home-front in all occupations during the war, women re-entered domestic life and the fifties with vigor. They worked hard at perpetuating the slogan, "Woman's Place Is In The Home". The 1960's found the nation affluent and ready for the self-actualizing phase of its development and brought with it a vivid vision of the future. It was then that Friedan's Feminine Mystique was initiating conversation. Women, the majority of them married, entered the labor force in droves during the '60s, causing the largest percentage of its growth.³ President Kennedy established his Commission on the Status of Women in 1961, and Congress added the word "sex" to the section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that prohibited employment discrimination.

Ideas about women's roles are definitely changing. Building on the work that brought women from the position of "possession" to human individual with worth and rights and equal ability, modern women see a glorious future. Modern men also look to a future that insists on using all

³U. S. Department of Labor, Handbook on Women Workers, Women's Bureau Bulletin #283, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 93.

of the talent of all the people, with particular emphasis on those qualities which are uniquely feminine. The following facts and projections of the future have made redefinition of woman's roles imperative and her freedom to apply it unquestionable.

- Women make up 53% of the nation's population and the percentage increases as wars persist.⁴
- Increased longevity of women allow them as much time to pursue a profession as the average man is allowed.
- World population may make child-bearing the privilege of very few, or severely limited to many.⁵
- Predicted high incidence of one-parent families and temporary emotional involvements or marriages will make commitment to a vocation one of the few stabilizing agents. Vocation will be very important to all.⁶
- Crowded conditions and affluence will make self-actualization a primary need and will call for the use of the feminine qualities of cooperation and adaptability in all relationships.⁷

⁴Colton, Woman's Future Agenda, p. 3.

⁵Paul Ehrlich, The Population Bomb, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968), p. 135.

⁶Warren Bennis and Philip E. Slater, The Temporary Society, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), pp. 77-96.

⁷David C. McClelland, "Wanted: A New Self-Image for Woman", in Dialogue on Women, edited by Robert Theobald, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 44-52.

- Technology is and will continue to call for highly trained advisors in numbers that qualified men cannot fill.⁸

Woman's Present Status

America's mature married women are given, because of the many functions they are called on to perform, opportunity to develop unique abilities and skills that could provide the answers to social problems and meet educational and economic needs.⁹

Health and Age

Medical discoveries and a high standard of living has eliminated the premature 'granny' of yesterday. Women now find health and number of years sufficient for raising a "full-term family" with another lifetime to spare. The average woman in America has her last child at 26 and lives to be 75 years old.¹⁰

"So woman enters into middle life in her thirties knowing that the chances are she will live at least forty more years. She knows, too, that her health on the average can be at least as

⁸Edwin Lewis, Developing Women's Potential (Ames, Iowa: Iowa University Press, 1968), p. 158.

⁹Francena Miller, "Womanpower", Journal of Home Economics, 60, 9, (November, 1968), 693.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 693.

good during these forty years as it has been in the preceding thirty."¹¹

Role Confusion

It is at this time, when family responsibilities lessen, that a woman anticipates a major change in her life. Many women have plans for making this transition. Many do not.

"According to the American Medical Association, the most likely candidate for a suicide attempt is a 35-year old married woman with children". . . "In a research study on alcoholism, one of the three major classifications of problem drinkers being studied is the wives of successful executives."¹²

Having all the legal advantages, creature comforts and the liberal educations of self-actualizing citizens, women are often confused by the disabling, intangible pressures that keep them in 'choice, but no choice' situations. Advertisers and soap operas sell the idea that life-worth can be attained by using their product or nursing a lingering neurosis. Threatened husbands and protective fathers often make it impossible for a woman to

¹¹Esther Lloyd-Jones, "Progress Report of Pertinent Research", Potentialities of Women in the Middle Years, edited by Irma Gross (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1956), p. 21.

¹²Colton, Woman's Future Agenda, p. 1.

realize her full potential. Society's ambivalent attitude toward women who work is reflected in the number of studies made on the effects the working mother has on her children.

Employment

Many women are able to make healthy choices regarding the major portion of their lives often by expanding the use of their talents to include community service and/or employment.¹³

In Montana, 59 per cent of the 73,380 women in the labor force in 1960 were married and living with their husbands. Nineteen per cent were married with husbands absent, widowed or divorced.¹⁴ Despite the fact that many have greater ability. . .

"In general, these women fill a large number of the low status, low-paying jobs in the state. Clerical, service and sales workers describe the jobs held by almost 60%...Only 16% held professional positions, mostly teachers and nurses."¹⁵

The national picture looks much the same according to the

¹³Mary Dublin Keyseling, "Continuing Education for Women, A Growing Challenge", remarks at 22nd National Conference on Higher Education, Chicago, Illinois, 1967, p. 4.

¹⁴Maxine Johnson, Employed Women in Montana, report to Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, Helena, Montana, 1969, Table 2.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 4.

U. S. Labor Department's Women's Bureau.¹⁶

Leadership

Women made great strides during the Johnson administration, through political appointments. There was, however, out of this 53% of the population, only one lady U. S. Senator and 11 women Representatives serving elected posts in 1967. Fifty-three thousand more men than women were listed in Who's Who in American Colleges during that year.¹⁷

The ratio of men to women in the professions has changed very little in the past 50 years. The number of positions for college educated women will increase at a much greater rate than jobs for non-skilled or semi-skilled workers.¹⁸ Compared to Russia's doctors, 70% of which are female, the abundance of women jurists in Germany, Scandanavia's female social welfare leaders and Israel's Golda Meir, American women have a long way to go to achieve their "glorious destiny".

¹⁶U. S. Department of Labor, Handbook, pp. 85-120.

¹⁷Colton, Woman's Future Agenda, p. 3.

¹⁸Lewis, Developing Women's Potential, p. 158.

Volunteer Work

The world of work and paid positions is not the only realm of depleted manpower. Volunteer services, which have long been a mainstay in this democratic society and which have traditionally depended on women, have suffered heavy set-backs both in number of workers and quality of leadership.¹⁹

Education

"It is well established that women as a group represent a major source of untapped abilities to meet our country's manpower needs."²⁰ How they are responding and will continue to respond to these needs lies greatly within the realm of their educations.

Women are often trained for unrealistic careers before marriage, and marriage traditionally marks the end of a woman's formal education. The years of child bearing creates a gap between the mother's education and the time it can be put to use professionally. This gap causes knowledge to become outdated, skills to become rusty, amount of

¹⁹Chase Going Woodhouse, "Volunteer Community Work", in American Women: The Changing Image, edited by Beverly Cassara, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), p. 59.

²⁰Lewis, Developing Women's Potential, p. 14.

education to become insufficient, interest to change, and a loss of confidence in one's professional competence results.²¹

The President's Commission on the Status of Women saw the need for educational reform, recognizing that the sequence of education presently offered to women was a handicap not only to individual but to national goals as well.

"The education a woman receives will have a deeper effect on her life and status than anything else within the range of immediate social action."²²

In undertaking its study, the Commission's Education Committee agree:

1. There should be the widest possible opportunities for women to develop their potential and use their capabilities; to know the choices that may be open to them and exercise those choices.
2. Expanding career opportunities should not displace traditional responsibilities of women in the home and in the local community.²³

²¹Schletzer, et al., Minnesota Plan, pp. 2-3.

²²President's Commission on the Status of Women, report of the Committee on Education, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 1.

²³Ibid., p. 1.

In its report, the Committee emphasizes the importance of the response to the educational needs of women as they fulfill their traditional roles and prepare to take on new roles that emerge in our culture. Women's education, then, is seen by this group as an answer to the nation's unprecedented need for human services in every profession and as a way of increasing woman's personal satisfaction and enhancing family life.

Potential of Mature Women

Opening doors to already overcrowded universities takes more than a desire for personal improvement or pursuit of new interests. At this point in history, proof that potential for making a better world exists within the students chosen to attend, seems only logical. Researchers have set out to see if mature women do have this potential.

As Students

Halfter claims: "Women forty years of age and over gave a better than average total performance. The most important finding... may be the superior performance (judged by any criteria) of these older women with above average high school achievement and long absence from formal study."²⁴

²⁴Irma Halfter, "The Comparative Academic Achievement of Women", Adult Education, XII, 2, (Winter, 1962), p. 108.

U. S. Department of Labor findings say: "Undergraduate achievement of women students was higher than that of men, 68% having a grade point average of B or better, compared with 54% of the men."²⁵

A study by Davis, of over 33,000 college graduates from 135 colleges and universities showed women graduates to have a higher API rating than the men in all disciplines except philosophy. (API is the criteria used to rate potential graduate achievement and is computed by taking the student's grade point average and weighting it by the quality of his institution).²⁶ If older women outperform the younger women academically, and the younger women outperform their male counterparts, it would seem that mature women can be truly superior students.

Rose found that as many young women as men expected to get jobs after college, but fewer young women had specific plans or were acquiring the necessary education for

²⁵President's Commission on the Status of Women, Report on Progress in 1966 on the Status of Women, Interdepartmental Commission and Citizen's Advisory Council, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 12.

²⁶James A. Davis, Great Aspirations, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1964), p. 158.

a specific job. Seventy per cent of the young women said they wanted to work full time but only 28.2 were preparing for a profession and 15.5% were not sure what they were training for in college.²⁷ Lewis claims:

"The older women are motivated to get a degree they can use. Their reasons for going to college are not as confused and conflicting. As a result, older women generally outperform the younger ones."²⁸

Interest

Indications that women want more formal education, even during child-rearing years was very clear in the Women's Bureau surveys. The 1964 study of 1957 graduates showed their interest in both continuing education and paid employment was exceedingly high, both among the 51% already in the work force and the 49% not employed. Three-fourths of the respondents planned to enroll in an educational or training course. Forty-eight per cent had taken at least one graduate or professional course since gradua-

²⁷A. M. Rose, "The Adequacy of Women's Expectations for Adult Roles", Social Forces, 30, 1, (October, 1951), pp. 69-77.

²⁸Lewis, Developing Women's Potential, p. 213.

tion.²⁹ Seventy per cent of the graduates of 15 years before had also expressed a strong desire for more education.³⁰

The innovative Minnesota Plan enrollment attests to the fact that women will take advantage of further education when proper conditions exist. Eighty-five per cent of their membership is or has been married, nearly all have children. Over half of the mother-scholars still had preschool children at home.³¹

A revised listing of 45 states and over 200 educational institutions that are providing programs and services designed primarily for adult women was published by the Women's Bureau in 1968. This great involvement by schools in the nation reveals significant popular demand.³²

²⁹U. S. Department of Labor, College Women Seven Years After Graduation: Resurvey of Women Graduates-Class of 1957, Women's Bureau Bulletin #292, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 6.

³⁰U. S. Department of Labor, Fifteen Years After College, Women's Bureau Bulletin #283, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 12.

³¹Schletzer, et al., pp. 10-11.

³²U. S. Department of Labor, Continuing Education Programs and Services for Women, Wage and Labor Standards Pamphlet #10, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 88.

Montana's only listing is a program at Eastern Montana College in Billings. Its enrollment shows enthusiastic response by women in the area, as approximately 300 women aged 25 and over register there each quarter.³³

Specific Use

Participation in the work force, or clear-cut evidence of society receiving benefits from those it educates, is directly related to the amount of education received. More than half of all women college graduates are workers, while three-fourths of those with five or more years of higher education are now gainfully employed, particularly between the ages of 35 and 64.³⁴ In contrast, only one-fourth of the women with less than eight years of education are working.³⁵ In terms of development and conservation of our natural resources, Newcomer has this thought, "Is the higher education of women wasted, or is it a waste not to

³³Letter from Mrs. Jean Dimich, Coordinator, Continuing Education of Women, Eastern Montana College, Billings, Montana, October 21, 1969.

³⁴Keyserling, "Continuing Education for Women", p. 4.

³⁵U. S. Department of Labor, Trends in Educational Attainment of Women, Wage and Labor Standards Administration, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 8.

educate more of the ablest women than we do?"³⁶

Home Life

Aside from the persuasive evidence that talented women are needed in the labor force, the 'worker' role of a woman's life is seldom the main theme. As one writer quipped, "It is hard to imagine a literary work titled 'Death of a Saleslady.'"

"The fact that homemaking is generally woman's most important role has never been seriously questioned, either by those arguing in favor of college education for women or those opposing it."³⁷

It is this dichotomous situation, that of liking and doing very well in occupations outside the home without surrendering her allegiance to her home and family that sometimes make a competent woman highly suspect by those who, with even slight acceptance, could make her life gloriously fulfilling. Perhaps this lack of acceptance is a product of ignorance of the fact that "today's home differs greatly from yesterday's home...the homemaker of today must differ also, and she must be prepared to change even more in the

³⁶Mabel Newcomer, A Century of Higher Education for Women, (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1959), p. 246.

³⁷Ibid., p. 210.

future."³⁸

The benefits of graduate study could easily be seen in the home. Study in fields such as nursing, elementary and secondary education, social casework and home economics all lend themselves directly to the enhancement of family life and personal relationships. Cosper says, "Actual homes would be wonderful research centers for intelligent wives and mothers. This seems like the most important step between theory and actuality."³⁹

"Women who manage families and raise children have to be concerned with people, their development, and their problems. Many women emerge from this training ground in interpersonal relations with considerable skill in deciphering unspoken messages, in handling tensions and helping people to develop their potentialities."⁴⁰

As Individuals

Opportunity to pursue and enrich a woman's cultural

³⁸Schletzer, et al., p. 78.

³⁹Wilma Cosper, "Considerations of Higher Education for Married Women", Journal of Home Economics, 60, 9, (November, 1968), p. 21.

⁴⁰President's Commission on the Status of Women, report of the Committee on Education, quote by Dr. Mary Rioch, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 13.

interests could also come through graduate work. Canaday discovered that low scores were consistently given middle-aged mothers, by themselves and their families, on their performance of the individual-person role. These women were about to enter the 'empty nest' phase in their lives, which would call for another definite role change. Deficiencies in the area of self-development will prove to be a great handicap to making a smooth transition. Canaday feels education could remove this deficit.⁴¹ Viewed from any direction, education, with variations to meet the particular needs of mature married women, would benefit society.

Problems in Development of Woman's Potential

It is evident that a strange paradox exists between the need of the state and nation to utilize the services of all its able, educated people, and the underutilization of that segment of the population which is willing and has the potential for satisfying these needs.

⁴¹Martha Canaday, The Social Roles of Married Middle-Aged Women With Implications for Adult Education, Ed.D. Thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1966, p. 82.

"To talk of the necessity of more engineers, more scientists, more doctors, more teachers and not provide facilities for learning is a kind of cynical nonsense this nation cannot afford."⁴²

What are the reasons women, especially mature married women, are reluctant or unable to receive the necessary educational up-dating and advanced training? A great deal of research and speculating has been done recently to provide the answer to this question. Ginzberg says:

"The simple fact is that the basic educational, training and related institutions in our society are geared to the prototype of man moving steadily along from one stage to the next..."⁴³

Distance and Residence

According to Swope, lack of mobility and inaccessibility to graduate school is a strong limitation for married women. Residence requirements often make it impossible for married women to pursue degree programs even though they might be able to fulfill the coursework requirements through

⁴²Edith Green, "The Federal Role in Education" in Education and the Public Good, distributed for the Graduate School of Education of Harvard, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 14.

⁴³Eli Ginzberg, Life Styles of Educated Women, (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 184.

extension courses at cooperating institutions.⁴⁴

Counseling

Counseling orientated specifically to the problems of mature women was mentioned by researchers as one of the greatest needs of women who wish to return to school.

"College counselors who necessarily spend most of their time working with teen-agers often do not realize the special problems associated with continuing family responsibilities. Women surveyed also felt that many of their counselors were not aware of existing services and facilities that could help in solving their problems."⁴⁵

Mead explains: "Because of the differences in life patterns of women as contrasted with men, the counseling of girls and women is a specialized form of the counseling profession."⁴⁶

Finance

The problems of financing further education have

⁴⁴Mary Ruth Swope, "Interinstitutional Graduate Programs", Journal of Home Economics, 61, 2, (February, 1969), pp. 114-115.

⁴⁵U. S. Department of Labor, "Continuing Education", pp. 6-7.

⁴⁶President's Commission on the Status of Women, American Women, introduction by Margaret Mead and Frances Kaplan, (New York: Charles Schribner and Sons, 1965), p. 30.

unique characteristics. The fact that married women most often go on a part-time schedule and sometimes not every consecutive session, disqualifies them for many fellowships and scholarships. There seems to be an illogical assumption made by fund granting agencies that "part-time attendance indicates only part-way commitment".⁴⁷ Ginzberg summarizes:

"...government support for graduate education, which in the past has been weighted in favor of fields that women have generally avoided, should be granted for the humanities and social sciences as well as the natural sciences."⁴⁸

"Eighty-seven per cent of the funds of the federally sponsored graduate fellowships were for study in scientific fields and engineering."⁴⁹ Borrowing money requires a commitment to seek employment to pay it back, a promise a woman with a young family cannot always make. She must have a husband who is able to finance this schooling. This can be an insurmountable barrier to many bright young women who do not marry highly paid young men.

⁴⁷President's Commission on the Status of Women, Committee on Education, p. 9.

⁴⁸Ginzberg, Life Styles, p. 183.

⁴⁹Green, "The Federal Role in Education", p. 26.

An assistantship, which could be the most "honorable" way for a woman to finance her education without heavily taxing the family budget, means an added work load that few married women can realistically accept. Rulings requiring all Assistants to be registered as full-time students⁵⁰ will either eliminate serious women assistants with family responsibilities, or put both their scholarship and family relationships in jeopardy.

Prerequisite Requirements

Inflexible prerequisite requirements can be stumbling blocks--not only to women.

"Institutions with high standards sometimes refuse to give credit for work done at an institution the quality of whose work they question. Yet these same institutions accept foreign students as provisional juniors simply because of the difficulties of measuring the quality of their earlier education."⁵¹

Researchers Ginzberg, Cospers, Mead and Swope have recommended use of proficiency testing to give credit for life experience to fill undergraduate deficiencies. In 1966 the College Entrance Examination Board devised some equivalency tests. They are used to measure life experience and know-

⁵⁰Dr. Kenneth Goering, Dean of the Graduate School, Montana State University, personal interview, October 10, 1969.

⁵¹Newcomer, A Century of Higher Education, p. 251.

ledge of subject matter gained outside the classroom. Use of such tests is spreading rapidly as it becomes evident that they are a great help in advancing adult students.⁵²

Child Care

A child day care service was arranged in answer to a vital need of prospective "Planners" soon after the Minnesota Plan went into effect.⁵³ The need for child care services by mother students is no less acute than the need working mothers are expressing so audibly through many government agencies today.⁵⁴ The only difference being that students require lower rates and care for shorter periods of time.

Other Needs

Other needs still have been mentioned by some writers. They include:

⁵²National Association of Public School Adult Education, Administrators Swap Shop, XVI, 2, (November, 1969), p. 1.

⁵³Schletzer, et al., p. 68.

⁵⁴U. S. Department of Labor, Handbook, p. 48-51.

1. Course content should be designed to suit the interests, problems and capabilities of mature people.⁵⁵
2. Courses should be offered in home management, family finance, consumer buying, use of family leisure and the relation of the individual and the family to society.⁵⁶
3. Job placement or referral services for women have been part of some programs, but their value for graduate students has not been proven.⁵⁷
4. Flexible hours for classes, especially for basic courses, would do much to enable homemakers to attend.
5. Removal of age limits on graduate and professional programs would help older women and certainly would not lower graduate standards.
6. Provision for low-cost campus housing for women and their families needs to be made.⁵⁸

Attitudes Toward Educating Women

The need for a change of attitude by society, especially by those 'running' the university, was seen by all

⁵⁵U. S. Department of Labor, Continuing Educational Programs and Services for Women, p. 6.

⁵⁶President's Commission on the Status of Women, American Women, p. 33.

⁵⁷Schletzer, et al., Minnesota Plan, p. 48-57.

⁵⁸Ginzberg, Life Styles, p. 183.

as a crucial factor in education of today's woman. Perhaps Mary Bunting was correct in saying: "We never really expected women to use their talents and education to make significant intellectual advances."⁵⁹

"Nor have we made up our minds what the education of women is for...Are women to be only transmitters of knowledge as mothers and teachers, or are exceptional women to be encouraged, as exceptional men are encouraged, to make their contributions to the store of human knowledge and culture...? If we are going to encourage women in creative thinking, research and expression, are we going to encourage them to explore any field that catches their fancy...?"⁶⁰

"It seems inconsistent that colleges would put roadblocks in the way of the older woman who wants to return to school, but this is in fact what most of them do."⁶¹

"From the viewpoint of social policy, it is possible to express mild regret that the sex difference runs the way it does. Although women are clearly good students, a large portion of them are destined for marriage and family life...The facts of life are that the society will get many more years of professional work from a man than from a woman."⁶²

⁵⁹Lewis, Developing Women's Potential, p. 214.

⁶⁰Newcomer, A Century of Higher Education, p. 246.

⁶¹Lewis, Developing Women's Potential, p. 213.

⁶²Davis, Great Aspirations, p. 158.

". . . a more realistic index of the input into graduate fields can be made by calculating not just per cent high on API scores, but per cent who are high men, since low API students of either sex, and high women present some drawbacks."⁶³

Most of the needs require rather simple changes in the system of higher education. "Simple" changes become difficult, however, when poor attitudes are prevalent. Awareness of the mature woman's potential and her abilities as a student is the crucial factor in developing a program for her in the university.

⁶³Davis, Great Aspirations, p. 158.

CHAPTER III

Procedure

Our nation is desperately in need of leadership and creative thinkers to solve the pressing problems confronting it today. Women constitute more than half the country's population and have the potential for filling this need. Retraining or educational updating is necessary, however, for many women to make the role transition from 'homemaker' to 'homemaker and professional'. Graduate schools have traditionally been geared to the life-styles of single people, predominantly men. Women are confronted by many difficulties when they plan to return to the university. Fitting their quite different schedules and responsibilities into a system often seems impossible. Many colleges and universities are adopting policies that will facilitate mature 'wife and mother' students. It is the purpose of this study to first determine if there is a significant number of married women in Montana who wish to do graduate work. In addition, it seeks to define what these women see as the problems women would encounter if and when continued educations are sought.

Selection of Sample

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is a national organization with fifteen Branches in Montana. These Branches are distributed throughout the state (see Figure 1). The relatively larger towns serve as a base for chapters, but membership includes many rural women. All members are college or university graduates. Approximately 82 per cent of the membership is or has been married. This population could indicate: (1) whether or not there is sufficient interest in more formal education, (2) what factors would influence this interest and (3) what problems must be solved by those choosing to pursue this goal.

Method of Collecting Data

A questionnaire was selected as the data-gathering instrument as it provided the most efficient and convenient way of surveying hundreds of graduates scattered throughout the state. A closed questionnaire form provided for write-in categories and comments. This made the data uniform without eliminating pertinent individual responses. The questions were designed to elicit the following information:

1. Locale, age, marital and family status.
2. Present employment status and ambitions.
3. Present organizational involvement.
4. Involvement in or ambitions toward educational advancement.
5. Problems anticipated or encountered in pursuing educational goals.

To assure its effectiveness, the questionnaire was reviewed by professional consultants. It was then tested by administering it to a local group of Home Economics Graduates. A few minor changes were made on the questionnaire in accordance with suggestions and comments from the test group. These changes facilitated ease of administration and completion of the form.

Distribution of the Questionnaire

Twelve of the fifteen Branch presidents of AAUW were sent packets of questionnaires. Instructions for administering them to the random group of married women attending either the January or February meeting were enclosed. Conflicts in program plans made it impossible for three Branches to administer the questionnaires at a meeting. All of their members were then sent questionnaires by direct mail. This mailing included an explanatory cover letter, return envelope, and in one case, the Branch's

newsletter.

A follow-up mailing was made to those AAUW Branches which had the fewest returns and the presidents were asked to distribute them to members who had not completed one previously and were in attendance at their March-April meeting.

