

The Declining Distinctiveness of Utah's Working Women

Howard M. Bahr

Looking back, it seems that the American working woman has come a long way since 1940.¹ Certainly during World War II she entered the civilian labor force in unprecedented numbers and following that war did not abandon her work role. Instead, women's share of the nation's jobs increased. In 1950 one-third of America's women were working, by 1960 38 percent, and by 1976 the figure had risen to over 47 percent. In that year, 40 percent of all jobs in the country were held by women.

Along with increased employment for women came opportunities to work in jobs formerly closed to them. Women became more achievement oriented, and growing proportions prepared themselves for the new occupational opportunities by going to college. In absolute numbers, these generalizations are true: there are more women in college than there used to be and more women at work in high-status jobs. But social change seen from the vantage-points of personal experience and the media often lacks comparative perspective. When such changes in women's educational attainment and job status are viewed in relative terms, as part of a general rise in educational attainment and occupational status, it becomes clear that much of the accepted "progress" of women has merely been their keeping pace with the general upward mobility of all segments of society. In many ways, compared to men, American working women are more disadvantaged in the 1970s than they were in the 1940s.

This study deals with Utah working women. About three-fourths of Utahns are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and the state's people often are viewed as distinctive as a consequence of the Mormon influence. The state's

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¹Most of the comments in this report about change apply to the period 1940-1970. Occasionally, the author has been able to supplement census data with more recent figures, and so some patterns refer to a thirty-six year span, or a "generation."

political conservatism, the formal patriarchal structure of Mormon family life, the larger families, and the negative stance about women's employment outside the home taken by some Church leaders might all be seen as fostering a unique labor force experience for Utah women. Because it is so tempting to drag in patriarchalism or some of these other factors to explain Utah work force patterns which run counter to our accepted notions of how the world has changed and how women have been liberated, a sketching of historical trends and Utah-national comparisons is a critical initial step in this study.

The findings reported here should make us wary of facile generalizations about the distinctiveness of working women in Utah. The excursion into the historical record will document at least three facts that should be kept in mind as we consider more recent studies of Utah women's work: (1) Over the past generation the labor force participation of Utah women has become increasingly like that of women nationally, until today there is no difference. Utah women are as apt as other women to work outside the home. (2) The general types of jobs held by women have changed little since 1940; to the degree that change has occurred, it has been in the direction of making Utah women more like women in other states. (3) Both in Utah and in the nation, the position of women relative to men with respect to higher education and to participation in high-status occupations has either remained stable or deteriorated. True, there are more female professionals today; but there are also many more male professionals, and, in comparative perspective, there are only a few specific occupations where women have made significant inroads.

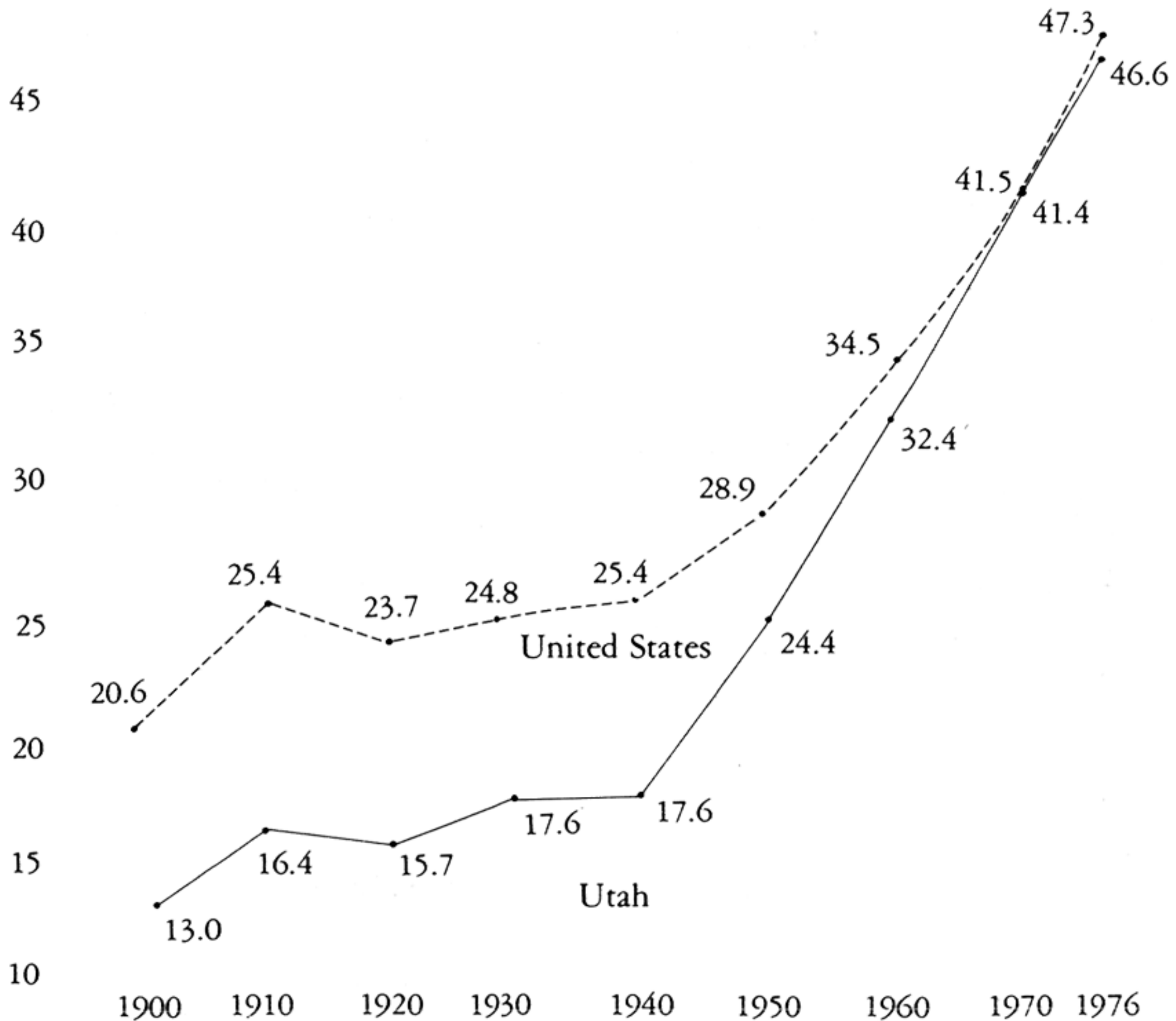
TRENDS IN LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Early in this century Utah women were much less likely to work outside the home than were American women generally. In 1900 only 13 percent of Utah's women were in the labor force, but the national figure was almost 21 percent. As may be seen in Figure 1, although women's labor force participation increased slightly between 1900 and 1940, the gap between Utah women and other women continued at about the same level, with women in the country as a whole being about 1.5 times as apt to be employed as Utah women. Since 1940, the difference has declined markedly. By 1950, 24 percent of Utah women were in the labor force, compared to 29 percent of women nationally, and by 1960 this 5 percent difference had been reduced to only a 2 percent difference. In the late sixties the Utah

Figure 1. Female Labor Force as Percentage of Total Female Population, for Women, Aged 14* and Over, for Utah and the U.S., by Ten-Year periods 1900-1970, and 1976

*Data for 1900-1930 for the U.S. represent women aged 15 and over, and 1970 figures are for women 16 and over.

U.S. -----
Utah ———



Sources:

1930: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *The Labor Force* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), vol. 3, part 5, Pennsylvania-Wyoming (Utah), Table 2, p. 649.

1940: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), vol. 2, part 7, Utah-Wyoming, Table 17, p. 34, and Table 18, p. 35; part 1, United States Summary, Table 16, p. 44-46, and Table 17, p. 44-47.

1950: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), vol. 2, part 44, Utah, Table 25, p. 44-30; part 1, United States Summary, Table 50, p. 1-99.

1960: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), vol. 1, Table 52, p. 46-76; part 1, United States Summary, Table 82, p. 1-213.

1970: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), vol. 1, part 46, Utah, Table 53, pp. 46-121, 46-122; part 1, United States Summary, Section 1, Table 90, pp. 1-390, 1-391.

U.S. Historical Statistics, Bicentennial, part 1, Series D 49-62, p. 133.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *U.S. Working Women: A Databook* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), Bulletin 1977, Table 3, p. 5.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, 1976* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), Table 3.

rate caught up with the national rate, and for the past decade there has been essentially no difference between the two.

It might be argued that the increased proportion of Utah women employed outside the home merely reflects the increasing urban nature of the Utah population in contrast to the national population. However, inspection of state and national figures on women's employment by locality of residence reveals that the tendency toward congruity with national patterns applies in rural farm, rural nonfarm, and city localities alike.

City women have consistently been more likely to work outside the home for pay than have their rural counterparts. In the U.S. as a whole, and in Utah in particular, the census figures on unemployment for rural residents are remarkably consistent, with rural farm women the least apt to participate in the labor force, followed by women who live in rural areas but do not belong to farming families, and topped by urban women, whose labor force participation is highest. Since 1940 the participation of all women in the labor force has increased. In fact, rural women in 1970 were much more apt to be employed than were urban women in 1940.

The convergence of the employment patterns of Utah women and women nationally is apparent in the urban/rural nonfarm/rural farm comparisons in Table 1. In 1940, more than one of every six

TABLE 1
Percentage of Women* in the Labor Force, by Urban and Rural Residence, Utah and the United States, 1940-1970

| | 1940 | | 1950 | | 1960 | | 1970 | |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. |
| TOTAL | 17.6% | 25.4% | 24.4% | 28.9% | 32.4% | 34.5% | 41.5% | 41.4% |
| Urban | 21.7 | 31.2 | 28.1 | 33.2 | 34.7 | 37.3 | 43.0 | 43.1 |
| Rural Nonfarm | 12.4 | 20.7 | 17.7 | 22.7 | 25.4 | 28.8 | 35.4 | 37.1 |
| Rural Farm | 9.9 | 12.1 | 13.9 | 15.7 | 23.3 | 22.9 | 30.9 | 29.9 |

*Aged 14 and over, 1940-1960, and 16 and over in 1970.

Sources:

1940: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), vol. 2, part 7, Utah-Wyoming, Tables 17 and 18; part 1, United States Summary, Tables 16 and 17.

1950: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), vol. 2, part 44, Utah, Table 25; part 1, United States Summary, Table 50.

1960: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), vol. 1, Table 52; part 1, United States Summary, Table 82.

1970: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), vol. 1, part 46, Utah, Table 53; part 1, United States Summary, Section 1, Table 90.

Utah women was in the labor force, compared to one in four in the nation. The gap between the figures for Utah women and the national rate was highest for women living in the urban areas and smallest for rural farm women. By 1950 the difference in percent of women in the labor force had declined to 4.5 percent, and women in both urban and rural nonfarm Utah lagged about 5 percent behind the national figures in labor force participation. Farm women were still about half as likely as city women to have jobs. By 1960, the difference between Utah women and women in the entire nation had narrowed still further, and for the first time, a category of Utah women—those in the rural farm category—were *more* likely to be in the labor force than their counterparts nationwide.

The 1970 figures reveal that for each of the three rural-urban classifications Utah women's participation in the labor force was no different from that of American women generally, and the differences by urban-rural category were all less than 2 percent. Thus, whether we consider women in cities, in farming areas, or in non-farm rural settings, the finding is the same: Between 1940 and 1970 Utah women entered the labor force faster than American women as a whole. Not only did they keep pace with the national trend toward increased participation of women in the labor force, but they also closed the employment gap which existed in 1940.

If the trends which have affected the employment of women in the country as a whole had influenced Utah women to the same degree as women elsewhere, the differential between Utah women and other women would have remained even, although the absolute rates of participation would have increased for both groups. Instead, not only did Utah women enter the labor force in numbers large enough to maintain the state's position relative to the increasing national rate, but the gap between Utah women and other women disappeared entirely.

Along with the increase in the percentage of women employed has come an increase in part-time work. Census figures on part-time employment are not available for all working women, but for one segment of the population—the young adult category including women up to age twenty-seven or thirty-four—there are published figures which permit Utah-national comparisons. As may be seen in Table 2, the proportion of employed women working full time (thirty-five hours or more per week) has shown a consistent decline over the thirty-year period in both Utah and the U.S. as a whole.

In 1940, 85 percent of Utah women who worked were employed full time. By 1950 this figure had dropped to 72 percent and then to

60 percent in 1960 and 57 percent in 1970. The figures for the nation as a whole show a comparable decline, going from 82 percent in 1940 to 67 percent in 1970. In other words, four-fifths of the employed women used to work full time, but by 1970, among women under thirty-five, only about two-thirds in the nation and just over half in Utah worked full time. Since 1950, Utah women who work have been consistently more apt to work part time than have their counterparts in the nation.

TABLE 2
Young Adult^a Women's Employment Status and Hours Worked,
Utah and the United States, 1940-1970

| | 1940 | | 1950 | | 1960 | | 1970 | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|
| | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. |
| Number in labor force | 33,888 | 12,845,259 | 23,700 | 6,021,945 | 41,466 | 8,462,195 | 70,397 | 12,944,539 |
| Percentage in labor force | 17.6% | 25.4% | 25.9% | 32.5 % | 30.9% | 33.7% | 43.1% | 45.4% |
| Total at work during census week | 25,276 | 9,515,593 | 21,030 | 5,272,355 | 37,889 | 7,622,993 | 63,638 | 11,624,139 |
| Percentage working: | | | | | | | | |
| 1-14 hours | 2.8% ^b | 2.8% ^b | 12.0% | 5.1% | 20.6% | 12.6% | 16.6% | 11.0% |
| 15-34 hours | 12.7 | 15.2 | 15.5 | 13.2 | 19.5 | 16.0 | 26.2 | 22.0 |
| 35 hours or more | 84.5 | 82.0 | 72.5 | 81.7 | 59.5 | 71.4 | 57.2 | 67.0 |

^a1940, 14 years and older; 1950, 14-29 years; 1960, 14-34 years, civilian labor force; 1970, 16-34 years, civilian labor force.

^b1940 category listed was "under 14 hours."

Sources:

1940: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *The Labor Force* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), vol. 3, part 5, Pennsylvania-Wyoming (Utah), Table 22, p. 695; part 1, United States Summary, Table 85, p. 258.

1950: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952), vol. 2, part 44, Utah, Table 71, p. 44-97; part 1, United States Summary, Table 122, p. 1-258.

1960: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964), vol. 1, part 46, Utah, Table 117, p. 46-196; part 1, United States Summary, Table 197, p. 1-507.

1970: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), vol. 1, part 46, Utah, Table 166, p. 46-356; part 1, United States Summary, Section 2, Table 217, p. 1-693.

PREPARATION FOR WORK:

TRENDS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Utah women are better educated than women in the country as a whole. However, these differences also seem to be declining. In 1940,

among women aged twenty-five and over, the median number of years of school completed was 10.4 for Utah women and 8.7 for U.S. women. By 1950, the difference had increased slightly and the average Utah woman had completed high school (median years schooling = 12.0) while the average American woman had only 9.6 years of schooling. The 1960 census revealed that women nationally were beginning to close the gap with the median of 10.9 years completed as compared to 12.2 for Utah women. By 1970, the median figure for Utah women was 12.4, up only .4 from 1950, while that for U.S. women as a whole was 12.1. Thus, as of 1970, the educational advantage Utah women had formerly possessed over women nationally was largely gone.

This finding of the declining distinctiveness of Utah women does not appear, however, if we examine figures on college attendance. Utah continues to maintain a sizable advantage in proportion of women attending college. In 1940, one out of six Utah women aged twenty-five and over had attended at least one year of college, compared to one out of ten nationally. By 1950, the Utah figure had jumped to one out of five compared to one of eight nationally (19.6 percent vs. 12.9 percent). In 1960, 21.8 percent of Utah women had completed at least one year of college compared to 14.8 percent among other women, and in 1970, the comparable figures were 26.6 percent as compared to 18.7 percent.

Thus, while the difference in median number of years of education has almost disappeared, Utah women continue to be enrolled more frequently in college and to be college graduates. In fact, their advantage in proportion of women completing four or more years of college has increased. In 1940, 4.7 percent of Utah women had completed college compared to 3.8 percent for women nationally, an advantage for Utah women of 0.9 percent. In 1950, the difference remained at about the same level with 6.0 percent of Utah women having graduated as compared to 5.2 percent; but in 1960, for the first time in the thirty-year period, the difference between Utah women and other women in the percent completing four or more years of college surpassed 1 percent (7.1 percent for Utah women compared to 5.8 percent for all women), and the difference increased to 1.5 percent in 1970 (9.6 percent versus 8.1 percent, respectively). Despite a national trend toward increased education for women which has raised the national median to near the level for Utah women, in the highest categories of educational achievement, Utah women have not only maintained their advantage but increased it. In

1970, almost one out of ten Utah women was a college graduate, compared to one in twelve for the country as a whole.

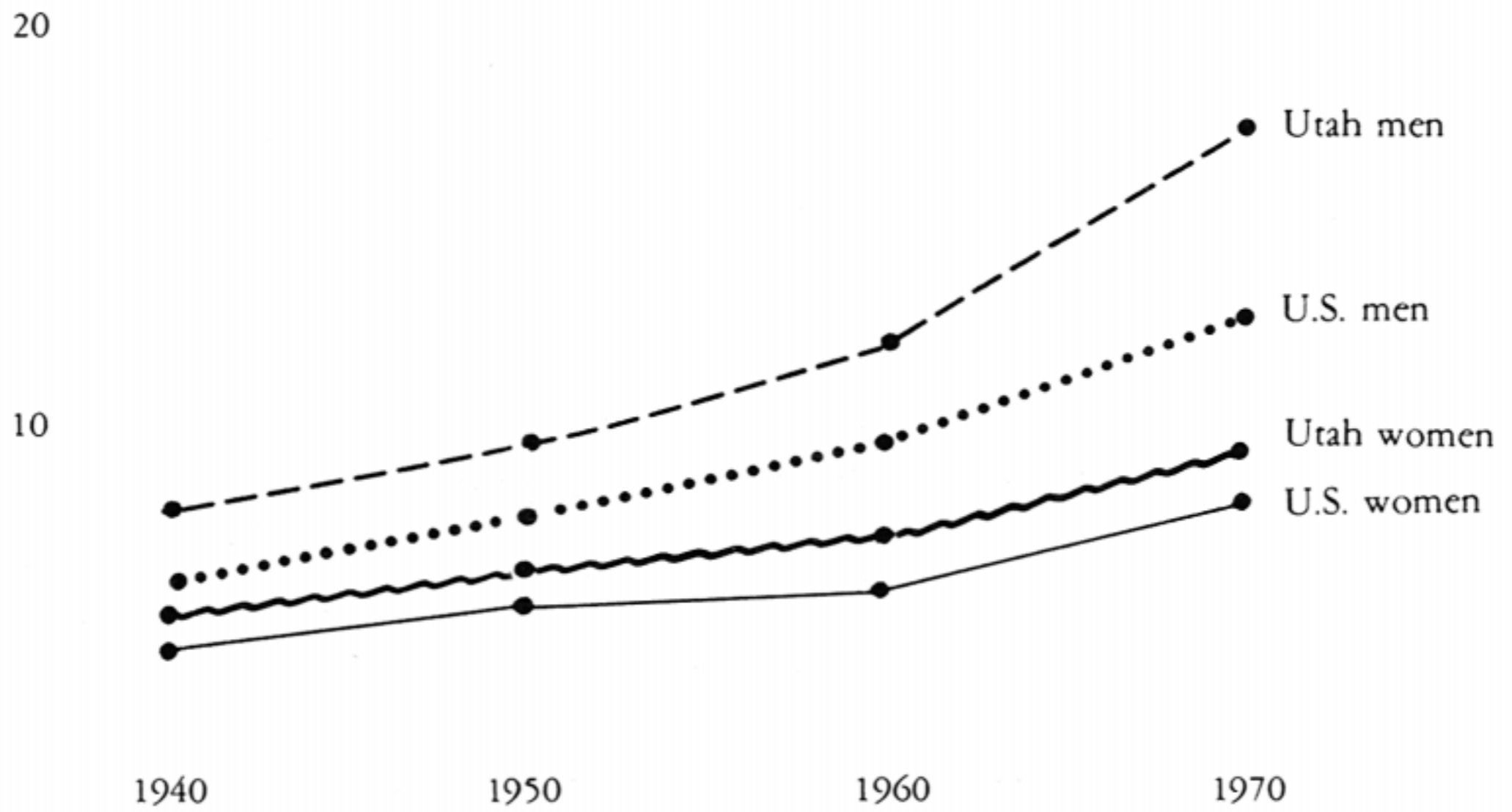
Although the percentage of women attending college increased between 1940 and 1970, the national pattern has been for women to complete fewer years of college than men. As may be seen in Figure 2, women's educational disadvantage has increased, rather than decreased, over the years since 1940. The pattern is consistent for both the country as a whole and for Utah, and it appears whether we consider proportion of college graduates or percent of the population ever attending college. This is not to say that the proportion of women attending college has not increased markedly. It has, but the population of men in college has increased at an even faster rate, so that the educational gap between men and women is larger in 1970 than at any of the earlier census years portrayed in the chart. Today's women are better educated than at any other time in the nation's history, but they continue to fall farther behind the men.

The relative position of Utah women in comparison to the educational attainment of men in the nation as a whole is quite remarkable. When completion of one or more years of college is the indicator of educational attainment, Utah women appear better educated than men in the country as a whole. However, they lag far behind Utah men. In summary, figures on participation in higher education provide little evidence of women's progress relative to men's, over the thirty-year period. Today the population as a whole is better educated, and women have participated in this general improvement. But when the increase in their educational attainment is compared to the improvement experienced by men, it is plain that the disparity is growing, i.e., that women's relative disadvantage is increasing.

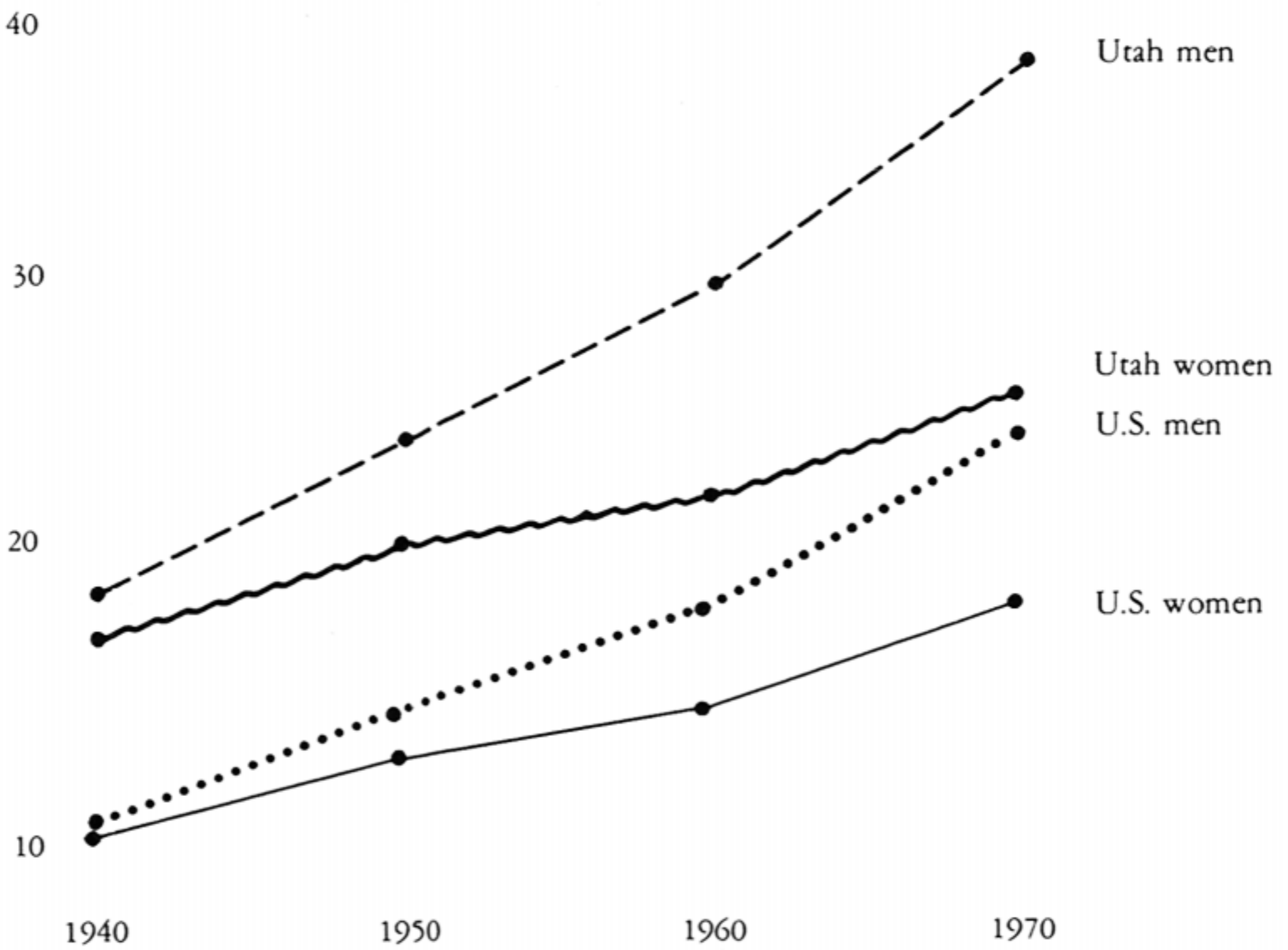
The change in men's attainment in contrast to that of women's is perhaps most dramatic with respect to college graduates. In 1940, 8 percent of Utah men and 5 percent of Utah women had graduated from college. A college degree was clearly an unusual achievement, but women were almost as likely to achieve it as men. Thirty years later, in 1970, the proportion of male college graduates in the Utah population was 19 percent, two and one-half times what it had been in 1940, while among Utah women the proportion was 10 percent. In other words, in 1970 Utah men were almost twice as apt to be college graduates as were Utah women, while in 1940 a man was 1.5 percent as apt as a woman to be a college graduate. In 1970 every fifth Utah man had completed at least four years of higher education as compared to every tenth Utah woman.

Figure 2

Percentage of Population Aged 25 and Over Completing Four or More Years College, by Sex, Utah and the United States, 1940-1970



Percentage of Population Aged 25 and Over Completing One or More Years College, by Sex, Utah and the United States, 1940-1970



THE KINDS OF WORK WOMEN DO

Utah women used to have better jobs than American women generally, but that advantage has now disappeared. In 1940 almost one of every five employed Utah women worked in a professional/technical job, compared to one in seven for the nation. By the late 1970s the job distribution of Utah women had become much more congruent with national patterns and one out of six employed women worked in a professional/technical position. This gradual coming together of the occupational distribution patterns for Utah and the country as a whole is apparent in almost every occupational category. For example, as can be seen in Table 3, women managers

TABLE 3
Occupational Distribution of Employed Women,
Utah and the United States, 1940-1976

| Occupational Group | 1940 | | 1950 | | 1960 | | 1970 | | 1976 ^a | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. |
| Professional, technical, and kindred workers | 18.9% | 13.2% | 14.9% | 12.3% | 14.0% | 13.0% | 16.8% | 15.7% | 16.3% | 16.0% |
| Managers and administrators | 5.5 | 3.8 | 4.9 | 4.3 | 4.0 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.6 | 5.5 | 5.5 |
| Sales workers | 9.4 ^b | 7.7 ^b | 10.9 | 8.5 | 8.6 | 7.8 | 7.7 | 7.4 | 7.8 | 6.7 |
| Clerical and kindred workers | 28.5 ^b | 24.8 ^b | 33.0 | 27.3 | 36.1 | 29.7 | 37.9 | 34.9 | 36.7 | 34.9 |
| Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers | 0.9 | 1.0 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 1.9 | 1.8 | 2.4 | 1.6 |
| Operatives, including transport equipment operatives | 9.9 | 18.4 | 9.8 | 19.2 | 8.2 | 15.4 | 9.2 | 14.3 | 10.3 | 11.8 |
| Laborers, except farm | 0.4 | 0.9 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 1.0 | — | 1.1 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Farmers and farm managers | 0.8 | 1.4 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.1 | 0.2 | — | — |
| Farm laborers and farm foremen | 0.4 | 2.9 | 1.4 | 2.8 | 0.4 | 1.1 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 1.3 | 1.3 |
| Service workers, except private household | 14.8 | 11.3 | 15.8 | 12.2 | 17.6 | 13.4 | 19.4 | 16.6 | 18.6 | 21.0 |
| Private household workers | 9.1 | 17.7 | 4.9 | 8.5 | 4.6 | 7.9 | 1.9 | 3.9 | — | — |
| Occupation not reported | 1.4 | 1.2 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 4.2 | 5.7 | — | — | — | — |

^aThese figures are U.S. Department of Labor estimates which may not be strictly comparable to the figures for 1940-1970 which are from the U.S. censuses for those years.

^bThe 1940 census reports "clerical, sales, and kindred workers" as a single category. The breakdown here is an estimate made by dividing the 1940 total according to the ratio of sales to clerical workers in the 1950 censuses.

Sources:

1940: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), vol. 2, part 7, Utah-Wyoming, Table 18, p. 35, and Table 19, p. 36; part 1, United States Summary, Table 18, p. 48, and Table 19, p. 49.

1950: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), vol. 2, part 44, Utah, Table 28, p. 44-32; part 1, United States Summary, Table 53, p. 1-101.

1960: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), vol. 1, part 46, Utah, Table 57, p. 46-79; part 1, United States Summary, Table 87, p. 1-216.

1970: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), vol. 1, part 46, Utah, Table 54, pp. 46-123, 46-124; part 1, United States Summary, Section 1, Table 91, pp. 1-392, 1-393.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *U.S. Working Women: A Databook* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), Table 7; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, 1976* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), Table 6; and sources listed for Table 2.

and administrators used to be overrepresented in Utah. In each succeeding census the gap has decreased, and the 1976 estimates show no Utah-U.S. difference. Similarly, the underrepresentation of Utah women in operative (factory worker) jobs has practically disappeared. In 1940 almost one out of five employed women were operatives, but in Utah the figure was one in ten. By 1976 the gap had shrunk to only 1.5 percent, with operatives accounting for 10.3 percent of employed women in Utah and 11.8 in the nation. A similar convergence is apparent with respect to women's employment as private household workers and farm workers.

In most ways the convergence represents a relative increase in Utah women's participation in the lower-status occupations and a relative decline in their involvement in the higher-status jobs. Where the trend is not one of relative deterioration of position, the pattern is one of stability. Even among private household workers, an occupational category that has experienced a drastic decline in numbers of workers, Utah women's position relative to the national figures has remained stable. In 1940 one of every eleven employed Utah women was a private household worker, and Utah women were about half as likely as women nationally to be employed in private households. By 1970 less than one in fifty of Utah's employed women were private household workers, compared to one in twenty-five for the nation. Thus, as a generation before, the proportion in Utah was about half that in the entire country.

Both in Utah and elsewhere women workers are concentrated in a few occupations and that pattern has changed little in the past generation. In 1940, well over half (56.8 percent) of the employed women in Utah worked in professional occupations or as sales and clerical workers. For the country as a whole, the comparable figure was 45.7 percent. In 1970 these same three occupational categories accounted for 62.4 percent of Utah women employees and 58 percent of women workers nationally, and the 1976 estimates are at about the same level (60.8 percent for Utah women, 57.6 percent for women nationally).

Not only are employed women heavily concentrated in a few occupational categories, but within those categories they occupy only a few specific "women's jobs." Among Utah's female professional and semi-professional workers in 1940, over 78 percent were employed in one of only two occupations—teachers (54.3 percent) and nurses (24.2 percent). These traditional occupational roles for professional women have continued to dominate among professional women. In 1950, 44.5 percent of the employed professional women were teachers and 22.2 percent were nurses; comparable figures for 1960 are 43.8 percent teachers and 19.5 percent nurses; and for 1970, 41.8 percent were teachers and 15.3 percent were registered nurses.

The other traditional women's occupational category is that of clerical and sales workers. These jobs, which include bookkeepers, cashiers, office machine operators, stenographers, typists, secretaries, telephone operators, file clerks, and retail sales clerks, accounted for 37.9 percent of Utah's employed women in 1940 and 44.5 percent in 1976. Comparable figures for the nation over the same time span are

32.5 percent and 41.6 percent. The single most common Utah women's job in 1970 was secretary, followed by teacher, salesperson, waitress, clerk, bookkeeper, cashier, cook, cleaning service worker, and registered nurse. These ten occupations together accounted for 53.2 percent of all working women in the state.

Table 4 shows the percentage of employed women in these ten occupations in Utah and the nation for the 1940-1970 period. For each of the four censuses represented in the table, these few occupations have accounted for between 53 and 59 percent of Utah's working women. Throughout the entire period, the most common women's job has been secretary, and it seems to be becoming more, rather than less, typical. Since 1940 the proportion of Utah women who are waitresses, bookkeepers, cooks, and nurses has varied less than 1.2 percent, and since 1950 the same is true for teachers. In the 1970s Utah women were somewhat less apt to be salespersons than they had been in the 1940s and 1950s, and their employment as clerks had declined substantially (a development in contrast to their increasing employment as office machine operators, a trend not shown in the table).

Utah-U.S. contrasts in these ten occupations are also of interest. Note that since 1950 nurses have consistently accounted for about the same proportion of employed women in Utah and the nation. Also, not only have Utah women always been more apt to be employed as secretaries, but for this occupation, unlike the others in the table, the gap between Utah and the rest of the country seems to be gradually increasing. For most of these occupations the differences between Utah women and other women have remained at about the same level. The exceptions, where there is a clear trend toward convergence, are teachers and salespersons.

Although a detailed discussion of sex differences in occupation is beyond the scope of this paper, some of the most striking contrasts should be noted. First, it is obvious that the range of occupational opportunity is much more restricted for women. Women are concentrated in only a few occupational categories, whereas men are more evenly distributed across the occupational spectrum. In 1976 over 36 percent of Utah's working women held jobs in the category of clerical workers, and 35 percent more were either service workers or had professional or technical jobs. Thus, three-fourths of the employed women were accounted for in these three categories. In contrast, the proportion of workers in the most common male occupational category ("craft and kindred workers") was only 23 percent, and there was just one occupational category—farm workers—in

TABLE 4
Percentage of Employed Women in Selected Occupations,
Utah and the United States, 1940-1970

| | 1940 | | 1950 | | 1960 | | 1970 | |
|---|------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. | Utah | U.S. |
| Secretaries ^a | 12.9% | 8.9% | 12.5% | 9.6% | 14.2% | 10.9% | 15.0% | 10.5% |
| Teachers, except college and university | 10.3 | 7.0 | 6.6 | 5.3 | 6.1 | 5.7 | 7.0 | 6.7 |
| Saleswomen, sales clerks | 9.8 | 6.5 | 10.4 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 7.1 | 6.1 | 5.8 |
| Waitresses ^b | 5.0 | 3.2 | 5.6 | 3.8 | 6.2 | 4.0 | 5.4 | 3.7 |
| Clerks ^c | 5.2 | 6.2 | 11.8 | 10.9 | 8.1 | 8.2 | 4.6 | 3.1 |
| Bookkeepers | | | 3.8 | 3.5 | 3.9 | 3.6 | 3.8 | 4.3 |
| | 5.0 ^d | 4.0 ^d | | | | | | |
| Cashiers ^e | | | 1.9 | 1.2 | 2.9 | 2.2 | 3.4 | 3.1 |
| Cooks | 1.3 | 1.0 | 2.6 | 1.5 | 2.7 | 1.7 | 2.7 | 1.8 |
| Cleaning service workers ^f | 0.9 | 0.7 | 1.1 | 0.8 | 2.2 | 1.7 | 2.6 | 2.1 |
| Registered nurses | 3.9 ^g | 2.6 ^g | 2.8 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| TOTAL | 54.3% | 40.1% | 59.1% | 47.1% | 56.9% | 47.8% | 53.2% | 43.9% |

^aIncludes receptionists, stenographers, and typists.

^bIncludes bartenders and food counter and fountain workers.

^cMiscellaneous or not specified; the decline between 1960 and 1970 is attributable in part to the designation of many more specific categories of clerk in 1970.

^dIncludes both bookkeepers and cashiers.

^eIncludes bank tellers.

^fIncludes maids, cleaners, and janitors, except private household.

^gAdjusted to exclude student nurses, using the ratio of student to professional nurses in 1950.

Sources: Computed from published figures in the following tables:

1940: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), vol. 2, part 7, Utah-Wyoming, Table 10; part 1, United States Summary, Table 59.

1950: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), vol. 2, part 44, Utah, Table 75; part 1, United States Summary, Table 126.

1960: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), vol. 1, part 46, Utah, Table 121; part 1, United States Summary, Section 1, Table 203.

1970: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), vol. 1, part 46, Utah, Table 171; part 1, United States Summary, Table 222.

which there were fewer than 6 percent of the male work force (see Table 5).

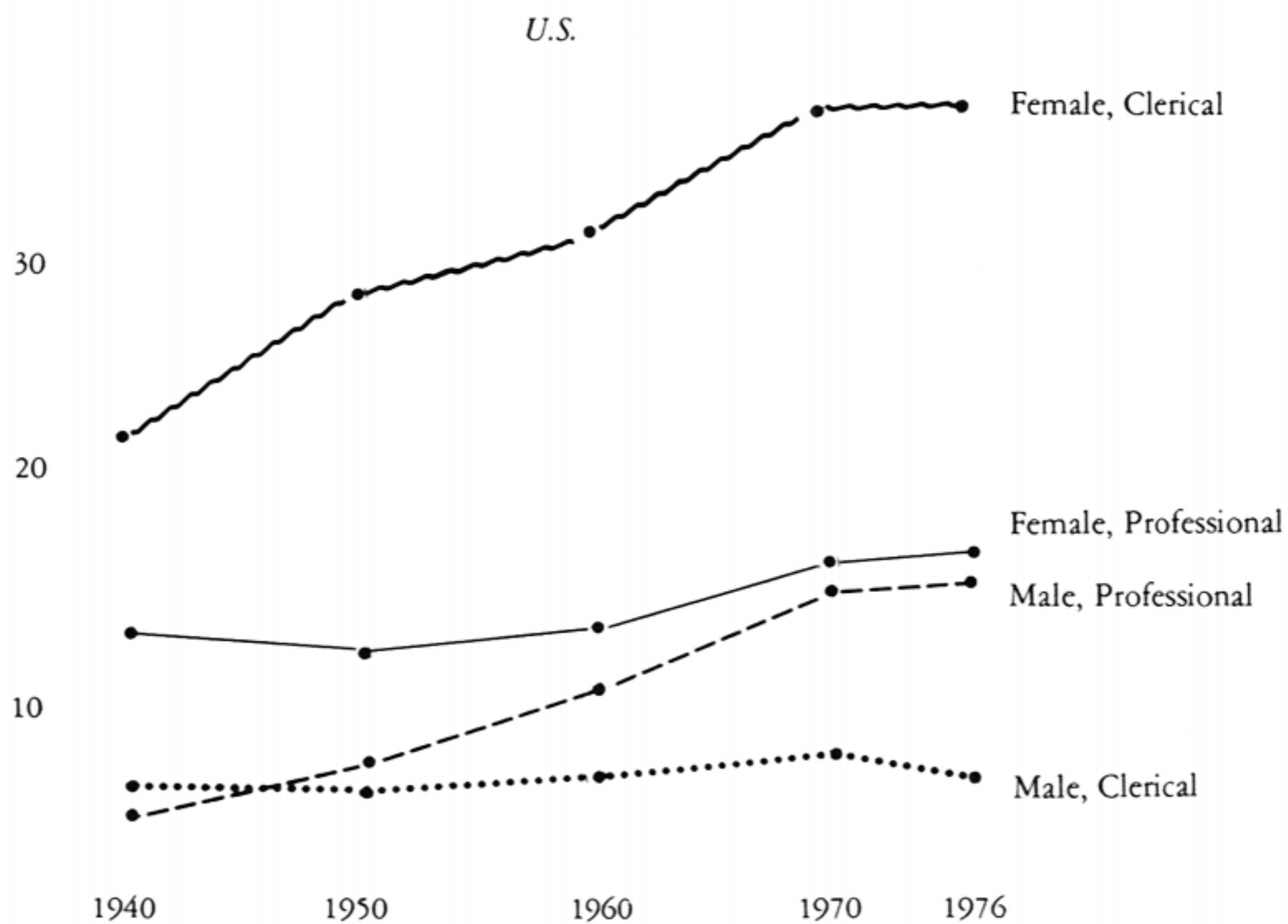
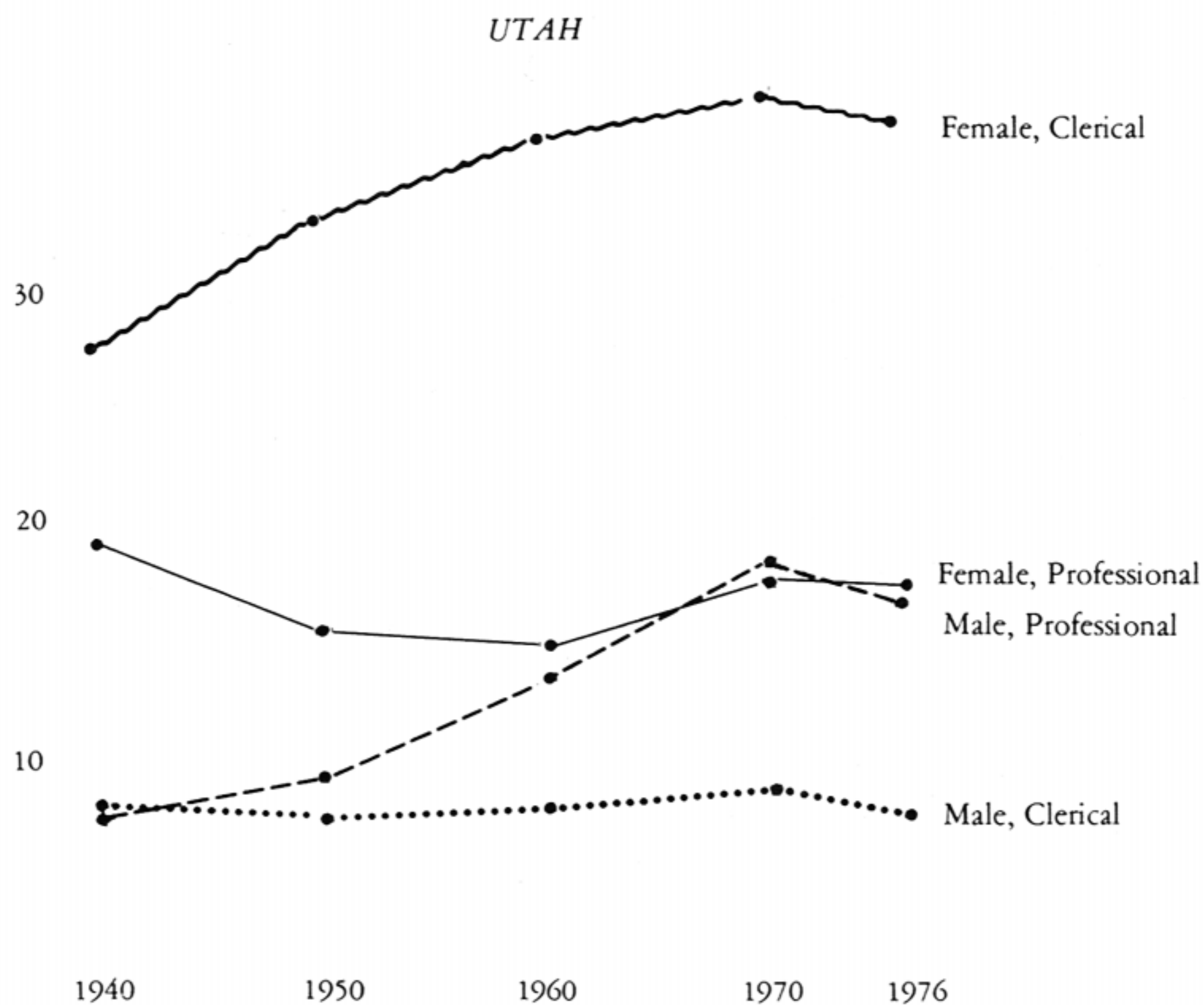
TABLE 5
Occupational Distribution of Employed Persons by Sex, Utah, 1976

| Occupational Group | Men | Women |
|---|-------|-------|
| Professional and technical | 15.6% | 16.3% |
| Managers and administrators, except farm | 14.0 | 5.5 |
| Sales workers | 7.2 | 7.8 |
| Clerical workers | 6.1 | 36.7 |
| Craft and kindred workers | 23.3 | 2.4 |
| Operatives, except transport | 9.6 | 10.3 |
| Transport equipment operatives | 6.3 | —* |
| Nonfarm laborers | 6.7 | —* |
| Service workers | 6.8 | 18.6 |
| Farm workers | 4.3 | 1.3 |
| TOTAL | 99.9% | 98.9% |

Earlier we found that although more women are attending college than ever before, their relative position with respect to the educational attainment of men has deteriorated over the past generation. A similar finding emerges when we compare changes in the proportions of males and females in high-status occupations. Figure 3 compares male and female participation in two broad occupational categories between 1940 and 1970 for Utah and for the country as a whole. It may be seen that the proportion of employed women holding clerical jobs has steadily increased in both Utah and the nation, while the proportion of males in clerical jobs has remained stable. Women's increasing involvement in clerical jobs is not a sign of occupational advancement, for these typically are not high-status jobs.

We must look at the professional category to estimate women's access to the most desirable jobs. The profiles in Figure 3 highlight the fact that, relative to men, women's proportionate share of the professional jobs has decreased. In 1940 Utah women were more than twice as likely as Utah men to be employed in professional occupations. Since that time there has been a continual increase in the percentage of men occupying professional positions, in contrast to a slight decline for women. On balance, this means that as the entire

Figure 3. Professional, Technical and Kindred Workers, and Clerical Workers, as a Proportion of Employed Persons, by Sex, 1940-1976



job market has become increasingly professionalized, women's share of the professional jobs has decreased at the same time that men's share has increased markedly. In 1970, for the first time, the proportion of employed Utah males holding professional jobs surpassed that for females (17.4 percent versus 16.8 percent).

As is evident in the lower panel of Figure 3, the same general pattern applies to employed workers nationally, although by 1970 the percentage of the female work force employed in professional jobs was still slightly higher than that for males. In summary, along with the increased employment of women has come an increase in the proportion of workers employed in white-collar and professional jobs. Women have tended to move into the white-collar clerical occupations, but their employment in the professional category has declined in the state of Utah and increased only slightly in the nation as a whole, while men's involvement in professional occupations has increased dramatically. The net result is a decline in working women's status, a loss in relative position accompanying their increased participation in the labor force. They are no longer overrepresented in professional and technical occupations as they once were.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

We have documented the convergence in labor force participation between Utah women and other American women. Between 1940 and 1970, Utah women entered the labor force more rapidly than did women nationally, and as a consequence in the 1970s Utah women have been employed outside the home at about the same rate as women nationally. Part-time jobs are more common for women workers than they used to be, and employed women in Utah are slightly more apt to work part time than women elsewhere.

Utah women are also less distinctive in educational attainment than they once were. They still attend college more than other women, but an advantage they once had in median years of schooling completed has now disappeared. When their education is compared to men's, both Utah women and women nationally show a decline in relative position. Both men and women are getting more education today than formerly, and when the men's increases in educational attainment are compared to the women's, it is apparent that the women have not kept pace.

A similar finding emerged when we considered the types of jobs women do. Although Utah women used to have better jobs than

women generally, that is no longer the case. With the increased congruence in labor force participation has come increasing similarity to the national female labor force in types of jobs held. Utah women, like women in other states, continue to be concentrated in a few "women's occupations." Their range of occupational opportunities continues to be much more constricted than that for men, and they are concentrated in clerical jobs. Moreover, the entire job hierarchy has become more professionalized, but women's share of professional jobs has decreased. In comparison to men, working women in Utah used to be overrepresented in the professional and technical occupations. That advantage has also disappeared, as men's employment in professional jobs has increased while women's has declined.

The trend toward increasing female participation in the labor force by Utah women is a long-term one, and there is little likelihood that it will "go away" in the foreseeable future. The fact that the labor force participation of Utah women is practically indistinguishable from that of women nationally does not mean that Utah women are like other women in all ways. For example, Utah's married women are notably more prolific than married women in the rest of the country. But Utah women are part of the same social economy; and the economic pressures, the changing definitions of appropriate women's roles, and the opportunities for employment that affect the nation also influence Utah. In fact, in view of the high productivity of Utah women and the increasing economic costs of child-rearing, the strains of a regressive and inflationary national economy may affect Utah families more severely than other families.

In other words, not only are Utah families subject to the same kinds of economic pressures as families in other states, but they may, because they have more children, be subject to even greater economic strain. One adaptation to such strain is for the married woman to enter the labor force. There is no evidence, either in the national economic outlook or in current trends in Utah family size and expected patterns of child education and enrichment, that the forces which since 1940 have pushed Utah women into the labor market at a more rapid rate than women nationally are likely to abate.

Accordingly, it seems appropriate that we try as much as possible, through organization and planning, to minimize the negative impacts of women's employment upon family life. Such preparation should be conducted by individuals and families as well as by community and state agencies; it might include the following: (1) The explicit recognition that inasmuch as almost half of Utah women work for pay, the status of a working woman or working mother is

no longer a deviant one in the statistical sense; (2) a serious effort toward reshaping occupational definitions to permit more part-time or variable-time employment; (3) an intensive effort by educators and planners responsible for the design of vocational and professional education in Utah to provide the opportunities and encouragement that will permit Utah women who elect to enter the labor force to do so in higher-status occupations, thereby maximizing their economic contributions to their families, rather than constraining them, by lack of adequate training or by accepted definitions of "women's work," to follow relatively low-paying clerical and service occupations.