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# Marriage Vows and Economic Discrimination: The Married Teacher Problem

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**Marriage Vows and Economic Discrimination:  
The Married Teacher Problem**

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By  
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## **Abstract**

This study analyzes the rapid increase of economic discrimination against married women teachers in the early twentieth century, particularly during the Depression. It challenges the notion that economic discrimination against married women teachers was simple, easy, and largely was unchallenged. I argue that the creation and proliferation of marriage bars in the early twentieth century involved a compounded and multifaceted set of economic and social concerns. Support for this argument is accomplished by examination of the national debate on marriage bars as well as careful investigation of the local debate illustrated in Huntington, West Virginia.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my daughters, Cerese and Aven Thomas, who radiated the life and encouragement that I needed to see this project to completion. I challenge them always to question the answers. Don't let anyone ever tell you that you can't or that you won't because you can, and I promise with dedication and resilience-- you will.

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## INTRODUCTION

On November 10, 1930 the Huntington Independent District Board of Education ended maternity leave for teachers. Subsequent proposed board policies that economically discriminated against married female teachers increased in the following two years. Huntington, West Virginia was not unique in adopting actively exclusionary policies against married teachers, nor was it the first.<sup>1</sup> Widespread marriage bars existed in the teaching profession and specifically applied to educated, middle-class, married women. By the late 1920s, approximately 60% of cities and towns nationally did not employ married women as new teachers, and half of these communities did not retain single teachers who married.<sup>2</sup> By 1940, school boards that would hire a married teacher fell to 13%, and retention of single women upon marriage fell to 30%.<sup>3</sup> The rapid increase of marriage bars in the teaching profession is historically significant because education was the one career open to women because of their maternal feminine qualities. Yet, even in this profession, women were systematically discriminated against through the prolific use of marriage bars. I argue that the creation and proliferation of marriage bars in the early twentieth century involved a compounded and multifaceted set of economic and social concerns that peaked during the Depression. Marriage bars were more severe in the teaching profession than any other career open to middle-class educated women because of social pressure to reinforce men's socioeconomic status and

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. November 10, 1930 through May 9, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and The Great Depression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 76.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

power in the community and family combined with increased economic competition within the field.

For the purposes of this thesis, economic discrimination describes a form of prejudice based on economic factors such as job availability and wages. Two types of marriage bars existed, a hire bar and retain bar. The hire bar, prevented the hiring of married women. The retain bar banned the retainment of any woman who entered into a marriage contract. Marriage bars also added justification for paying married women less money than single women and men regardless of experiences, education, or job performance. Government employees became the target of much of the social and legislative discrimination because, as the historian Lois Scharf stated, “The area in which the most concerted efforts to send married women workers back to their homes became the public sector, for there conflicting American values pertaining to the role of government converged with conventional ideals of women’s place in society.”<sup>4</sup> Teachers were publicly viewed as role models for children by the community and represented the embodiment of educated, middle-class femininity as educated, nurturing caretakers of children. Hostility arose when increasing numbers of these teachers did not wish to retreat to the home after marriage in order to give birth to their own children.

Scholar Robert O’Brien’s asserts in “Persecution and Acceptance: The Strange History of Discrimination against Married Women Teacher in West Virginia” that no married teachers or board members in West Virginia argued or even questioned that women should be fired from their teaching positions upon their marriage even though state laws specifically stated to the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 44.

contrary.<sup>5</sup> This argument is incorrect for two reasons: first married women did challenge the marriage bars within West Virginia, and second the state law did not protect married women teachers. O'Brien's argument is important because it illustrates the misconceptions about marriage bars in the teaching profession. O'Brien argues that the school boards created marriage bars in order to keep men within their school systems. This is partly true, but does not fully explain the complex set of social and economic factors that gave rise to aggressive marriage bars against female teachers. By specifically investigating the economic discrimination in marriage bars and separate salary schedules through the case study of Huntington Independent District Board of Education, a more layered and multifaceted set of social and economic factors appears. Comparing the marriage bars at the local level to the national level illustrates the complex legal, social, and economic factors surrounding the marriage bars.

There has been considerable debate as to the legality and fairness of marriage bars and further economic discrimination against married teachers--such as the separate salary schedules that occurred in the spring of 1932, which is evident in the Huntington Independent District Board of Education notes and the local Huntington newspaper, *The Herald Dispatch*. The debate amongst the school board and citizens of Huntington largely mirrored the federal debate on marriage bars.

Marriage bars in the teaching profession played a crucial part in the economic discrimination against women by reinforcing traditional gendered family roles and actively

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<sup>5</sup> Robert J. O'Brien, "Persecution and Acceptance: The Strange History of Discrimination against Married Women Teachers in West Virginia," *West Virginia History* 56 (1997) : 74-75.

discouraging women from long-term, highly prestigious careers. This thesis connects the research on why society initially encouraged women to enter the profession of teaching in the mid-nineteenth century to why married teachers increasingly fell victim to economic discrimination through marriage bars beginning in the early twentieth century and peaking during the economic crisis of the Depression. Marriage bars applied to professional career women; therefore, a historical precedent of discrimination against educated married women entering into the profession became standard. Marriage bars laid a foundation for paying qualified educated married women less for equal work, a condition usually more closely associated with working-class women.

My research illustrates that middle-class, educated women were not safe from discrimination even in feminized careers open to them because of their perceived maternal instincts. The significance of this research lies in the disjunction between newly won political and social freedom, feminist ideals for women, and the larger society and government wishes to keep families “safe” by reinforcing the separate spheres, especially in marriage. Legislation and school board policies passed specifically barring women’s employment in order to ensure men’s socioeconomic status and power in the community and in their own home amongst their own family. Identifying where legal economic discrimination through marriage bars begins is crucial to understanding how the laws contributed to and encouraged the economic discrimination against educated, married women.

From 1860 through the 1920s middle- and upper- class women entering college became socially acceptable.<sup>6</sup> These women laid the foundation for future generations to enter into higher education. Of those women, a growing number began to combine career and family in the 1920s. Noted scholar of women's higher education, Barbara Solomon, states, "Whereas previously most educated women had perceived two distinct life paths--marriage or career--now women started thinking about a third choice--marriage *and* career."<sup>7</sup> Even though the numbers of college-educated women combining marriage and career remained small throughout the early twentieth century, those few women who did choose career and family received much attention in the form of social commentary as well as federal, state, and local legislation. Social and legislative hostility peaked when the economic crisis of the Depression caused increased competition for existing well paying positions. Thus, with even small numbers of women choosing to extend their careers after marriage, the trend toward increased legal and social freedoms complicated and intensified public debate.

With the narrow passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, an expansion of choices and possibilities arose. This Amendment was a tangible erosion between the separation of genders into public and private spheres. The public domain of government was now open to women. Granting women a step closer to full citizenship was an enormous paradigm shift of power. Women's entrance into the masculine domain of politics challenged deeply held social norms on women's proper place in society.

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<sup>6</sup> Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women* (London, England: Yale University Press, 1985), 78.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

In addition to suffrage, middle-class women increased their secondary education and explored the option of professional careers. Public debate on whether women should combine career and family centered on three themes: women's traditional role as mother and helpmate, sexuality, and the rigid separate spheres adhered to during the Victorian era. In order to understand how marriage bars in the teaching profession relate to economic discrimination against college educated, middle-class women, one must recognize these social issues, which serve as the foundation for the discrimination.

Historian Nancy F. Cott argues that discrimination against hiring married women can be traced back to women's sexuality. Cott argued in "Marriage and Women's Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934" that marriage is a civil status that is very much a public institution in which personal identity, privileges and duties are doled out.<sup>8</sup> Cott's work states that sexuality determined the level of freedom women were allowed in employment. If a woman remained single and chaste in the teaching profession she could teach indefinitely, but if she chose to marry then she came under considerable social and governmental pressure to retire to the home and bear children.

Directly tied to social class, marriage bars found supporters among social conservatives and proponents of eugenics. Those following the scientific theory of eugenics viewed married teachers who did not retire to the home as suspect because they ignored their biological duties to their race and their class. Intelligent women who possessed the good breeding and heredity

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<sup>8</sup> Nancy F. Cott, "Marriage and Women's Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934," *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (Dec. 1998) : 1442-1443.

to become teachers were the kind of women needed to refill the middle-class's population.<sup>9</sup>

Critics, such as social reformers concerned with eugenics, perceived married women as selfish, first for seeking paid income above what their husbands provided to them or "pin-money" and second for ignoring their natural duty as wife and mother by giving birth to fewer children and leaving the children they did have at home unattended. Those fighting against marriage bars argued largely on merit in that judgment on workers for retainment or retrenchment decisions should focus on individual competency rather than any other extenuating circumstances such as marital status.

Middle-class women during the Victorian era held to a rigid separate sphere within the social hierarchy of the time.<sup>10</sup> Women did not enter into the masculine sphere of work and politics. One exception was the field of teaching where femininity in childcare was highly valued. Women were encouraged to enter into the teaching profession during the early and mid nineteenth century by educator and lecturer Catharine Beecher, who argued that teaching fit women's specific temperament and nature to nurture children.<sup>11</sup> Yet, if a woman entered into marriage and thereby publicly entered into a sexual relationship with a man, she was no longer seen fit to enter into the paid workforce unless forced due to extreme financial hardship. What constituted extreme financial hardship was undefined. As long as a woman remained chaste regardless of how much money her family made or if she was still living with them, then

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<sup>9</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and The Great Depression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 79.

<sup>10</sup> Jeanne Peterson, "No Angels in the House: The Victorian Myth and the Paget Woman," *American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (June 1984) : 678.

<sup>11</sup> Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Catharine Beecher: Transforming the Teaching Profession," in *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, 34d ed., ed. Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) : 171-178

her actions were socially acceptable and she could continue in the teaching profession indefinitely.

Social norms that routed women either to marriage or work affected federal, state, and local legislation whereby politicians and town authorities reflected the societal values of domesticity. As the economic crisis of the Depression sank officials deeper into retrenchment, marriage bars increased dramatically by the early 1930s. The combination of economic crisis with social hostility added to the economic discrimination placed on married middle-class women.

The economic discrimination against married, educated, middle-class women increased significantly with the passage of the Economy Act and other New Deal legislation. Teachers and clerical workers suffered the brunt of both public and legal discrimination. Whereas marriage bars had existed on a smaller scale in the public and private sector, the economic crisis of the Depression meant that those existing rules and regulations were exercised to a greater extent. Married women in public jobs became increasingly under fire when the government experienced severe budget deficits necessitating reduction of personnel either by function or by social characteristics. A strong precedent for firing by social characteristic already existed within the public sector.<sup>12</sup> Traditionally, married women's financial support came from their husbands. A working married woman was then taking two paychecks, her own and that of her husband. When the government needed to reduce its labor force, married women were particularly vulnerable because, it was argued, their husbands could support these women.

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<sup>12</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and The Great Depression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 45.

The beginning of federal legislative discrimination against married women started with Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. The New Deal began by systematically excluding women from employment, firing women who had employed husbands, and routing women on work relief to sex segregated and grossly underpaid work in comparison to men. In the eyes of the federal government, men were the breadwinners and women only constituted a small fraction of the unemployed that should qualify for work relief.<sup>13</sup> In the early 1930s, state and local governments began to restrict or completely fire working married women in public positions. As early as 1931 Massachusetts and New York introduced legislation barring any married woman from employment if her husband held a government job.<sup>14</sup>

The 1932 Economy Act included Section 213, which was known as the "married persons clause," that was a federal law stating, "Whenever personnel reductions took place in the executive branch, married persons were to be the first discharged if their spouse was also a government employee."<sup>15</sup> After this federal legislation passed, many more state "married person's clauses" began to crop up across the nation targeting married women, even if the language of the law was ambiguous. During the decade of economic crisis, politicians used popular public sentiment against working wives in order to secure their own political favors with constituents.

The implementation and proliferation of marriage bars was not uniform across the nation because of inconsistent legal rulings on marriage bars in the early twentieth century.

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<sup>13</sup> Nancy F. Cott, "Marriage and Women's Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934," *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (Dec. 1998) : 1440-1474.

<sup>14</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and The Great Depression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 45.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

The elastic nature of these rulings laid the foundation for increased economic discrimination during the Depression. Laws regulating marriage bars and the marriage bars themselves shifted from school board to school board and from state to state. With no legal precedent, fighting this kind of economic discrimination presented these teachers with a great challenge.

West Virginia and specifically Huntington both hold examples of inconsistencies in marriage bars. The Official Code of West Virginia 18-7-1, published in 1931 forbid discrimination based on marriage status at the very same time that federal and local laws were increasing their marriage bars.<sup>16</sup> However, 18-7-1 law did not protect teachers required to sign contracts, which included marriage bars. Huntington Independent District Board of Education's proposed marriage bars were severe, but never fully enacted during the Depression, despite a lengthy school board battle lasting over four months eventually concluding that the proposed marriage bar was legal. Although the board never fully implemented a marriage bar within its contracts during the Depression, a separate salary schedule paid married teachers less and cut their salaries significantly in order to facilitate a reduction in school expenditure.

The Huntington Independent District Board of Education granted maternity leave prior to the marriage bar in 1932. However, the newly created Cabell County Board of Education, which absorbed all independent school districts in the county in 1933, reinstated maternity leave one year later in 1934.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The Official Code of West Virginia 18-7-1, published in 1931.

<sup>17</sup> Marie Nelson Lewis, "An Historical Survey of the Public Schools of Cabell county, West Virginia," (Master's thesis, Marshall College, 1944), 246.

West Virginia and Huntington Independent District Board of Education during the 1930-1932 school years illustrate the complexities, paradoxes, and inconsistencies found in marriage bars' application and societal acceptance.<sup>18</sup> In order to illustrate the severity of economic discrimination against married female teachers in Huntington as well as on the national level, primary sources are examined. This thesis uses primary sources, such as women's organizations' publications in defense of working married women as well as polls and studies focused on working married women. This thesis identifies the ideologies of the arguments made by groups of women such as the National Women's Trade Union League of America and the National League of Women Voters. The thesis also explores independent arguments women made against the marriage bars and economic discrimination. The primary sources for this work were obtained predominantly from Cabell County School Board notes that include the minutes of the Meeting for Huntington Independent District Board of Education from 1920-1940. Local oral histories for women, both married and single who taught during the Depression were not available; however, the local newspaper *The Herald Dispatch* covered the proposed marriage bar and separate salary schedule closely during the spring of 1932.

The secondary sources focus on working women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Of this material, emphasis on the economic discrimination of working married women was explored. Specifically, the few professions available to women were subject to marriage bars or were heavily affected by the social norms of the surrounding communities, which reflected negatively on women combining career and family. Barbara Solomon's *In the Company of Educated Women* is vital to understanding both when women

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<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Huntington Independent District Board of Education 1930-1940.

began their entrance into higher education and when women began to combine family and professions. Solomon specifically looks at the social norms and the legislation that contributed to the economic discrimination of college educated, middle-class married women.<sup>19</sup>

Lois Scharf, unlike Barbara Solomon, focuses entirely on married teachers in *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and the Great Depression*. She notes that, in several respects, the debate that swirled around married women teachers, while reflective of economic despair due to unemployment during the Depression, actually centered on social anxiety over the challenge to sex roles and family structure.<sup>20</sup> This argument is particularly vital to recognizing that marriage bars in the teaching profession are important to understanding the complexities surrounding the economic discrimination against married, college-educated, middle-classwomen in the early twentieth century because, as Scharf notes, paradigms of sexuality and shifting societal roles were the ultimate culprit in the rise of the marriage bars. Like Scharf, Nancy Cott in “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States” targets sexuality as the main culprit behind economic discrimination as well as the denial of full citizenship. Cott views citizenship and sexuality as intrinsically connected. As women gained suffrage and began asserting greater sexual and economic freedom, they were then targeted for discrimination.<sup>21</sup> Suffrage was a large step toward greater citizenship, as women entered the masculine domain of politics. This victory led to challenging other social boundaries of sexual norms and economic dependence on men.

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<sup>19</sup> Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women* (London, England: Yale University Press, 1985), 172.-185.

<sup>20</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and the Great Depression* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 66-85.

<sup>21</sup> Nancy F. Cott, “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934” *The American Historical Review* 103 no. 5 (Dec. 1998) : 1442-1443.

Cott and Scharf tend to focus on the middle and upper classes. This is not the case for other historians who study the marriage bars. Winifred Wandersee's *Women's Work and Family Values 1920-1940* argues that, whereas professional and business women such as teachers did not suffer to the same extent as lower-class working women in the Depression, the economic discrimination through marriage bars discouraged women's expansion into other occupational fields.<sup>22</sup> Wandersee's thesis is critical because her perspective on the economic discrimination of educated, middle-class women takes into account a broader spectrum of classes and effects that the Depression had on American women. Wandersee explores the economic discrimination against married women teachers and the various ideological responses from women's organizations and argues that women's organizations failed to assert feminist goals of suffragists who focused on women's self-determination. Wandersee argues that the women's organizations ignored career as self-fulfillment in favor of career as economic survival in order to argue more successfully in favor of married women working.<sup>23</sup> Wandersee's analysis illustrates the economic disparity of career women and the shortcomings of women's organizations to react in a manner that did not reinforce gender roles.

Historian Patricia Carter is in agreement with Lois Scharf in her book *Everybody's Paid But the Teacher: The Teaching Profession and the Women's Movement*. Carter argues that male teachers and administrators attempted to use public fears about the economy to their own benefit either by implementing marriage bars or by using marriage bars as a threat and

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<sup>22</sup> Winifred D. Wandersee, *Women's Work and Family Values: 1920-1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 89.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 101,122.

justification for paying married teachers significantly less.<sup>24</sup> Unlike other historians studying the marriage bars, Carter states that male teachers and administrators used the marriage bars themselves as a tool for economic discrimination against their married women colleagues. This concept is significant to my thesis because it illustrates the more subtle economic motives that add to the complexity of the marriage bars. Marriage bars were not simply economic discrimination against married women to reinforce social roles but also were used as tools by administrators in order to facilitate retrenchment.

One example of a scholar who theorizes why married women were singled out for discrimination is Claudia Goldin who wrote a chapter titled “Marriage Bars: Discrimination against Married Women Workers from the 1920-1950s” in the economics text *Favorites of Fortune* in which she theorized about how marriage bars could have benefited employers and perhaps even some women. Goldin concentrates on the economic reasoning behind keeping young, unskilled, single women employed while simultaneously firing or refusing to hire married women.<sup>25</sup> The argument that married women working outside the home hurt single women by taking away feminized jobs from women who did not have a husband to provide for them was not new. Indeed, this idea is consistent with my findings within the Huntington Independent District Board of Education in the early 1930s in which single women teachers presented petitions against the hiring and retainment of married teachers.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Patricia Carter, *Everybody's Paid But the Teacher* (New York: New York 2002), 99-100.

<sup>25</sup> Claudia Goldin, “Marriage Bars: Discrimination against Married Women Workers from the 1920s to the 1950s,” in *Favorites of Fortune*, ed. Patrice Higonnet, David S. Landes, and Henry Rosovsky (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.) : 511-536.

<sup>26</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Huntington Independent District Board of Education 1930-1940.

School boards' rulings on married women are both complicated and reflective of the cultural values of the time. Robert J. O'Brien studied the state of West Virginia in the Depression noting in *The Official Code of West Virginia 18-7-1* published in 1931 a specific law forbid school boards to discriminate against married women. The law was in regard to the appointment of teachers. Despite this law, the majority of school boards continued to discriminate against married women. Beyond studying the law of West Virginia, O'Brien interviewed a few of the women forced out of their jobs because they chose to marry. As to why marriage bars persisted, O'Brien's research shows that the school boards wanted "strong men in their counties" and feared the feminization of school teaching. This assertion is important because it shows that school boards specifically used marriage bars in order to encourage men to live in their communities. "Strong men" is what was wanted and not "weak women." Overall, school boards that were predominantly all white male authority groups continually aimed to de-feminize the teaching profession, as can be seen in O'Brien's work. While this is one of the reasons school boards enacted marriage bars, it is much too simplistic and assumes it is the primary reason. O'Brien ignores the complicated, shifting social norms and economic dynamics of the 1920s and 1930s. However, O'Brien's work does point to another layer of the complexities surrounding marriage bars.<sup>27</sup>

Historians who focus on economic discrimination through marriage bars each add to the complex set of issues, that increased the prejudice against working married women, especially in the teaching profession. Wandersee's analysis of both white and blue collar working wives is

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<sup>27</sup> Robert J. O'Brien, "Persecution and Acceptance: The Strange History of Discrimination against Married Women Teachers in West Virginia," *West Virginia History* 56 (1997).

important to this study because her work shows that the public debate over working wives focused on women who did not have to work out of economic necessity but, rather on the white collar professional workers who were working for perceived “pin-money.”<sup>28</sup> Wandersee and Carter theorize on why marriage bars concentrated on middle-class educated women, especially in the teaching field. Wandersee’s work on society’s hostility to working wives helps to illustrate the complex social factors influencing marriage bars. Carter’s exploration of increased economic competition and male exploitation of marriage bar policies provides a frame for the complicated economic factors that created and increased marriage bars. While my investigation of primary and secondary sources agrees with O’Brien’s assertion that school boards wanted to keep strong men in their counties. I argue that the creation and proliferation of marriage bars in the early twentieth century involved a much more compounded and multifaceted set of economic and social concerns that peaked during the Depression. The teaching profession, more than any other career open to middle-class, educated women, experienced acute marriage bars because of social pressure to reinforce men’s socioeconomic status and power both in the community and their own family. This social hostility combined with increased economic competition within the field during the Depression resulted in severe economic discrimination.

This thesis consists of three chapters that explore first, why married teachers were specifically targeted, second, the legal ambiguities that enabled discriminatory policies to increase during economic turmoil, and, finally, a case study illustrating both of these points.

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<sup>28</sup> Winifred D. Wandersee, *Women’s Work and Family Values: 1920-1940*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 67.

The first chapter explores why marriage bars specifically targeted middle-class, educated white women. The intention of marriage bar policies was to discourage or bar married women completely from teaching. Excluded from marriage bars were working-class, married women such as janitors, school clerks, and groundskeepers. Whereas targeted by marriage bars were primarily in the public sector. While married women who were in private sectors such as the business, legal, and medical professions were also subject to discrimination, specific legislative marriage bars focused on teachers and, to a lesser extent, government employees whose spouses also worked for the government. This assertion is significant because marriage bars in the teaching profession were the result of several converging social and economic issues. Marriage bars concentrated within the teaching profession, which was, by and large, the one profession that was feminized and socially acceptable for married college-educated women to enter.

Chapter two covers the legal ambiguities of marriage bars in the early twentieth century and shows how the elasticity of these laws laid the foundation for increased economic discrimination during the Depression. Legislation and court rulings on marriage bars were not consistent throughout the United States and became further complicated by the shifting policies of individual school boards. In the absence of consistent laws governing the rights of married women teachers, local contracts created by local school boards containing discriminatory language against married teachers often held up in court.<sup>29</sup> The school boards' increase in marriage bars is a direct reflection of the loss of tax revenue needed to manage school systems due to the deepening Depression. The marriage bars of the early twentieth

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<sup>29</sup> Jewel D. Kennemer, *The Married Woman Teacher Problem* (East Texas State Teachers College, 1939).

century laid the legal foundation for economic discrimination against college-educated, middle-class, married female teachers by hiring and firing by virtue of marital status rather than merit.

Chapter three examines the proposed marriage bar policies, separate salary systems, and subsequent controversy that arose in the local community of Huntington, West Virginia. Huntington was chosen as a case study because of the detailed board meeting minutes and the *Herald Dispatch's* coverage of the controversy surrounding the proposed marriage bar. Further, the Huntington case study shows the complex arguments both for and against marriage bars. Chapter three theorizes that a multifaceted set of arguments focused on workers' independent merit versus married women's rightful place in society. These arguments are further complicated by heightened competition for employment that increased economic discrimination against married women. The case study of Huntington shows that marriage bars targeted married women teachers specifically to keep them economically dependent upon husbands. The Huntington Independent School District Board of Education minutes and local newspaper coverage of the school board's debate illustrates that the marriage bars and separate salary schedules, though deemed legal by Attorney General Howard B. Lee, were narrowly defeated after months of school board and public debate. Although the minority board members succeeded in stopping the implementation of marriage bars, the majority members achieved their goal of paying married teachers significantly lower pay through the implementation of a separate salary schedule.

Marriage bars are important in helping to understand the economic discrimination against married women. Marriage bars are a clear indication of societal reaction to the shifting

spheres of women and men in both the public and private sectors. Further, the economic discrimination seen in marriage bars demonstrates the control of women's sexuality through employment and marriage. Finally, the dramatic increase of marriage bars during the Depression is a direct result of government officials, most notably school board members, attempting to find a socially acceptable way to increase retrenchment. For the purposes of this paper, retrenchment is defined as the reduction of workers.

The teaching profession was the one career open to women because of their maternal feminine qualities. Yet even in this profession, women were systematically discriminated against through the prolific use of marriage bars. Marriage bars were more severe and concentrated in the teaching profession than any other career open to middle-class educated women because of a complex set of social norms and increasing economic competition within the field. This study bridges the gap between why women were initially encouraged to enter the teaching profession yet suffered economic discrimination more than any other profession. Understanding how marriage bars affected women in the teaching profession is vital to the overall historical context of economic discrimination of women in twentieth-century America.

## CHAPTER ONE

### MARRIAGE, CLASS, AND THE SCHOOL TEACHER

For generations, female teachers remained single, retiring from the teaching profession upon marriage. Why would so many young women go to the expensive and trouble of gaining the education and credentials to teach only to retire after marrying? Education historian, Frances R. Donovan wrote in 1938 about the “custom” from the beginning of women’s entrance into the teaching field that female teachers remain “celibate.” Only after WWI when the demand for teachers grew exponentially did small numbers of married women begin to expand their teaching careers.<sup>30</sup> With increased access to higher education women from 1890-1920 doubled their number in the teaching profession. In 1890 there were 238,000 teachers and that number grew to 584,000 in 1920.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, 77 years prior to the America’s great economic Depression, Catharine Beecher lectured across the country on the benefits of feminizing the teaching profession. In a petition to Congress, she specifically underscored that women teachers would retire upon marriage.

Single women would gain valuable experience while teaching that would make them better mothers and wives in the future.<sup>32</sup> That the teaching profession was never intended to be a gateway for white, middle-class, married women to carry out careers while raising children of their own is clear. However, an increased demand for teachers after WWI, combined with

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<sup>30</sup> Frances R. Donovan, *The SchoolMa’am* (New York: Frederic A. Stokes Company, 1938), 57.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Catharine Beecher: Transforming the Teaching Profession," in *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, 34d ed., ed. Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) : 147.

longer, more expensive teacher education, provided excellent incentive for women to expand their employment after marriage. As these women grew in numbers, so too did the marriage bars that sought to exclude them from the teaching profession. No one social or economic cause created marriage bars; rather, this discrimination was the result of highly complex and shifting cultural norms combined with rapid social change and intense economic competition for well paying positions. This chapter explores the multiple elements that gave rise to marriage bars and how these factors translated to the Huntington Independent District Board of Education's proposed marriage bar and salary schedule.

Marriage bars targeted married, middle-class, white teachers as a group because they challenged racial, class, and social norms. Women have always worked; however, educated married women who worked within prestigious careers such as teaching earned enough money to support themselves and dependents, thus threatening the traditional family patriarchy and women's perceived place in society. Further, social reformers concerned with eugenics specifically grouped white, middle-class teachers together because these were the kind of women who should be encouraged to have as many children as possible. Legislators designed marriage bars specifically to discriminate against married, educated, white women such as teachers, rather than married female janitors and clerks, because they directly competed against men for well paying jobs while simultaneously challenging male economic authority within the home. African American women teachers were not grouped with educated, middle-class white teachers because, as a whole, school officials treated them separately and with

more severe discriminatory hiring, certification, and salary systems.<sup>33</sup> There is no evidence of African American married women specifically being targeted by marriage bars; however, these teachers, as a whole, suffered the dual discrimination of race and gender. School boards discriminated against African American and Caucasian female teachers differently because the set of complex social and economic influences creating practices such as marriage bars differed greatly between the two groups. For example, the majority of social reformers such as those practicing eugenics were largely concerned with native-born white women increasing the white middle-class population; therefore, marriage bars applied specifically to white teachers.

The implications of middle-class, educated teachers targeted as a group for economic discrimination through marriage bars are clear. First, college women polled from the 1920s who expressed optimism in combining both career and family became decidedly pessimistic by 1940.<sup>34</sup> By treating married, middle-class educated women as a whole, popular culture and public figures framed arguments around the virtues of this group remaining in their natural place in society and in the home. Further, by grouping these women together as a whole, legislators' aimed publicly popular marriage bars directly at a minority of women, thus gaining political favor. Teaching was one of the few professions open and socially acceptable to middle-class, white women outside of the home. School teachers became primary targets because they belonged within the public sector and suffered discriminatory laws on the local, state, and federal level. The public sector refers to government employees who are easier to

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Fultz, "Teacher Training and African American Education in the South, 1900-1940," *Journal of Negro Education* 64, no. 2 (1995) : 197.

<sup>34</sup> Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), 182-184.

control through legislation than the private sector, which refers to all employees and companies not controlled by the government. Legislation passed specifically to target married educated, middle-class women in the public sector took place on the federal level with the passage of the marriage clause. An example of discriminatory laws passed against married women in the local public sector is the proposed marriage bar and salary schedule within the case study of Huntington, West Virginia. The careful study of both the federal and local legislation is vital to understanding the multiple economic and social pressures that created and proliferated the marriage bars against teachers. The laws themselves as well as the arguments for and against them offer insights into the complexities of expectations for middle-class, white women and the economic factors that increased social agitation against working wives. These factors are explored in this and subsequent chapters.

Understanding how marriage bars are connected to career women is historically significant because one must recognize the first legal and social precedents of discrimination against highly educated, professional, middle-class women in order to recognize the historical foundation for pay inequalities seen throughout the professions today. There are many kinds of discrimination that women have felt in the workforce in terms of which jobs were open to them and which educational fields allowed them to train within their areas of expertise. Discrimination could occur through written and unwritten rules that dictated what was available to women. Marriage bars differ in that these are actual written rules, regulations, and laws that literally “barred” women from employment either by firing women once they signed a marriage contract or by refusing to hire a woman because of her marital status. The social and economic pressures on married, middle-class teachers were severe enough to legitimize and

justify overt economic discrimination. These bars were always placed on women rather than men.<sup>35</sup> Marriage bar legislation was noted by proponents as being protective of family values. Interestingly, in a culture that encouraged white women to marry and produce children, legislatures and public officials consistently passed laws and regulations penalizing women with economic loss for marrying. Marriage bars in the teaching profession were particularly severe and increased significantly in the early twentieth century. In order to understand how and why this occurred one must first examine the feminization of the profession and place teachers within the larger historical context of women's labor history.

Recruitment of women to teach the young in schools began during the 1830s by Catharine Beecher who sought a way to elevate the status of women through a profession.<sup>36</sup> Beecher envisioned that young moral women would be a celibate class, temporarily extending their moral and social skills to the teaching of young children.<sup>37</sup> A celibate class in this context meant a group of unwed and therefore sexually abstinent, educated women who had the opportunity for a brief career before marriage. Female teachers would remain unmarried as long as they taught, and therefore presumably sexually celibate while working in the teaching profession. This group of unmarried, educated, middle-class women could engage in a brief career before marriage and giving birth to their own children. Beecher lectured around the country explaining the effects of values that female teachers could have on the children and community that they served. These women would become "the moral examples that the rest

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<sup>35</sup> Claudia Goldin, "Marriage Bars: Discrimination against Married Women Workers from the 1920s to the 1950s," in *Favorites of Fortune*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) 514.

<sup>36</sup> Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Catharine Beecher: Transforming the Teaching Profession," in *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, 34d ed., ed. Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) : 147.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

of the community could imitate.”<sup>38</sup> Teaching utilized women’s natural ability to care for young children in the role of mother. Largely due to Beecher’s influence and national lecture tours encouraging young women to teach, the teaching profession shifted from a predominately male to female occupation during the mid nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> While Beecher set up the feminization of the teaching profession, she did so by extracting the Victorian values on womanhood and simultaneously setting the ground rule of the celibate single teacher who retired from her career upon marriage. As teaching became feminized over the mid nineteenth century, an overall shift in women’s labor occurred.

According to the Bureau of the Census, the total number of women working in the labor force nearly tripled from 1890-1930.<sup>40</sup> This fact alone illustrates a rapid shift in women entering the workforce and redefining-- and in some cases defining-- jobs for women. Historian Lois Scharf notes, “Occupational redistribution began in the 1890s with growth in the established profession of teaching, the founding of the new professions of nursing, social work, and librarianship, and with the astonishingly rapid development of service jobs in the clerical and sales fields.”<sup>41</sup> Defining what constituted a professional occupation provides a great challenge because the concept shifted over time as new fields arose. The word “professions” used here is defined as those jobs that require advanced education from degree-granting institutions. Even though the Depression hurt nearly everyone, the economic disaster hit professional women in the labor force because their growing presence in the workforce was

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>40</sup> Lynn Y. Weiner, *From Working Girl to Working Mother: The Female Labor Force in the United States, 1820-1980* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1985), 4.

<sup>41</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and The Great Depression*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 5.

new for middle-class white women. Immigrant and African American women, single and married, worked outside and inside their homes before, during, and after industrialization; however, the increase of domestic white women's entrance into public paid employment caused public outcry resulting in marriage bars. The entrance of married women into the paid labor force jumped from 14% in 1890 to 36% by the beginning of 1940.<sup>42</sup> At the same time married women were increasing their numbers in the overall paid labor force, marriage bars in the teaching profession began to multiply exponentially.

The earliest known study of policies created by school boards on married women teachers took place in 1928 by the Research Division of the National Education Association. The report stated that approximately 60% of the nearly 1500 cities reporting did not employ married women as new teachers, though 49% of their single teachers who married retained their employment.<sup>43</sup> By 1940, school boards that would hire a married teacher fell to 13%, and retention of single women upon marriage fell to 30%.<sup>44</sup> These data are important because, although school board policies centered on married teachers, no such policies existed for the married female janitors or secretaries. Married women teachers as a group suffered economic discrimination to a greater degree because of their class, gender, and education level. Therefore, marriage bars are a form of class-based economic discrimination. In that the teaching profession was one of the few socially acceptable professional career paths for women, marriage bars are important to understanding the complicated and often multifaceted

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<sup>42</sup> Lynn Y. Weiner, *From Working Girl to Working Mother: The Female Labor Force in the United States, 1820-1980* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1985), 6.

<sup>43</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and The Great Depression*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 76.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

economic discrimination against married, college-educated, middle-class women in the early twentieth century.

Understanding the public and legal hostility married professional women faced in the teaching field requires that one must also place working wives into the larger historical context of American women's labor history. This historical concept is important in identifying the roots of the social expectations of women as well as understanding why married, middle-class women faced strong economic discrimination upon entering the paid workforce. Women have always worked within the home creating goods and services for their families' survival and for economic advancement. From the colonial economy to the 1890s, most free white people participated in a "family economy" in which all family members worked together for economic success.<sup>45</sup> Although women worked together with the family, the manner of work was not as strictly divided as after the industrial revolution. The family economy and the plantation economy were replaced by independent wage production often in the form of factory work.<sup>46</sup> During the nineteenth century, the shift in wage work from the family economy to the capitalist economy was accompanied by the rise of the cult of domesticity. Women were responsible for unpaid domestic housework, which directly contrasted the for-profit public market space. Industrialization shifted much of the kind of work that had been completed by women in the home to the factory. Modernization of appliances freed women's time. Canning, laundering, and the production of family foodstuffs shifted to factories. Population shifts changed the location of the family. As industrialization matured in America, families moved from rural to

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<sup>45</sup> Teresa L. Amott and Julie A Matthaei, *Race Gender & Work a Multicultural Economic History of Women in the United States* (Boston: South End Press, 1991), 292.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

urban areas where access to goods became easier. Only housekeeping, child rearing, and consumption were left to the woman's sphere.<sup>47</sup> Even where women could enter into the workforce, such as in textile factories, the division of labor was severe. Women predominately found work in dangerous factories or as hired servants within another home.<sup>48</sup> Despite low paying and often dangerous work, women continued to increase their numbers in the paid labor force throughout the Industrial Revolution.

The maturation of America's industrialization coincided with the expanded education and increased social freedoms experienced by women. The Victorian womanhood ideal strictly defined socially acceptable behavior for middle- and upper-class women through a complicated set of cultural norms reinforced by popular media. During the early twentieth century, the modern woman encroached more on men's public domain politically and economically as more single and married women entered into the professions. This concept was evident in the field of teaching. As more educated, white married women began to enter into the public sector, marriage bars on the state and local level increased dramatically. Even though marriage bars existed before the Depression, the 1932 Economy Act increased their numbers exponentially in the three years directly after the legislation passed.<sup>49</sup> This increase occurred because the federal government's marriage bar legitimized the economic discrimination taking place at the local level. This legitimization justified the increase and implementation of more marriage bars.

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<sup>47</sup> Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "The 'Industrial Revolution' in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the Twentieth Century," In *Women's America Refocusing the Past*, ed. Linda K Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 400.

<sup>48</sup> Teresa L. Amott and Julie A. Matthaei, *Race Gender & Work a Multicultural Economic History of Women in the United States* (Boston: South End Press, 1991), 298-299.

<sup>49</sup> To Amend Married Person Clause, House of Representatives Committee on the Civil Service April 18, 1935 22.

Because the federal marriage bar offered local authorities a level of justification for their policies, marriage bars proliferated. This justification arose because of series of complex social and economic issues. One example of this was that professional women, particularly married teachers, threatened traditional family norms.

Feminist theorists such as Kate Millett note that status within society is dependent upon economic, social, and educational circumstances; women's social status is not directly tied to these factors. Millet states, "In general, the position of women in a patriarchy is a continuous function of their economic dependence. Just as their social position is vicarious and achieved often temporary or marginal basis through males, their relation to the economy is also typically vicarious or tangential."<sup>50</sup> Women belonged to the class of their father or husband; when a woman worked outside of the home tension arose especially within the middle-class.<sup>51</sup> The rise of public education coincided with Victorian ideology. Victorians viewed education as both a path to self-betterment for the middle and upper classes and as a mechanism for social control of the lower class.<sup>52</sup> Victorian middle-class women who wanted higher education benefited themselves by becoming teachers; however, if they chose to combine career and marriage they challenged the Victorian ideal. Economically independent women threatened the male patriarchy of the home. Women who could undercut male authority were both consciously and unconsciously perceived as a threat.<sup>53</sup> A woman holding a prestigious position making enough money to support herself and dependents threatened the traditional model of male

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<sup>50</sup> Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 40.

<sup>51</sup> Joan N. Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (Totoway, NJ: Croom Helm London, 1980), 12.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>53</sup> Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 87.

breadwinner and dependent and mother and children. As the teaching profession was one of the few careers society encouraged middle-class women to enter, marriage bars hit this position hardest.

The popularizing trend of public education during the Victorian era and the professionalization of teaching nonetheless led growing numbers of women to enter into higher education. As women completed their higher education, most chose either the chaste life of a career woman or retired to the home. Thus, these highly educated women waived any vocation that their education prepared them to endeavor. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a small but growing number of pioneering women began to combine marriage and gainful employment. According to historian Barbara Solomon, "In 1920 there were about two million married women gainfully employed. That figure represented almost four times as many as in 1890. Similarly, in 1910, only 12 percent of professional women married but by 1930, 24 percent were marrying."<sup>54</sup> The modern woman of the 1920s had won the right to vote and experienced increased opportunities in higher education and economic freedom. The Victorian distinction of separate spheres between home and profession was slowly blurring. When these women began to combine employment with the home, marriage, and children, tension arose as formerly held boundaries were tested. Societal fears peaked as social scientists and reformers condemned women who worked while married for not fulfilling their maternal duties.

Teachers were of course not the only working women in the middle-class nor were they all white. Women of all races had been working in factories and a small number had begun encroaching into the male-dominated professions of medicine and law. African American and

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<sup>54</sup> Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*. (London: Yale University Press, 1985), 175.

white female teachers faced discrimination; however, African American teachers faced additional bigotry due to white racism. Because school boards wished to keep salaries low, African American teachers suffered salary inequities as well as deplorable working conditions while battling white intolerance of African American education.<sup>55</sup> African American teachers of both genders faced severe discrimination. However, marriage bars specifically treated married white women as a group. One reason for this is the social reformers practicing eugenics.

Most social reformers opposed the employment of working white wives and especially mothers.<sup>56</sup> In particular, social reformers focused on wives who worked outside of the home. Even small numbers of white women delaying or withholding completely their “natural” role in reproduction represented the worst fears of social reformers and social scientists practicing eugenics. From the beginning of the first generation of women entering into higher education, social reformers warned of dire consequences in educating the middle-class. At best, the education would be wasted on a sex that did not need nor desire it. At worst, the education would encourage a woman to not marry and have children. Non-native born women from lesser-desired “races” were reproducing at an alarming rate. By educating women and opening avenues of careers-- albeit *feminized professions*-- these women would be motivated to leave their proper sphere. With so much life lost during the Great War, middle-class white women’s refusal to bear children could result in dire consequences for the entire human race. Social reformers and conservative proponents of traditional family values joined forces in order to

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<sup>55</sup> Michael Fultz, “Teacher Training and African American Education in the South, 1900-1940,” *Journal of Negro Education* 64, no. 2 (1995) : 205-206.

<sup>56</sup> Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), 175.

prevent married women from working and committing “race suicide.”<sup>57</sup> Race suicide referred to white, middle-class women who either chose not to have children or deferred having children for a certain period while they worked. If these women bore fewer children then this would have dire consequences for America as a whole because the white race would die out and be overrun by “inferior races,” that seemed to be repopulating at an alarming rate. Indeed college-educated and therefore professionally trained women did tend to marry later than women who did not attend college.<sup>58</sup> Social reformers placed high importance on white women marrying and raising children. Scholarly research as early as 1940 focused on the marriage rates of white teachers by age.<sup>59</sup> The perceived consequences of teachers delaying marriage in favor of career was significant to social reformers.

Social reformers placed pressure on college educated white women to remain within the home at the same time that new opportunities outside the home expanded. Marriage bars increasing significantly is directly connected to women fighting for and gaining additional freedoms over the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The expansion of women’s education and subsequent employment possibilities combined with the right to vote increased women’s freedom but caused social agitation. This agitation tempered the effects of newly won freedoms. College women expressed confidence when surveyed in the 1920s about combining career and family, but by 1940 the marriage bars and societal pressure had taken their effect as many more women answered negatively when asked if they could successfully

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<sup>57</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and The Great Depression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 17.

<sup>58</sup> Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), 119-121.

<sup>59</sup> Harold H Punke, “Marriage Rate Among Women Teachers,” *Journal of Sociological Review* 5 (August 1940) : 505.

have both a career and family.<sup>60</sup> At a time when college-educated women enjoyed new freedoms, these rights did not expand to combining career and marriage.

The historical significance of this survey is important to understanding the marriage bars' impact on women. Women faced intense social and legal pressure to retire to the home upon marriage. While marriage bars existed in the 1920s, they increased significantly during the Depression, as did societal pressure for women to stop taking "men's jobs." However, the economic crisis during the Depression left many women supporting extended family members as well as assisting their own immediate families. Fighting against economic discrimination while shouldering the burden for the livelihood of their families attributed to much of the pessimism.

Popular culture emphasized that women had to choose between marriage and family or career. Magazines such as *Good Housekeeping* devoted articles underscoring this point by stating that ninety percent of women scientists were single and eight of the twelve greatest living women had never been married and, of those, only two were mothers. In order to lead women away from professions *Good Housekeeping* reported that despite the fulfillment career women obtained through their professions, they would never know the deep meaning that everyday mothers feel with their children.<sup>61</sup> During the Depression, publications such as *Good Housekeeping* counseled women to stay in the home and devote their education to their children. The prevailing message was married women should be content to be supported by their husbands. Any woman who worked while being married took a job away from a young

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<sup>60</sup> Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), 182-184.

<sup>61</sup> Sarah Comstock, "Marriage or Career," *Good Housekeeping*, 94, no. 6 (1932) : 32-33, 159-162.

single woman who needed to support herself or a man who needed to support his family.<sup>62</sup>

This argument stated that married women were “double dipping” by selfishly taking the income from another family by preventing a husband from working. This sentiment not only came from popular magazines and newspapers but from government officials in the White House. Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor during the Depression, asked married women workers to give up their jobs in order to be replaced by a man who presumably had a family to support and mouths to feed.<sup>63</sup> Prominent journalist Norman Cousins stated, “There are approximately 10,000,000 men out of work in the United States today; there are also 10,000,000 or more women, married and single, who are jobholders. Simply fire the women, who shouldn’t be working anyway, and hire the men. Presto! No unemployment. No relief rolls. No Depression.”<sup>64</sup> Public sentiment was set against the notion of working married women and indeed the threat of taking away employment from all women was a discussion point.

The Depression held many paradoxes for married women in the United States. First, there was a heightened resentment and public hostility to married working women in general. In 1936 a *Fortune* poll asked: “Do you believe that married women should have a full time job outside the home?” Only 15% of those polled approved, while 48% disapproved, and 37% gave it conditioned approval.<sup>65</sup> The rationale for the poll’s findings was consistent in that a married woman working took a job away from a qualified man and that children and husbands suffered

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<sup>62</sup> Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), 78-79.

<sup>63</sup> Dorothy Schneider and Carl J. Schneider, *Women in the Workplace* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 1993), 162.

<sup>64</sup> Alice Keller-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 256.

<sup>65</sup> Barbara Haber, *Holding Their Own: American Women in the 1930s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 27.

if a wife and mother were absent from the home. The public disapproval spilled over into the public sector when politicians began legislating for political favors among their constituency by passing federal marriage bars. The federal laws immediately began having an impact on working women at the local level and on a very personal level.

The public hostility toward working married women is clear, but those who suffered the brunt of both public and legal discrimination were teachers. Even though marriage bars had existed on a smaller scale in the private sector, the economic crisis of the Depression meant that those existing rules and regulations were exercised to a greater extent. Married women in public jobs became increasingly under fire and were even called “parasitic” by New York Assemblyman Arthur Swartz.<sup>66</sup> The beginning of federal legislative discrimination against married women started with Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal. The New Deal began with systematically excluding women from well paying jobs and firing women who had employed husbands. Further, the New Deal routed women on work relief to sex-segregated and grossly underpaid jobs. In the eyes of the federal government, men were the breadwinners and women only constituted a small fraction that would qualify for work relief.<sup>67</sup> The increasing entrance of married women into the public workforce and the subsequent public hostility toward them was symptomatic of larger social shifts occurring with all women at the time.

By treating educated, middle-class married women as a separate minority group, legislators targeted discriminatory policies at them in order to gain political favors from

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<sup>66</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and the Great Depression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 45.

<sup>67</sup> Nany F. Cott, “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934,” *The American Historical Review* 103 no. 5 (Dec. 1998) : 1440-74.

constituents. Marriage bars applied to both the private and public sectors; however, government employees in the public sector were susceptible to hostile legislation. Government employees were the target of much of the social and legislative discrimination because, as historian Lois Scharf stated, “The role of government converged with the conventional ideals of women’s place in society.”<sup>68</sup> This assertion can be seen at the federal level with the 1932 Economy Act with Section 213, also known as the “married persons clause” that provided employers with a federal precedent to override state laws in the matter of married women’s employment. This Section did not specifically apply to teachers except in the District of Columbia; however, the legislation did provide an example to state and local officials that dismissal on marital grounds was acceptable and sanctioned by the federal government. Marriage bar legislation increased in states during the three years directly after the Economy Act passed in 1932.<sup>69</sup> The federal legislation affected state legislation, as can be seen in West Virginia. Most of the marriage bars in West Virginia occurred after the Economy Act was passed in 1932.<sup>70</sup> The “married persons clause” provided employees with a federal precedent to override state laws in the matter of married women’s employment. Marriage bars occurred at the local level before the Economy Act. In fact, marriage bars existed well before 1932; however, the pervasiveness of both written codes and unspoken custom increased considerably when the federal law overruled any state and local laws that may have existed to protect married women’s right to work. An example of increased marriage bar codes directly

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<sup>68</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and The Great Depression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 44.

<sup>69</sup> To Amend Married Person Clause, House of Representatives Committee on the Civil Service April 18, 1935, 22.

<sup>70</sup> Robert J. O’Brien, “Persecution and Acceptance: The Strange History of Discrimination against Married Women Teachers in West Virginia,” *West Virginia History* 56 (1997) : 74 -75.

after the Economy Act is illustrated in West Virginia where the proposed marriage bar and salary schedule in Huntington occurred in 1932. Indeed, of the marriage bars surveyed by Robert O'Brien, nearly all took place in the first few years after the passage of the marriage clause.<sup>71</sup>

The Huntington Independent District Board of Education targeted married, middle-class, educated women teachers together as a whole for economic discrimination. Huntington proposed a severe marriage bar banning all married women from employment as teachers in 1932; however, the motion was never passed. Huntington provides a unique illustration of how marriage bars affected the justification of pay that married women received even if the no marriage bar passed.

The discrimination against married women teachers during the Depression in Huntington began slowly. The first restrictions began November 10, 1930 when maternity leave was revoked.<sup>72</sup> This distinction is important to note because it points out two very important facts. First, married women were apparently hired and prior to 1930 were allowed maternity leave before returning to their teaching posts. Although the School Board decided to revoke maternity leave in 1930, they did allow for women to reapply "after some time of the birth of the child," for another teaching position.<sup>73</sup> In other words, hiring married women, even married women with young children, was not prohibited. Therefore, before the Depression Huntington had liberal hiring and retention practices for married women teachers.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. April 18, 1932.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

The Huntington Independent District Board of Education created a motion for the first marriage bar resolution during the Depression. The minutes of the meeting state:

Be it resolved by the Board of Education of the Huntington Independent School District that in view of the unusual and abnormal economic conditions we are facing at this time and the absolute need for tax relief as well as the very pressing need for relief from unemployment in the city, that the Superintendent be requested by the Board to take into consideration the financial condition and circumstances of the applicant, as well as their fitness and qualifications for teaching, when recommending the teaching staff for the coming year, with the idea in mind of awarding contract to those teachers whose financial circumstances and responsibilities are the most distressing, provided their fitness and qualifications are equal. Be it further resolved that it is the sense of this Board that all married women now teaching in the Huntington schools and whose husbands are also employed as teachers in the Huntington schools should be dropped from the teaching staff together with all other married women teachers who are not dependent upon their salary as teachers for a living but who have other ample means of support.<sup>74</sup>

What constituted a “living” or “ample means of support” was left undefined in this marriage bar as well as all others in West Virginia and across the country. Even though this resolution was proposed, it did not pass in large part because President A. H. Frankel wrote a letter of objection to the board. In it he acknowledged the tax burden on the public and the larger economic crisis forcing the school board to reduce its staff; however, firing all married women regardless of efficiency and qualification would upset the school system and the education of the children. President Frankel stated that Superintendent Rice should make the final decisions on which teachers should be retained based solely on efficiency after direct observation.<sup>75</sup>

When the board accepted Frankel’s position and did not pass the proposed marriage bar, by the next board meeting the first of several petitions requesting the board to create new vacancies began to appear. Unmarried, unemployed women presented the petitions arguing

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

that married women teachers prevented them from having a career and further that they did not have husbands to provide for them. These women echoed the national arguments against married women working.

After the petitions were presented to the board, a resolution was adopted and resolved creating two distinct classes of teachers known as class A and class B. The first class consisted of men regardless of marriage status and single women. The second class consisted of married women. Regardless of experience, education, or efficiency the two classes would be paid dramatically different wages. In fact, the wages were so low for married women in the second class that it had to be amended May 26, 1932 because the pay was lower than state law permitted.<sup>76</sup> Although President Frankel was against this measure, it did pass. The separate salary schedules and proposed marriage bar illustrate the complex social and economic issues taking place in the early twentieth century. Marriage bars were the result of intense multifaceted social pressure and shifting cultural norms as expressed by the petitions from unemployed, single female teachers. The economic stress of the Depression compelled the school board to find socially acceptable means to reduce costs while maintaining the schools. Blatant economic discrimination against married women teachers in Huntington with salary schedules reinforced both the social and economic factors proliferating marriage bars.

Marriage bars targeted middle-class, educated white women as a group because of class and racial norms. The consequences of such significant social and legal pressure placed on professional married women as a whole are clear in the college women surveyed in the 1920s who were optimistic about combining career and family, but who by 1940 answered negatively

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., May 9, 1932.

when asked if there was hope for having both a career and family.<sup>77</sup> Though single and married professional women continued to increase their numbers in the workforce during the Depression, the increase was small, and the mood of young educated women combining work and family turned pessimistic. Societal pressure came from many avenues. The most pervasive were marriage bars that both restricted a married women's employment and justified paying those married women who did find employment less. Marriage bars specifically targeted educated, middle-class white married women as a way to preserve the gendered family structure of power. While women have always worked, the cult of domesticity shaped the division of labor around gender and class. Though women could be educated and enter into professions, combining family and work continued to be fraught with social and legal hostility well after the Depression had come and gone.

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<sup>77</sup> Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), 182-184.

## CHAPTER TWO

### NO GUARANTEES: THE LEGAL LIMBO OF MARRIED WOMEN TEACHERS

*“Causes for discharge or demotion... shall be immoral character, conduct unbecoming an instructor, insubordination, failure to obey reasonable rules promulgated by the board of education, marriage of women instructors, inefficiency, incompetency, physical unfitness.”*

National Education Association, *Legal Status of Married Teachers* p. 8

Married middle-class teachers as a group endured economic discrimination due to a complex set of social and economic factors. This discrimination increased and became more difficult to challenge legally because of the elastic nature of the laws as well as intensified economic competition during the Depression. The legal ambiguities of marriage bars prior to the Depression complicated the position of teaching wives when economic turmoil and social hostility escalated during the economic crisis. Without clear legal protection, discrimination flourished when the economic Depression inflamed preexisting enmity against middle-class educated women continuing their careers past marriage. This chapter explores how the increase of federal, state, and local marriage bars during the Depression was a direct result of the economic crisis' exasperation of the public's unease with educated, middle-class white women combining work and family. This assertion is accomplished through the thorough investigation of the legal ambiguities of marriage bars and how they shifted from state to state and even from school board to school board.

Further complicating the legality of marriage bars was the merit system. Marriage bars escalated when the federal government disregarded the merit system within the Economy Act's

“marriage clause.” Critics of marriage bars seized on the merit argument, both on the federal level and in local level, challenging the fairness and efficiency of such policies. This chapter explores how critics used the argument of the merit system in order to stress the legal ambiguities of marriage bars. The arguments against marriage bars at the federal and local level highlight society’s unease with working class married women while still maintaining fairness in hiring and retrenchment policies. An illustration of these arguments is shown through careful review of the diverse groups who fought for the repeal of Section 213 of the Economy Act also known as the “married persons clause”.

Neither state legislation nor certification regulations referred to women’s marital status at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the absence of federal or consistent state laws prohibiting discrimination against married women, local school boards could hire and fire at will. Challenging the local school boards required formal complaints filed with state boards of education. As the Depression deepened, schools directly felt the loss of tax revenue required to run the schools and pay teachers’ salaries. The marriage bars of the early twentieth century laid the legal foundation for economic discrimination against college educated, middle-class married teachers. Legislation protected school boards that hired and fired teachers due to marital status rather than merit. Legal ambiguities allowed school boards that enacted marriage bars to disregard women’s education, experience, and quality of work. The consequences of increased marriage bars and social hostility meant married women’s entrance into professions, even feminized professions such as teaching, was protracted. The legal ambiguities of marriage bars led to increased economic discrimination during the Depression.

Public schools supported directly from taxes felt the full impact of the economic crisis in the 1930s. School boards initially utilized marriage bars in the 1920s to lessen the fierce economic competition for teaching positions. However, during the Depression marriage bars began to accelerate in order to cut teaching positions as well as begin retrenchment of current teaching staff. When the first signs of the economic crisis began to appear in 1931, 23.4 percent of all cities hired married women, a dramatic decrease from 37 percent held in 1928.<sup>78</sup> The acceleration of marriage bars continued until by 1940 only 13 percent of school boards hired married teachers and 30 percent retained single women who married while employed. The policies of the school boards and their enforcement of marriage bars is well documented in *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism, and the Great Depression*; the legality of each of these policies is complex, and it is difficult to ascertain clear commonalities.<sup>79</sup> The lack of commonalities meant no clear legal precedent existed to protect married female teachers from marriage bars.

The legal status of married women teachers in the early twentieth century was tenuous and constantly in flux because of the varying statutory provisions, local regulations or practices, circumstances, and the conclusions arrived at by the courts.<sup>80</sup> In the absence of consistent legal direction as to the legal protection of married teaching women, local school boards hired whomever they chose to and discriminated through exclusionary hiring practices. Further, contracts punished single women who chose to marry and teach. General principles of law

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<sup>78</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism, and the Great Depression* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 76-77.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Jewel D. Kennemer, *The Married Woman Teacher Problem* (Master's thesis, East Texas State Teachers College, 1939), 103-104.

governing contracts held up in court even if the contract included discriminatory language. Jewel D. Kennemer explores the legal ambiguity that teaching wives faced in *The Married Woman Teacher Problem*<sup>81</sup>. In it Kennemer states, “Because of the lack of complete unanimity in court decisions relating to married women teachers, it is well to recognize that under slightly different circumstances the courts of a given state might render decisions apparently contradictory to those already announced.” Even within a state the decisions have not always been wholly consistent.” The one consistency that can be gleaned from the myriad of court cases involving marriage bars prior to 1940 is that no state laws prohibited school boards from discriminating against the hiring of married teachers. Without statute law, a school board could determine its own policies on whether or not to employ a married teacher.<sup>82</sup>

Marriage bars cropped up in school boards as early as the late nineteenth century. Subsequent challenges appear in court as early as 1902 in the *Guildford School Township v. Roberts* case in which a married woman challenged the school board for firing her solely based on marital status.<sup>83</sup> In this case, the court sided with the school board because the teacher had signed a contract stating that she would remain unmarried during the school year. Another early court case took place in 1904 in New York where the ruling sided in favor of the married teacher. In *Murphy v. Maxwell*,<sup>84</sup> the court found that the teacher could not be fired because of marital status. The court cited that a contradictory and ambiguous bylaw under the city of Brooklyn’s Board of Education stated, “Should a female principal, head of department or teacher marry, her place shall thereupon become vacant, but her marriage shall not operate as

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 122-124.

<sup>83</sup> *Guildford School Township v. Roberts*: 62 N.E. 711 (1902).

<sup>84</sup> *Murphy v. Maxwell*: 177 N.Y. 494; 69 N.E. 1092. (1904).

a bar to her reappointment, should it be deemed to the best interest of the school to retain her services.”<sup>85</sup> In both cases, the question of a married woman teacher arose before the state courts only to arrive at opposing rulings because of the particular details original to that case. The limitations of married women’s economic rights depended upon the location of her employment and the policies and bylaws governing that particular school board. Therefore, the legality of marriage bars remained unclear, setting the stage for debate on whether merit or marital status influenced retrenchment during the Depression.

If employed at Huntington Independent District Board of Education, where in 1932 a full marriage bar was not implemented, a woman was not subject to termination simply because of marital status. However, within the Board of Education of Elkins Independent District, an unmarried female teacher was forced to resign upon marriage.<sup>86</sup> Within the same state, whether or not a woman could continue her teaching profession depended on the school board’s inclinations.

With no federal laws protecting married women’s right to employment and state laws either elastic in nature or silent on the issue of working wives, school boards held power to hire and fire at will. A married woman’s legal ability to work, or a single woman’s ability to retain her teaching position upon marriage, depended on the individual hiring school board. Drastic shifts in policy occurred not just from state to state and county to county but from school board

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<sup>85</sup> Ward Keesecker, *The Legal Status of Married Women Teachers* (United States Government Print Office, 1934), 6-7.

<sup>86</sup> Robert J. O’Brien, “Persecution and Acceptance: The Strange History of Discrimination against Married Women Teachers in West Virginia.” *West Virginia History* 56 (1997), 60.

to neighboring school board. Further complicating the legal status of married women teachers was the ever-shifting nature of state laws on working wives.

For example, the Supreme Court of West Virginia ruled in 1914 that marriage could not be grounds for the dismissal of a teacher in *Jameson v. Board of Education of Union District*.<sup>87</sup> Despite this ruling, that same year, school boards across West Virginia enacted marriage bars that severely restricted a married woman teacher's employment and retention.<sup>88</sup> Even with the addition of another state code 18-7-1 in 1931, as long as the contract that a teacher signed affirmed that she should not marry and continue to work, no legal rights protected her. In The Official Code of West Virginia, appointment of teachers was thus stated:

Any teacher who enters into a contract with a board of education to teach a public school and who fails to complete the term of such contract, unless prevented from doing so by personal illness or other just cause, or unless released from such contract by the board, or who violates any other lawful provision of such contract, shall be disqualified to teach in any other public school in the State during the term of such contract: Provided, that marriage of a teacher during the term of the contract shall not be considered or deemed a violation or breach of such contract.<sup>89</sup>

The code is not a clear legal protection from termination due to marital status. Specifically, this code discourages teachers from breaking contract in order to teach for another school. School boards largely ignored the court ruling and subsequent 1931 State Code by creating hiring contracts whereby marriage nullified the teaching contract and terminated employment. As long as school boards held the right to hire and fire at will, marriage bars continued to proliferate throughout the Depression in West Virginia despite a specific court case stating that

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>88</sup> Robert J. O'Brien, "Persecution and Acceptance: The Strange History of Discrimination against Married Women Teachers in West Virginia," *West Virginia History* 56 (1997) 58.

<sup>89</sup> The Official Code of West Virginia 18-7-1, published in 1931.

marriage cannot be grounds for dismissal. Attorney General Howard B. Lee agreed that marriage bars and separate salary schedules for married female teachers were legal. Lee ruled on this matter after investigating the Huntington Independent District Board of Education's proposed marriage bar, teacher terminations, and separate salary schedules. He came to this conclusion because contracts protect school boards.<sup>90</sup> Upon reading state code 18-7-1, one might assume as scholar Robert O'Brien did in *Persecution and Acceptance: A Strange History of Discrimination Against Married Women Teachers in West Virginia*, that the law protected married women from discrimination but was simply uncontested by women. Lee's ruling argues O'Brien's assertion that marriage bars were not challenged in West Virginia. 18-7-1 and Lee's ruling underscore the legal ambiguities surrounding marriage bars.

O'Brien's theory is that, because no married teachers legally contested the marriage bars that occurred throughout the state after the passage of the code, this factor implies willingness on the part of the teachers to accept the discrimination.<sup>91</sup> This conclusion is inaccurate not only because of the legal ambiguity of the code, but also because the burden placed on the teachers to know and claim their rights-- an extremely difficult expectation considering the complexities of policies, laws, and codes that shifted from state to state and school board to school board. With marriage bars difficult to battle legally, school boards increasingly used such policies as a way to reduce their teaching staff in a publicly acceptable manner. If female teachers knew and interpreted state law and school board policies then tenure status offered tenuous protection.

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<sup>90</sup> "School Board's Marriage Ban Legal, Lee Says," *Huntington Herald Dispatch* May 20 1932, 8.

<sup>91</sup> Robert J. O'Brien, "Persecution and Acceptance: The Strange History of Discrimination against Married Women Teachers in West Virginia," *West Virginia History* 56 (1997), 59.

For example, a Louisiana attorney general ruled that when women teachers who marry and are protected by tenure resign, even if pressured to do so by the school board, they forfeit their rights. Women who refuse to abide by the rule and provide written protest were allowed to remain in employment having retained their tenure rights.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, women would need to know the specific legislation applying to tenure as well as stipulations to contracts on top of what their own school board policies were, all of which was subject to change over the course of their employment. The complex and ambiguous nature of marriage bars hampered a teacher's ability to successfully battle a school board in court.

While married teachers may have found refuge in tenure laws, which prohibited the firing of a woman after a set number of years regardless of marital status, by 1920 only five states had enacted tenure legislation. By 1940, thirty-one states passed tenure legislation; of those only five were statewide and one of those five specifically excluded tenure protection if a woman decided to marry.<sup>93</sup> However, if a single woman married and continued her teaching career in a state or with a school board that adhered to tenure laws, then her employment was reasonably secure. With such uncertainty of employment for married women teachers from state to state and even within a state, a single favorable court decision could not guarantee employment protection.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Jewel D. Kennemer, *The Married Woman Teacher Problem* (Master's thesis, Commerce Texas: East Texas State Teachers College, 1939), 118.

<sup>93</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and the Great Depression* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 81.

<sup>94</sup> Jewel D. Kennemer, *The Married Woman Teacher Problem* (Master's thesis, Commerce Texas: East Texas State Teachers College, 1939), 118.

The lack of legal continuity and the intensification of marriage bars from 1920 until the Second World War arose because of sharp economic competition for teaching positions beginning in the twenties that increased during the economic crisis of the Depression. The social hostility toward working wives expanded with rising national unemployment and in turn placed pressure on elected officials such as school boards to hire and retain based on perceived economic need. Wives traditionally received the financial support of their husbands. Having a two-income household as unemployment surged created an environment in which marriage bars flourished. As marriage bars multiplied exponentially across the nation, in 1932 the federal government sanctioned the retrenchment of working wives over merit with the passage of Section 213 of the Economy Act.

Section 213 and the subsequent increase of marriage bars in the Depression occurred because of the escalated competition for well paying employment and the public's unease with educated, middle-class white women combining work and family. Section 213 of the Economy Act set a federal, legal precedent by which state and local governments could disregard the merit system in order to facilitate retrenchment targeted directly at married professional women.

First introduced by President Hoover, the Economy Act intended to cut government expenses and lower taxes in response to the financial crisis gripping the United States. Within the Economy Act a small clause called Section 213 stated that if married couples worked for the federal government then either the husband or wife would be fired first upon governmental reductions. The clause stated:

In any reduction of personnel in any branch of the service of the United States Government or the District of Columbia, married persons (living with husband or wife) employed in the grades to be reduced shall be dismissed before any other persons employed in such class are dismissed, if such husband or wife is also in the service of the United States or the District of Columbia. In the appointment of persons to the classified Civil Service, preference shall be given to the persons other than married persons living with husband or wife, such husband or wife being in the service of the United States or the District of Columbia.<sup>95</sup>

The bill did not specifically state that women must be fired, though wives overwhelmingly were targeted as societal pressure mounted on employers and legislatures to fire married women.

This Section did not clearly apply to teachers except in the District of Columbia; however, the legislation did provide an example to state and local officials that dismissal on marital grounds was acceptable and sanctioned by the federal government.<sup>96</sup> Marriage bar legislation increased in states during the three years directly after the Economy Act passed in 1932.<sup>97</sup> Women suffered disproportionately under the bill, though the clause did not specifically state termination of all married women. This result occurred partly because the interpretation and application of the legislation varied from department to department. Consequences of this bill were that 1,600 spouses had their employment terminated. Of this number, three-fourths were women.<sup>98</sup> Further, 80 percent of the spouses fired because of marital status earned less than \$2,000 dollars a year, while women who were paid more-- such as Congressmen's wives-- retained employment.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, the application of the clause did not occur across all

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Edwina Austin Avery, *It Did Happen Here: Women as Marginal Labor After the First World War* (New York: Vantage Press, 1975), 204.

<sup>97</sup> "To Amend Married Person Clause, House of Representatives Committee on the Civil Service" April 18, 1935, 22.

<sup>98</sup> John Thomas McGuire, "The Most Unjust Piece of Legislation," *Journal of Policy History* 20 no. 4 (2008), pp 25.

<sup>99</sup> "To Amend Married Person Clause, House of Representatives Committee on the Civil Service" April 18, 1935, 13.

government workers. Workers who were middle-class suffered more. It is important to note that middle-class women were the target of Section 213 because these discriminatory laws illustrate the public's anxiety over middle-class women working.

Although the language of Section 213 did not specify wives exclusively, the congressional representative, John Cochran of Missouri, who wrote and supported the Section, leaves little doubt as to the legislation's purpose. Cochran's intentions were to preserve the American home by putting women back in the home and ensuring that they stayed there. Interestingly, Congressman Cochran's wife acted as his aid. He assured the public that she was not on the pay roll, emphasizing that a woman could work as long as she was not paid.<sup>100</sup> Critics of marriage bars seized on the argument that proficient and experienced working women should not be compensated for their work based on their marital status.

Marriage bars ignored the merit system. Section 213 provided the framework by which proponents of working wives could center their arguments. Married, educated, middle-class women were explicitly targeted for economic discrimination as a group. By identifying the economic discrimination these women faced as a group and focusing on the worth of the women's experience, education, and performance rather than their marital status offered a potent counterpoint to critics. The fight to enforce the merit system in hiring and retention as well as the practice of retrenchment of employees regardless of sex or marital status united sympathetic unions, educational organizations, and women's organizations from a myriad of ideological backgrounds. This fight can be seen at the federal level with the fight against

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<sup>100</sup> Edwina Austin Avery, *It Did Happen Here: Women as Marginal Labor After the First World War* (New York: Vantage Press, 1975), 50-51.

Section 213 as well as the local level such as the case study of Huntington, W.V. in which a myriad of organizations, including unions, argued that the women could not be discriminated against solely because of marital status. The overriding concern was the disregard of the merit system. Marriage bars did not always pass unchallenged or without intense public debate. These debates reveal the powerful and complex social and economic factors that proliferated during the Depression.

When the federal government set a precedent of economic discrimination against married women regardless of merit, this in turn legitimized and increased marriage bars in school systems. Only by 1937 was Section 213 repealed without retroactively rehiring those fired from 1932-1937. Section 213 not only legitimized the use of marriage bars within schools systems but acted as a referendum on working mothers that underscored popular opinion during the Depression.

The impact on college-educated women reflected in poll numbers leaves little doubt to the consequences decades after increased legal and social discrimination affected opinions on combining work and family. College women surveyed in the 1920s were confident about combining career and family, but by 1940 the marriage bars and societal pressure had taken its toll as many more women answered negatively when asked if there was hope in having both a career and family.<sup>101</sup> Marriage bars in the teaching profession are important to understanding the economic discrimination against married college educated, middle-class women because, as women began to increase their political and social freedoms, a direct backlash occurred against

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<sup>101</sup> Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), 182-184.

those women who wanted both the economic freedom that came from work and the opportunity to have a family.

Scholars tend to group the arguments on why women should be free from economic discrimination into two separate camps. The first is the feminist argument, which reasoned that marriage bars such as Section 213 were “a blow to marriage, and career feminism in particular and a blatant attempt to undermine female occupational status in general.”<sup>102</sup> The second set of arguments center around women’s economic need as it relates to supporting their families. In other words, the argument for married women working was placed in the context of the traditional woman. The traditional woman worked only to support her family as a good wife and mother. Separating these groups by ideology is important; however, the overall theme uniting diverse organizations and arguments was the concept of merit-based employment and retention. Merit-based employment spoke to the legal ambiguities of marriage bars that further complicated the position of married, middle-class women. When employment and retention are disconnected from merit, then legal protection for workers is tenuous. Further, if society is willing to ignore merit in the case of married, middle-class women then one could legally discriminate against other groups.

An example of this argument is seen in the initial statement from New York Representative Emanuel Celler who introduced H.R. 5051 legislation to nullify Section 213. The arguments that Celler utilized revolved around the question of merit versus social status. To Celler, Section 213 represented discrimination because it focused on the extenuating social standing of workers rather than their ability function in their jobs with competency. Within his

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 51.

first comments on Section 213 he argued that the Marriage Clause was discriminatory and a violation of equal rights.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, much of his argument centered on civil rights and the fairness of the Marriage Clause. Congressman Celler argued further that Section 213 was a barrier against marriage that would lead to other barriers such as race, color, religion, or nationality. Within his statement, Celler pointed out that unequal application of the Marriage Clause existed in all departments. It may be socially acceptable to discriminate against married, middle-class women; however, Celler warned that the uneven application and the biased nature of the law could lead to more discriminatory practices. Celler argued that the law's uneven application was the result of its ambiguous wording that left interpretation and enforcement up to the department.

Another representative from New York, Congresswoman Mrs. Caroline O'Day, was an example of a speaker opposed to Section 213 who attacked the legislation's validity by arguing on the grounds of merit. O'Day's argument began by stressing the damage to couples forced into divorce, poverty, or secret marriages because of Section 213.<sup>104</sup> O'Day's main argument centered on merit when she stated, "I think it is a very unfortunate situation, and I think it is a dangerous situation, dangerous for the country and dangerous for the morals of men and women; that just as a matter of pure justice it seems to me that anybody that is qualified to work should be given a chance to work."<sup>105</sup> O'Day's views also appealed to the social feminist perspective. O'Day stated that she currently sat on two school boards and was the president of

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<sup>103</sup> To Amend Married Persons Clause, House of Representatives Committee on the Civil Service Washington D.C. April 18, 1935, 1.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 6.

a third, and in her experience on these school boards, every married teacher she knew of supported family dependents.<sup>106</sup> Though O'Day sat on school boards that employed married women, government publications such as "The Legal Status of Married Women Teachers" published by the Office of Education specifically gathered legal rulings by state supreme courts in order to "make legal principles involved in dismissal of women teachers on account of marriage available."<sup>107</sup> Interestingly, O'Day also used eugenics as a force for keeping married women *in* the workforce and not out of it. Her rationale was that couples have fewer children when they are limited to one income. The married woman who works does so to educate and support her children.<sup>108</sup> All of O'Day's arguments center on the shifting and complex social norms that married, middle-class women disturbed when they combined work and family.

The Vice President of the National League of Women Voters, Mrs. Harris T. Baldwin, argued that the Marriage Clause weakened the morale. In Baldwin's opening statement, she argued that Section 213 harmed public service morale for four reasons. The merit system of the government employment was undermined "no matter how capable such a prospective employee may be, the door is shut."<sup>109</sup> The security of employment was undermined. Those who work for the stability of tenure and a secure pension become weakened when they see that they can be dismissed for something like their marital status.<sup>110</sup> Workers lose their pensions due solely to their marital status. Indeed, the women and few men fired under the

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>107</sup> Ward W. Keesecker, *"The Legal Status of Married Women Teachers"* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1934), 2.

<sup>108</sup> To Amend Married Person's Clause, House of Representatives Committee on the Civil Service Washington D.C. April 18, 1935, 6-7.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 12

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

Marriage Clause did lose their pensions. Only upon divorce could workers find consideration for re-employment. The entire public service suffered by the unequal enforcement of this law because some departments, which obey the clause, lose excellent employees while those who ignore the law hire the fired employees. Therefore, those who do not adhere to the law benefit.<sup>111</sup> The ambiguous nature of the law meant that departments determined enforcement. Marriage bars initially created as a socially acceptable means for retrenchment applied only when the employers needed them.

The arguments presented in the House Committee Notes illustrate that the quality, experience, and education of a candidate were irrelevant according to Section 213. By undercutting the value of one minority group, employees as a whole suffered because, even if one excelled in one's position, continued employment and pension are tenuous due to extraneous circumstances unconnected with work life. Merit was one theme that continuously reoccurs throughout the majority of individuals arguing before House representatives. By ignoring merit, critics of Section 213 were able to highlight the ambiguous nature of the law and its uneven application.

The marriage bars and, in particular, Section 213 gave proponents of working wives ample opportunity to sharpen their arguments. Despite this opportunity, marriage bars, especially in the teaching profession persisted, well into the 1950s. Legal economic discrimination against college-educated, middle-class women, especially teachers, in the early twentieth century is important in understanding why married women's entrance into the

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

professions was protracted. Legal and social hostility combined with economic discrimination discouraged college-educated women from blending family and career.

Marriage bars undercut the merit system, which rewards education, experience, and quality teaching. In the absence of state or federal legislation protecting married women's rights to work in the early twentieth century, economic crisis, and subsequent heightened competition for employment for teaching positions, illustrates one example in which married women became targets for economic discrimination. Locally elected school boards, which lost much of their tax revenue early in the Depression, needed to find a socially acceptable manner for retrenchment. Building off the legal ambiguities governing the legal status of married teachers, both school and society found an easy target to vent their anger toward rampant unemployment in college-educated professionals. By devaluing the merit system, marriage bars communicated to middle-class women that no matter how much education they achieved or how well they performed their duties, their first duty was as wife and mother. Even if a woman chose to continue her career, ambiguous legislation hampered many female teachers from challenging the status quo. This assertion is important to understanding middle-class women's entrance into professional careers in the early twentieth century. Just as women began to increase their education, professional careers were legislated against married women. This legislation combined with the social hostility and severe economic competition led to negative views on combining career and family.

Even in a profession, which highlighted and celebrated maternal feminine qualities, such as teaching, the door to a lifetime of economic independence closed due to systematic

discrimination. An adult woman, privileged by class, race, and education could only maintain economic freedom if she chose not to marry. Teaching women were systematically discriminated against through the prolific use of marriage bars. Marriage bars were prolific during the Depression in the teaching profession because legal ambiguities enabled legislators and school boards to manipulate social hostility toward working, middle-class, married women. The Depression's economic crisis forced school boards into severe retrenchment. Elected school board members actively discriminated against married women because it was socially acceptable and economically convenient to do so. Marriage bars were the product of multifarious and shifting social and economic factors. Adding to the complex nature of marriage bars was merit. When policies and laws disregarded merit, the legal ambiguities as well as the efficiency and fairness of such rules were highlighted. Section 213 illustrates this point on the national level, and the case study of Huntington Independent School District demonstrates this argument at the local level.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MARRIED FEMALE TEACHERS IN HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA

*“We were elected on a ticket of lower taxes, and reform in the school system, as far as we could wisely go. It becomes our duty and problem today to meet these demands as far as it is advisable, without first injuring education; second, without confusion of the employees of the school system, and most certainly with an ever watchful eye on the rights of the tax payer. It has been freely discussed publicly that all married teachers should be dropped, regardless of efficiency. This plan could not possibly be other than harmful.”*

Huntington Independent District Board of Education President A.H. Frankel on April 18, 1932.<sup>112</sup>

On September 22, 1931, school board President A.H. Frankel of Huntington read a statement from a local teacher named Queen Ann Diddle. In her statement, Mrs. Diddle pleaded with the board not to terminate her contract because she was pregnant and needed to take a leave of absence for childbirth.<sup>113</sup> Less than a year earlier, on November 10, 1930, the board decided to end such leaves because of public criticism against the policy.<sup>114</sup> The vote to end maternity leave and to uphold the board’s stance on such leaves was not universal. Board members split five to three, beginning what was to become a public battle over the employment and retention of married women teachers that touched on cultural attitudes, gendered family roles, and merit.

The local debate within Huntington illustrates that no one social or economic cause created marriage bars and related economic discrimination against married female teachers.

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<sup>112</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. April 18, 1932.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. September 22, 1931.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. November 10, 1930.

Complex social norms combined with increasing economic strains and intensified competition for well paying jobs each added to the proliferation of marriage bars. The heated school board meetings and subsequent community uproar demonstrated that economic discrimination against married women teachers was not simple or easy. The complexity arose because of the complicated elements that created the marriage bars. These elements were in direct conflict with the merit system in which the Huntington School Board had previously paid its teachers. The need to keep efficient teachers while still providing a socially acceptable way for retrenchment resulted in the school board's decision to retain proficient married female teachers while paying them significantly less. In order to do this, the majority board members relied on the legal ambiguities connected with marriage bars in order to target married female teachers.

The Huntington Independent District Board of Education's proposed marriage bar and separate salary schedule show how marriage bars specifically targeted married, college-educated, middle-class white women in the teaching profession when severe economic retrenchment forced school boards to find socially acceptable means to reduce their teaching staff. Further, a case study of the Huntington Independent District Board of Education's initial marriage bar proposals and subsequent public debate in school board meetings and local newspapers demonstrate the struggle between merit and efficiency versus marital status. The decisions made by the school board suggest that, even though a drastic marriage bar was not implemented during the Depression in Huntington, social hostility to career wives and the need for drastic reduction in teachers were both cited as justification to economically discriminate against married female teachers. Married teachers faced legal ambiguities from state to state;

Huntington Independent District Board of Education illustrates that these same legal ambiguities shifted from school system to school system within West Virginia. The Huntington School Board is an example that supports the argument that marriage bars were more acute in the feminized teaching profession because of social pressure to reinforce men's socioeconomic status and power in the community and family combined with increased economic competition within the field. This assertion is illustrated through the proposed marriage bar's language and the implementation of separate salary schedules. Further, Huntington Independent District Board of Education demonstrates that the legal ambiguities surrounding marriage bars enabled the school board to legally pass policies against married female teachers.

The marriage bar controversy in 1932 marked the last year of the Huntington Independent District Board of Education. The following school year, all four independent school districts of Barboursville, Guyandotte, Huntington, and Central City united under the Cabell County Board of Education. An election of Huntington's board members occurred every three years.<sup>115</sup> A correlation between the Huntington's Board of Education battle over retrenchment policies and salary schedule reduction and the dissolution of the school boards cannot be directly traced. As scholar, Marie Nelson Lewis noted in 1944, "It was not until 1933, during the national financial Depression that the majority of people in West Virginia voted for the centralization of power in the fifty-five counties. At that time, one central Cabell County Board of Education assumed control over all of Cabell County."<sup>116</sup> The vote was state wide to centralize all school boards into counties rather than independent school districts. Therefore

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<sup>115</sup> Marie Nelson Lewis, "An Historical Survey of the Public Schools of Cabell County, West Virginia" (Master's thesis, Marshall College, 1944), 15-17.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. 17.

the controversy over the retention and salaries of married teachers was not the cause of the board's demise. Further, the debate to centralize the school boards predated the Depression by decades.<sup>117</sup> This fact is important because it would be easy to surmise from the board's fiery exchanges and intense community scrutiny that the marriage bar controversy led to the board's dissolution. However, this research does not support that assumption.

Local political battles erupted during the Depression when unemployment eroded the tax base for small local communities. As a result, the Huntington Independent District Board of Education faced the dire and potentially politically damaging decision to drastically reduce staff or increase the taxes on its citizens. A political schism between board members and the community ultimately led to the economic discrimination of married professional women teachers. Married female teachers in Huntington faced the threat of a new marriage bar, termination, and separate salary schedules. The School Board threatened these actions in order to save money and protect the family.

The Huntington Independent District Board of Education implemented a previous marriage bar in 1918. According to local historian Marie Nelson Lewis, the resolution stated, "The board would no longer employ married women as teachers who are wholly or partly dependent on their husbands for support."<sup>118</sup> Although this represents a clear hiring bar against married women, no mention of retaining single women teachers who later married is mentioned in the policy. Further, by 1930 evidence exists within the school board notes that married women were routinely given time off for childbirth and allowed to return to

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>118</sup> Marie Nelson Lewis, "An Historical Survey of the Public Schools of Cabell County, West Virginia" (Master's thesis, Marshall College, 1944), 245.

teaching.<sup>119</sup> Although the board implemented a hire bar in 1918, by 1930 the board adopted more liberal hiring and retention practices for married female teachers. Therefore, the precedent for discriminatory hiring practices began in 1918, providing the board with a foundation for the implementation of further economic discrimination against married women during the Depression. Prior to the revocation of maternity leave, the school board routinely granted leaves of absence for childbirth. The board revoked maternity leave November 10, 1930 with the following motion passed:

Since the Board of Education has before it requests from several married women teachers and employees for temporary leave from service because of expected child birth, and since such grants of leave bring considerable public criticism upon the policy of the Board in granting them, be it resolved by the Board that such leaves be no longer granted but that such teachers and employees be requested to present their resignations, and that such teachers may thereafter at some later time present applications for employment.<sup>120</sup>

The passage of this motion indicates the motivations of the school board. The board cited public pressure to revoke maternity leave. This motion allowed the board to gain political favor from the community while simultaneously leaving a window of opportunity to later hire teachers. Overall, the Huntington Independent District Board of Education was in the minority of school boards willing both to hire married women and retain those single teachers who did marry.<sup>121</sup> This motion indicates that the board did not prohibit the hiring of married women, even married women with young children. However, this did not stop the board from economically discriminating against married women by employing separate salary schedules for married women. The majority of board members used the threat of a marriage bar to enact

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<sup>119</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. November 10, 1930.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. November 10, 1932.

<sup>121</sup> Lois Scharf, *To Work and To Wed: Female Employment, Feminism and The Great Depression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 76-79.

the separate salary schedule. By not implementing a marriage bar the school system could hire and retain efficient married women while paying them significantly less.

According to a report presented by C.L. Wright Superintendent of Schools, 1918 also marks the year that Huntington lost many of its experienced teachers, resulting in student failures which led to the board adopting a single salary schedule on May 14, 1923.<sup>122</sup> The single salary schedule set a standard pay according to grade taught, years of experience, and level of education. The single salary was in effect in 1931 when the board voted to cut all teachers salaries by 10% for the upcoming school year.<sup>123</sup> By April 18, 1932 the majority of board members perceived even more drastic cuts to staff were necessary. Board member Thomas W. Dugan presented a resolution on April 18, 1932 that would terminate all married women teachers whose husbands were also employed as teachers for the Huntington Independent District. Further, the signing of a marriage contract by female teachers would have terminated the teaching contract. Finally, the misrepresentation of marital facts for the procurement of a contract would result in termination. This motion was narrowly defeated by the President A.H. Frankel who argued that teacher efficiency be the only judgment used for teacher retainment or termination.<sup>124</sup> Despite the successful block of the proposed marriage bar in April, the following month Frankel and two other board members were not successful in blocking the termination of 41 school teachers, the majority of whom were married, and the adoption of a separate salary schedule that focused on the remaining married women teachers in the Huntington Independent School District. This fact is significant because women targeted by

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<sup>122</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Huntington Independent District Board of Education March 18,1931.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. July 28,1931.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. April 18,1932.

discriminatory marriage bars and salary schedules in school systems were teachers and principals. Discriminatory practices aimed at educated professional women rather than working-class, married women, who had been working outside of the home for generations, point to a larger culture that did not value married, middle-class women's right to economic independence. Economic discrimination against these women occurred because of their education, position in society, and class, combined with their choice to merge marriage and career. The economic discrimination increased during the Depression because elected officials needed to find a way to reduce their teaching staff in a publicly acceptable manner. Even though the Huntington Independent District Board of Education split on the decision, the separate salary schedules remained.

The economic challenges that exasperated the social unease with middle-class, married women are seen from the beginning of the proposed marriage bar. Challenged with political pressure to reduce school costs or increase the taxes on Huntington's citizens, board members split over how to manage this dilemma. The national unemployment rate averaged 3.2% in 1929 but ballooned to 25.2% by 1933.<sup>125</sup> Facing a significant financial crisis crippling their city, board members were in the politically dangerous position of deciding which teachers and staff should be terminated and by what standards teachers be paid. Board members split into two camps, which represented two schools of thought on the legal rights of teaching women. The five majority members included Theo A. Cavendish, W.M. F. Crook, Thomas W. Dugan, Grayson Thornton, and Harry W. Pollock, who argued that retrenchment decisions be made by the

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<sup>125</sup>"Great Depression," *Encyclopedia of World Trade From Ancient Times to the Present*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2005. *Credo Reference*. Web. 28 February 2010.

school board and in accordance with those who needed employment the most. The majority board members argued that men and single women should receive preference for teaching positions as married women presumably had husbands who could provide for them. The board meeting minutes state on May 9, 1932, "This distinction made in salaries of married women teachers is based upon the assumption that their husbands will at least be able to contribute something to the support of those who are dependent upon."<sup>126</sup> This language clearly demonstrates the unease of majority board members on the economic independence of married women teachers. A married woman in a prestigious public position-- such as teaching-- who earned as much as a man who supported dependent wife and children threatened the economic supremacy of husbands and fathers in their own home. The married woman privileged by class, education, and race challenged the economic power within the family. No one specific element caused the proposed marriage bar and subsequent separate salary schedule; rather, the economic discrimination was the result of several complicated and shifting social and economic concerns.

The minority fraction included school board members who voted that retrenchment be based on efficiency rather than marital status. These included the school board President A.H. Frankel and board members H.R. Alexander and Erskine McLane. Huntington Superintendent Rice's sympathies lay with the minority school board members who argued that the basis for selection for termination be formed on sound educational practices rather than the financial need of individual teachers. The minority board members argued that, even though retrenchment was necessary, the superintendent who would base his selection on teacher

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<sup>126</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Huntington Independent District Board of Education May 9, 1932.

efficiency and no other extenuating circumstances should make decisions on termination.<sup>127</sup>

Within the board's split decision, the argument of merit complicated the marriage bar. The schools needed to run in an efficient manner with the best possible teachers. The marriage bar was blocked enabling the School Board to retain the best of the married female teachers. By enacting a separate salary schedule, efficiency was trumped by marital status; thus, the school board could pay highly efficient married women teachers far less than their male or single female colleagues. The school board could effectively punish married women for working while still benefiting from their labor.

The school board's battle intensified when the local newspaper reported that three of the five majority members hired their wives and relatives to staff positions while singling out married women teachers for termination behind a closed-door board meeting.<sup>128</sup> Further, the majority board members argued that they should make decisions on termination rather than the superintendent, which was in opposition to the school's charter.<sup>129</sup> The public was angered by the hypocrisy of the majority school board members and not at the proposed marriage bar itself and by the school board ignoring the school charter. Further complicating majority board members' decision to target married women teachers was the history of a single salary schedule based on merit that became a problem after a voluntary 10% salary cut from all teachers failed to save enough money to prevent raising taxes.

During the school year of 1930-31, the financial crisis brought about a voluntary 10% cut in all teachers' salaries according to the single salary schedule. Huntington schools adopted the

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<sup>127</sup> "Name Rice, Drop 41 Teachers," *Huntington Herald Dispatch* May 10, 1932, 1.

<sup>128</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. February 9, 1931.

<sup>129</sup> "Ouster Threats are Given Voice At Board Meeting," *Huntington Herald Dispatch* May 13, 1932, 3.

single salary schedules in 1923 in order to recruit teachers during a labor shortage occurring during World War I. “The single salary schedule meant that teachers were paid the same salary according to training and experience regardless of the grades or position to which they may be assigned.”<sup>130</sup> Neither gender, nor marital statuses appear in the single salary schedule, but there were distinctions based on years of experience, educational achievement, and grade level taught. The 1931 salary schedule

<u>Year</u>	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Normal School</u>	<u>A.B. Degree</u>	<u>A.M. Degree</u>
First	0	1,000.00	1,200.00	1,300.00
Second	1	1,050.00	1,250.00	1,400.00
Third	2	1,100.00	1,400.00	1,500.00
Fourth	3	1,200.00	1,500.00	1,600.00
Fifth	4	1,300.00	1,600.00	1,700.00
Sixth	5	1,400.00	1,700.00	1,800.00
Seventh	6	1,500.00	1,800.00	1,900.00
Eighth	7	1,600.00	1,900.00	2,000.00
Ninth	8	1,700.00	2,000.00	2,100.00
Tenth	9	1,800.00	2,100.00	2,200.00
Eleventh	10	1,800.00	2,200.00	2,300.00
Twelfth	11		2,300.00	2,400.00
	12		2,400.00	2,500.00
	13		2,400.00	2,500.00

Source: Data from Minutes of Huntington Independent District Board of Education March 18, 1931.

<sup>130</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. March 18, 1931.

As of September 22, 1931 most of the Huntington school teachers signed the contract; thus, the board moved to cut salaries of teachers by 10% whether they had signed the contract or not.<sup>131</sup> This action was taken because board member Thornton who presented the motion stated “It would be a grossly unfair and obviously unjust” to accept the voluntary reductions of some of the teachers and not all.<sup>132</sup> This statement was ironic because Thornton belonged to the majority board members who supported the marriage bar and separate salary schedule. The leading force behind the marriage bar and separate salary was economic. Married female teachers were simply an easy target for retrenchment and harsh economic discrimination, which is evident in the fact that the board continued to present motions requiring forced reductions of pay even though these reductions would not be equally shared nor evenly applied to all teachers. On April 18, 1932 Thomas W. Dugan placed a motion for a full marriage bar into the board meeting minutes.<sup>133</sup>

The first marriage bar resolution began by expressing deep concern with the economic circumstances facing the country and stated, “Awarding contracts to those teachers whose financial circumstances and responsibilities are the most distressing, provided that their fitness and qualifications are equal.” The resolution goes on to say “that all women now teaching in the Huntington schools and whose husbands are also employed as teachers in the Huntington schools should be dropped from the teaching staff together with all other married women teachers who are not dependent upon their salary as teachers for a living but who have other

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<sup>131</sup> Minutes of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. September 22, 1931.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., April 18, 1932.

ample means of support.”<sup>134</sup> What constituted a “living” or “ample means of support” was left undefined. The ambiguity of these policies reflects the elastic state laws, which offered little protection to married female teachers. As seen in the previous chapter, state court decisions often sided with school boards if contracts included board policies on marriage and salary schedules according to marital status.

Even though this resolution was proposed, it did not pass because of President A.H. Frankel and two minority board members’ fervent opposition to the marriage bar. Frankel wrote a letter of objection to the board that was included in the minutes the same day that the board majority voted for the separate salary schedules. He acknowledged the tax burden on the public and the larger economic crisis forcing the school board to reduce its staff. However, firing all married women regardless of efficiency and qualification would upset the school system and the education of the children. President Frankel stated that Superintendent Rice should make the final decisions on termination of teachers based solely on efficiency after direct observation.<sup>135</sup> Frankel’s adamant support for retaining efficient teachers rather than arbitrary termination due to marital status presents the complicated elements that created the marriage bars that were in direct conflict with the merit system.

The Huntington marriage bar parallels the wording of the marriage clause within the 1932 Economy Act, the passage of which exponentially increased the number of marriage bars in states the following three years.<sup>136</sup> On May 16, 1932, the Herald Dispatch printed two front

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> “To Amend Married Person Clause, House of Representatives Committee on the Civil Service,” April 18, 1935, 22.

page parallel articles. The first alluded to the National Women's Party helping married female government employees obtain legal divorces in order to keep their employment. The second article reported on the school board's terminations and subsequent inner turmoil due to the separate and unequal salary schedules.<sup>137</sup> These parallel articles were not a coincidence as married women were the target of economic discrimination on the national and local level. The national debate on middle-class, married women and the corresponding local battles over experience, merit, and efficiency versus a married woman's economic independence from home and family reflected a culture uncomfortable with working, middle-class wives.

In order to foster additional savings, the majority motioned to create a new salary schedule based on sex, marital status, and current income. Grouped into class A were men and single women who faced graduated pay cuts depending on individual salary. Class B applied only to married women teachers. Mandatory pay cuts were significantly uneven between the classes and reflected only current salaries. Absent from the separate salary schedules were educational achievement and years of experience. Merit and efficiency, which were both highlighted in the single salary schedule, were no longer included in the new separate salary schedules. The Huntington Independent District Board of Education May 9, 1932 minutes read:

Schedule B applying to the salaries of married women teachers retained in the system on the grounds that they have stated that their husbands' income has been so reduced or that their financial situation is otherwise such that their removal from the school system would result in serious hardship and financial distress to themselves and their family.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> *Huntington Herald Dispatch*, May 16 1932, 1.

<sup>138</sup> Minutes of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. May 9, 1932.

This part of the meeting minutes was not part of the full marriage bar proposed by board member Dugan on April 18, 1932; however, it is clear evidence of economic discrimination based on gender and marital status. Those women retained in the school system due to financial need incurred a separate salary schedule dramatically reducing their pay. Unmarried men and single women without dependents were not subject to discriminatory marriage bars or salary schedules. Board members and the Huntington citizens who supported them assumed that married women teachers were and should be economically dependent on their husbands. Assessing the view point of Huntington's citizens on the subject of married women teachers is difficult to ascertain. However, as early as May 1932 school board meeting visitors such as A.F. Thompson requested that all married women teachers be discharged. Further, petitions by single unemployed female teachers who requested that vacancies be made available to them through the termination of married women teachers by Perry began in May and continued throughout 1932.<sup>139</sup> Despite the increased number of women obtaining higher education and political freedoms won, full economic independence ended for middle-class women upon marriage. School boards like Huntington Independent Board of Education that did not already have marriage bars still used the premise as justification to pay their married teachers less.

Even though all of the teachers regardless of salary schedule received pay cuts, these reductions were not even. Married women who retained their positions received less pay and significant pay cuts. Listed in the following tables are the salary schedules for both A and B according to the May 9, 1932 Huntington Independent District Board of Education minutes.

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<b>Schedule 'A'</b>		<b>Schedule 'B'</b>	
<u>Present Salary</u>	<u>Percentage of reduction</u>	<u>Present Salary</u>	<u>Percentage of reduction</u>
4,000.00 or more	20%	1,890.00 or more	33 ½%
2,400.00 and < 4,000.00	18%	1,701.00 and < 1,890.00	32%
2,200.00 and < 2,400.00	17%	1,621.00 and < 1701.00	31%
2,000.00 and < 2,200.00	16%	1500.00 and < 1,621.00	30%
1,800.00 and < 2,000.00	14%	1401.00 and < 1,500.00	28%
1,600.00 and < 1,800.00	13%	1,351.00 and < 1,401.00	27%
1,351.00 and < 1,600.00	11%	1,306.00 and < 1,351.00	26%
1,200.00 and < 1,351.00	8%	1,190.00 and < 1,306.00	25%
1,050.00 and < 1,200.00	6%		

*Source:* Data from Minutes of Huntington Independent District Board of Education May 9, 1932.

When the board accepted this policy, the meeting began the first of several petitions by unmarried, unemployed women who requested the board create more vacancies. At this same meeting, a resolution was adopted and resolved creating two distinct classes of teachers known as class A and class B. The first class would consist of men regardless of marriage status and single women. The second class would consist of married women. Regardless of experience, education, or efficiency, the two classes would be paid dramatically different wages. In fact, the wages were so low for married women in the second class that it had to be amended May 26, 1932 because the pay was lower than state law permitted.<sup>140</sup> Although President Frankel

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

was deeply against this measure, it did pass. Huntington's local newspaper, *The Herald Dispatch* reported on the infighting within the school board, pay reductions, and layoffs.

According to the new salary schedules, married women had their salaries cut by an average of 11% more than men and single women. The economic discrimination increases as married women's salaries increased. Due to an amendment on May 26, 1932, a married woman entered into schedule A only if:

She can furnish proof to the satisfaction of the Superintendent that her husband is totally and permanently disabled and incapacitated... or any woman who, although legally married, has been separated from her husband for at least one year last past, and is therefore solely dependent upon her own income for support, is regarded as an unmarried woman.<sup>141</sup>

The significance of this amendment is that the economic discrimination against married women was tied directly to traditional gendered roles where husbands provided support for middle-class wives. Though this is one element of the complex nature of marriage bars and related economic discrimination, it was not the sole cause. Prior to 1932 the salary schedule was uniform for both genders, based exclusively on years of experience, grade level taught, and educational degree obtained. Only after the reduction of salaries in the 1931 school year and the economic crisis continued to reduce the property tax revenue for the school system did five of the board members specifically target married women for dismissal and for a much higher salary reduction. The dismissals and the higher percentage of salary cuts were a direct result of elected officials who under the burden to raise taxes to increase revenue or reduce positions found a socially acceptable way to fire teachers. The precedent of a merit based salary

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<sup>141</sup> Minutes of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. May 9, 1932.

schedule in Huntington complicated the existing social hostility to career wives. However, the President of the school board, two board members, and the Superintendent continued to argue against the economic discrimination of married women by using similar arguments found in opponents of Section 213.

The main argument against Section 213 and against the marriage bars and separate salary schedules in Huntington were based on merit. If reductions in employees needed to take place, then those judgments should be based exclusively on the merit of the individual rather than the perceived need of employment, marital status, or any other extenuating circumstance connected to the employee. This type of retrenchment, it was argued, would benefit the institution by retaining those who were most efficient at their jobs. Thus, an institution would benefit by retaining those who were most efficient at their jobs. These sentiments were echoed in President Frankel's letter to the School Board, and the two other minority board members' public remarks regarding the salary schedules. The minority School Board members found support in Central Labor Union who petitioned the board to base any retrenchment decisions on merit.<sup>142</sup>

These sentiments reflect the main argument that New York Representative Emanuel Celler, who introduced H.R. 5051 legislation to nullify Section 213, used to argue against discriminatory legislation. Both Celler and Frankel argued on the grounds of merit. To Celler,

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid. May 23, 1932.

Section 213 was discriminatory because it focused on the marital status of female workers rather than job competency.<sup>143</sup>

Newspaper reports reflect the heated battle within the school board. Beginning May 9, 1932, the newspaper reported that the school board would meet behind closed doors to decide which teachers would be retained and upon what grounds. The next morning the *Herald Dispatch* announced that 41 employees would not be retained. Of these, 35 were teachers and of those 21 were married women.<sup>144</sup> The following month, the *Herald Dispatch* reported on the controversy surrounding the layoffs. Much of the controversy centered on the retainment of school board members' wives and relatives. President Frankel threatened to go to the legislature to dissolve the current board claiming the board members had not fired their own wives and relatives.<sup>145</sup> School Board members hiring relatives was in violation of a school board policy enacted February 9, 1931 that specifically prohibited board members from hiring relatives.<sup>146</sup> Indeed, both board members' wives were safe from termination because married women teachers were the only school employees directly targeted by marriage bars, termination, and incrementally higher reductions of salaries. The termination or salary reduction on the grounds of marital status for school clerks, ground keepers, and janitors are not mentioned in any surviving historical documents for Huntington Independent District Board of Education or any other school board records observed in primary or secondary sources. Married women working for pay did not appear to agitate the majority members unless those

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<sup>143</sup> To Amend Married Person's Clause, House of Representatives Committee on the Civil Service Washington D.C. April 18, 1935, 1.

<sup>144</sup> "Name Rice, Drop 41 Teachers," *Huntington Herald Dispatch* 10 May 1932. p. 1.

<sup>145</sup> "Special Meet To Hear Ouster Plea Tonight," *Huntington Herald Dispatch* May 12 1932, 1.

<sup>146</sup> Minutes of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. February 9, 1932.

women were employed as teachers. The difference between the majority board members' wives who worked as school clerks and the married teachers whose careers were threatened because of their marital status is a combination of education and pay. All teachers with a bachelor's degree in Huntington, under the 1931 salary schedule, earned an annual salary of at least \$1,200.00.<sup>147</sup> The annual average income in the United States during 1932 was \$1,120.00.<sup>148</sup> College-educated women in the teaching profession earned an income that could support themselves and dependents. Married teaching wives, as opposed to clerks, could threaten the economic supremacy of the male bread winner and the traditional family patriarchy.

Community outrage on the school board split increased when, in June, the investigating Attorney General Howard B. Lee discovered a secret contract between the five majority board members signed February 25, 1932 in which the majority board members agreed to vote for, among many other things, the termination of all married teachers where possible, implementation of separate salary schedules for retained married women, and the termination of all pregnant teachers.<sup>149</sup> The discovery of this pact was deemed illegal by Attorney General Lee; however, he stated that the marriage bar within teacher contracts and separate salary schedules were legal under the current West Virginia state law.<sup>150</sup> The majority board members argued that they secretly signed the pact in order to specifically target married women teachers for termination in order to prevent an increase in taxes on the community.

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<sup>147</sup> Minutes of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. March 18, 1931.

<sup>148</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970 Part 1*. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 164.

<sup>149</sup> "Lee Rules Majority Pact Unlawful," *Huntington Herald Dispatch* June 13, 1932, 1.

<sup>150</sup> "Pact Breaks as Rice is Voted," *Huntington Herald Dispatch* May 14 1932, 1.

The majority board members thought they were increasing their political capital by focusing on lower taxes and firing married women teachers. This action backfired not because marriage bars or the separate salary schedules were illegal, in the manner in which the board members tried to implement them. The proposed marriage bar and separate salary schedule were not the center of the controversy. The secret pact, hiring of board members' wives, and determining who was to be fired behind closed doors and without the Superintendent all added to the community outrage.

Frankel demanded the termination of the majority board members' wives and relatives before he would sign any contracts for the upcoming school year and actively encouraged their impeachment. The school board's fraction threatened the continuation of the school system. Frankel read a prepared statement in which he asked that all 41 terminated teachers be rehired and that Superintendent Rice should decide those fired "even if it was 150" teachers.<sup>151</sup> Frankel insisted throughout subsequent board meetings that spring that the rift between the members resulted because the 41 teachers selected for termination occurred without Superintendent Rice's input. Further, these selections did not consider what was best for the students and school system. Finally, the majority members targeted married teachers but did not fire their own wives, who worked as clerks for the school, or board member Cavendish's sister who was the last teacher hired yet not considered for termination by the majority board members.

The means by which the majority board members selected teachers for termination was unclear in the newspaper articles. However, the Minutes of Huntington Independent District

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<sup>151</sup> "Ouster Threats are Given Voice at Board Meeting," *Huntington Herald Dispatch* May 13 1932, 3.

Board of Education leave little ambiguity about whom the majority members intended to target for termination. A marriage bar resolution passed by the majority members in objection to the President Frankel and the two minority board members McClane and Alexander. The majority members again passed a resolution to create separate salary schedules for married women who could not prove that their husbands were completely and permanently incapable of supporting them. The motions to end leave for pregnant married teachers, the marriage bar, and separate salary schedules all discriminate against married women teachers. The fact that the majority members released a statement in the newspaper distancing themselves from their original stance against married teachers points to the amount of public pressure by the minority members, labor unions, and friends of those 41 teachers selected for termination. Even so, according to the 1932 Minutes of Huntington Independent District Board of Education the board did not reverse its decision. The 41 teachers selected for termination and the separate salary schedules remained in effect until the Independent School Board Districts in Cabell County combined in the following year.<sup>152</sup>

As the Depression continued, the newly established Cabell County Board of Education passed a resolution on August 15, 1934, stating that a teacher must go on leave when she became 6 months pregnant and remain on leave for at least one year before she could reapply for reemployment. This resolution is significant for two main reasons. First, married women teachers found employment in Huntington prior to 1934. Second, the school board considered these women for employment after the birth of a child. The length of time that Huntington

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<sup>152</sup> Marie Nelson Lewis, "An Historical Survey of the Public Schools of Cabell County, West Virginia," (Master's thesis, Marshall College, 1944), 13-17.

included separate salary schedules is difficult to judge from the historical data available.

However, hostility toward married teachers eased as historian, Marie Nelson Lewis states,

“At the present time, 1944, the board of education (Cabell County) the board of education is more liberal in its consideration of sex among teachers. About five-sixths of the 691 teachers at the present time are women. Approximately one-half of the women are married.”<sup>153</sup>

The hostility toward married female teachers ebbed for many reasons. Largely this lessening occurred due to America’s entrance into World War II. Much as with World War I when a shortage of teachers led to married women lengthening their careers beyond marriage, World War II ended the severe economic competition for employment and retrenchment. The complex social hostility to career wives still existed, but the demand for quality teachers enabled married women to increase their numbers in the teaching profession.

By segregating the teachers into two salary classes, the Huntington Independent District Board of Education was able to retain the talented, experienced married teachers that made up its staff while simultaneously lowering their overall cost by consistently paying them less. This economic discrimination was rooted in the assumption that women did not have economic responsibilities. Whether a married woman was supporting her parents or younger siblings was rarely a consideration. More unusual, single women, regardless of whether they were living at home or had dependents, were not subject to the same kind of legal discrimination as married women. If, as the legislature and public rhetoric suggests is true that jobs should be given out to those most economically in need, then school board members needed to target single men and women with no dependents for economic discrimination. This type of economic

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 246.

discrimination did not occur in Huntington, or any other school systems I studied across the country.

Marriage bars focused on married, college-educated, middle-class white women in the teaching profession when severe economic retrenchment forced school boards to find socially acceptable means to reduce their teaching staff during the Depression. The case study of the Huntington Independent School Board demonstrates the debate between hiring and retaining married women professionals because of merit or creating more openings for men and single women society perceived needed the positions more. Social hostility to career wives-- specifically teachers-- and the need for drastic reduction in school costs created justification to economically discriminate against married female teachers. The teaching profession was a career open to women because of their natural feminine qualities. However, within the teaching profession women were systematically discriminated against through the intense use of marriage bars. Marriage bars were more open, prolific, and severe in the teaching profession than any other career open to middle-class educated women because of social pressure to reinforce men's socioeconomic status and power in the community and family, combined with increased economic competition within the field.

## CONCLUSION

In the beginning of the twentieth century, white middle-class American women experienced increased education and legal and social freedoms. Each of these new freedoms eroded traditional male authority in a highly gender-stratified society. These new-found possibilities led to increased optimism expressed by college women in the 1920s. This optimism eroded as a backlash against married, middle-class women spread. This backlash reached its zenith when economic hardship due to chronic unemployment and heightened competition for jobs led to legislative bars excluding married women from employment as teachers. The complexities of marriage bars due to a myriad of intense social and economic pressures reflect the complicated elements of women's economic history. Simplistic interpretations of why marriage bars occurred in the teaching profession and increased dramatically damage the overall understanding of women's history.

Marriage bars in the teaching profession are important to understanding the economic discrimination against educated, middle-class white women as a group, even in a feminized career such as teaching. Marriage bars were more severe in the teaching profession than any other career open to middle-class educated women because of social pressure to reinforce men's socioeconomic status and power in the community and family combined with increased economic competition within the field. Specifically, they illustrate the legislative reaction to the perceived threat to male authority within the home. The traditional family patriarchy, including head of household husbands who acted as the sole breadwinner for dependent wife and children, were directly challenged by a married woman who earned enough money to be economically independent and support dependents of her own. Over the course of the

Depression competition for employment became acute. The combination of competition for jobs and the need for socially acceptable means of retrenchment led to increased marriage bars. Women holding public positions and therefore subject to direct legislative authority became the scapegoats for the nation's economic woes.

This work demonstrates why women were initially encouraged to enter into the teaching profession during the nineteenth century, only to be systematically barred from this career upon entering into a marriage contract. In order to understand the importance of marriage bars against married teachers in the twentieth century, this work illustrates how social tensions combined with economic competition and insecurity during the Depression led to increasing economic discrimination. The first chapter demonstrates that the increased marriage bars were the result of gradual political and social gains by women over the early twentieth century in combination with the looming economic crisis of the Depression. The most significant effect of these gains was the direct challenge to the family patriarchy in which the male bread winner utilized his economic power as authority over dependent wife and children.<sup>154</sup> In the second chapter, legislative ambiguities surrounding marriage bars are explored.

The legal ambiguities of marriage bars in the decades leading up to the Depression created a series of hurdles for teaching wives when economic turmoil and social hostility dramatically increased during the 1930s. In the absence of consistent state laws protecting a married woman's right to employment, local school boards hired and fired at will, largely protected by teaching contracts that included discriminatory language against married female

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<sup>154</sup> Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 87.

teachers. This historical concept is significant because, during the Depression, an epidemic of lost taxes increased pressure on school boards to find socially acceptable means of retrenchment while providing employment opportunities men and single women.

Finally, chapter three provides a case study in Huntington, West Virginia that demonstrates how the social hostility covered in chapter one and the legal ambiguities of chapter two created an atmosphere of economic discrimination against middle-class, educated working women. The Huntington Independent District Board of Education illustrates, even when a full marriage bar policy is not enacted, how economic discrimination against married teachers legally occurred and was largely justified by the legality of marriage bars. Therefore, marriage bars themselves acted to discriminate against married female teachers and also led to further discrimination against those married women teachers who managed to find employment. Marriage bars acted as a funnel system that siphoned off experienced teachers who chose to marry and qualified for higher pay under most single school salary schedules. Marriage bars systematically enabled school boards to pay retained married women less because of the prevalence and legality of policies that encouraged economic discrimination.

The collective effect of this study is to uncover the discrimination that specifically aimed at economically independent and educationally privileged professional married women. Of this group, teachers suffered under the most prolific and severe marriage bars. This study highlights when and why marriage bars in the teaching profession occurred and the negative effects on college-educated women's perceptions of combining career and family. Further, this

study provides insight into why married women's entrance into professions was protracted in the following decades.<sup>155</sup>

The consequences of economic discrimination against married women teachers are clear. First, by the early twentieth century, the teaching profession was feminized, offering educated women an opportunity at a socially acceptable and celebrated position. However, increased marriage bars and economic discrimination led to increased pessimism among college women about combining career and family. This deflation of possibilities is evident in a survey of college women in the 1920s who were optimistic about combining career and family, but by 1940 answered negatively when asked if there was hope for having both a career and family.<sup>156</sup> It is this pessimism, combined with the economic discrimination and social hostility to working married women that ultimately led to a decrease of middle-class educated white women from entering and remaining within the teaching profession.

Further, marriage bars are vital to understanding how public institutions undercut the economic independence of married women. Women have always worked both in and outside of their homes for profit. Factories employed working class women from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. However these women were separated into highly sex-segregated work that paid very little. All teachers with a bachelor's degree in Huntington, under the 1931 salary schedule, earned an annual salary of at least \$1,200.00.<sup>157</sup> The annual average income in the

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<sup>155</sup> Claudia Goldin, *Marriage Bars: "Discrimination against Married Women Workers from the 1920s-1950s,"* in *Favorites of Fortune* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 511-536.

<sup>156</sup> Barbara, Solomon. *In the Company of Educated Women*. (London: Yale University Press, 1985), 182-184.

<sup>157</sup> Minutes of Huntington Independent District Board of Education. March 18, 1931.

United States during 1932 was \$1,120.00.<sup>158</sup> College educated women in the teaching profession earned an income that could support themselves and dependents. Marriage bars did not target married women clerks, or janitors; rather, these policies sought to restrict educated, middle-class women's economic independence, reinforcing the male patriarchy within the family.

This project examined the importance of marriage bars in the teaching profession as they affected career opportunities for college-educated, middle-class white women in the early twentieth century. Further, married women teachers' economic independence was undercut by discriminatory legislation and policies that barred them from progressing into tenure and higher pay. Social hostility combined with economic competition and insecurity to create an atmosphere in which married women professionals were targeted for economic discrimination. Despite choosing a career path that was socially acceptable for women to enter, married women teachers were demonized for taking away positions from men and single women as well as ignoring their own family and home.

Popular understanding of married women's entrance into the workforce focuses on the working class, whose numbers grew during the decades directly following WWII. This research illustrates that college-educated, middle-class white women were entering into the professions in increasing numbers since the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>159</sup> Married women teachers increasingly sought to keep their careers and their families, despite facing increasing marriage bars and social hostility. Understanding when and why marriage bars occurred helps

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<sup>158</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970 Part 1*. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 164.

<sup>159</sup> Patricia Carter, *Everybody's Paid But the Teacher* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 2002), 99.

explain the overall economic discrimination that all working women experienced in the twentieth century.

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### **Education**

Master's in History, Marshall University, Huntington West Virginia, December 2010.

Master Library Science, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, May 2006.

Bachelor of Science in History, with research emphasis, Kansas State University, Manhattan Kansas, December 2001.

### **Experience**

Marshall University Information Technology, One John Marshall Drive, Huntington, West Virginia 25755. (304)-696-3627

Current Position

**Marshall University Libraries, Marshall University, Huntington, WV, Reference Department, August 2006 - current, Digital/Instruction/Reference Librarian**

- Certified Wimba Trainer
- Developed modules, as part of a team effort, for new student seminar courses in BlackBoard. Created Captivate screen captures, wrote scripts and storyboards with colleagues.
- Provided in-depth library instruction to students as an embedded librarian in four classes. This role required curriculum collaboration with professors and colleagues.
- Taught numerous library orientation and tours to incoming freshmen.
- Presented Wimba software to Marshall University professor in numerous training sessions.
- Coordinate the library instruction/user education program for the Marshall University Libraries.
- Maintain statistics of library instruction sessions on a monthly and yearly basis.

- Teach library instruction sessions offered by the libraries user education program.
- Prepare handouts, subject guides, and instructional modules for library instruction sessions.
- Assist in developing and conducting workshops for MU faculty, staff, students, and community members on library instruction.
- Created and updated the Research Guide webpages for Women's Studies, History, Graduate Students and Art insuring that all links, print, and virtual material were up to date.
- Market the library's services through library instruction classes, New Faculty seminars, Marshall University Open Houses, and at the reference desk. I advocate library services through my embedded and library drop-in sessions and tours.
- Created and maintained numerous online Information Literacy modules using Captivate 4.0, including an interactive library tour.
- Assist in the hiring, training, supervision, and scheduling of graduate and undergraduate student workers in the Reference Department.
- Participate in the Reference Desk rotation, assisting students and faculty with their reference needs.
- Assist library colleagues with new and ongoing information literacy initiatives, instruction modules, and digital content project.
- Serve on library and campus wide committees: University Functions, UNI/HON 101 Advisory Board, Digital Content Management Committee, Information Literacy Committee, COM Subcommittee for students with disabilities, and Drinko Art Acquisitions Committee.
- Participate actively in the scholarly community by attending all New Faculty Seminars and Teaching Excellence Lectures.
- Participate actively in the scholarly community by attending Teaching Excellence Lectures and Final Cut Training.

**Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, Registrar's Office,  
September 2004 – May 2006, Office of the Registration Assistant Internship**

- Organized, prepared and processed over 477 images of Walker Evans portfolio entitled 'African Negro Art.' Created the accession record, condition report and skeletal records for the portfolio plus all data entry into the collection catalog database (InMagic).
- Created and checked condition reports for both incoming and outgoing exhibitions.
- Disassembled and unpacked crates of exhibition artworks.
- Accessioned rare and antique books and completed full records and condition reports on each within each volume.
- Unpacked and compiled inventories for newly arrived art collections.
- Worked collaboratively with registration staff and students.

- Provided backup assistance as needed for projects and shipments.

**Center for Creative Photography, Research Center and Archives, June 2005 – May 2006, Archive Student Assistant**

- Verified and updated finding aids on various 20<sup>th</sup> century photographers, including Ansel Adams and the Center's internal archive collection.
- Created exhibition display of original Ansel Adams's stamp collection for public viewing.
- Assisted external researchers; monitored Research Center reading room.
- Completed the re-housing and re-boxing of numerous archival materials.
- Aided in the reorganization of shelved items.
- Arrangement and description of more than 31 linear feet of archive material including exhibition, book projects, and commercial work files.
- Conducted research to answer reference inquiries.
- Paged and refilled archival materials for researchers.
- Maintained accurate records of materials used by researchers.
- Preservation photocopying for over 69 linear feet of Ansel Adam's archive for the grant project entitled Save America's Treasures.

**Center for Creative Photography, Office of Rights and Reproduction, August 2005 – May 2006 Scanning Student Assistant Worker**

- Scanned several hundred artists' photographs and archive objects with Betterlight 4x5 Super 6K back.
- Applied imaging standards established by Center staff to obtain publication quality masters.
- Optimized image files using Adobe PhotoShop, including cropping, retouching and resizing for presentation and linking to the collection database.
- Assisted in the handling of works of art in preparation for scanning

**Riley County Historical Society, Manhattan, Kansas, January-May 2001, Internship**

- Assistant to Curator while handling and categorizing artifacts.
- Assistant to Archivist in preventive maintenance and restoration.

- Accumulation of an exhaustive research paper and project involving the Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps organizations of the nineteen thirties and forties.
- Data entry of all card catalogue into new computer system.

### **Further Experience**

#### **Tucson Cooperative Warehouse/ShopNatural January 2004 -October 2004, Customer Service Representative**

- Maintained client relations by utilizing diplomatic customer service skills.
- Resolved client challenges through detailed evaluation and final reconciliation.
- Prepared and processed incoming orders from both retail and buying clubs.
- Retrieved and updated client information quickly and efficiently.
- Resolved client credit and billing concerns exponentially.

#### **Fred Pryor Seminars/CareerTrack Training, Division of Park University Enterprises Inc, March 2002- July 2003 Sales Support Specialist**

- Aided in the selling and facilitation of custom on-site adult educational seminars within the United States and Canada.
- Acted as primary liaison and maintained open lines of communication between inter-department staff, training consultants, outside vendors, and management staff.
- Critiqued and researched direct shipping vendor's invoices in order to assure accuracy.
- Developed and wrote an extensive sales support manual, detailing specific instructions on the operations of the on-site seminar department.

### **Professional Activities**

#### **Courses Developed**

PLT 280-Public Library Marketing

FYS 100-First Year Seminar

#### **Courses Taught**

PLT 235- Advanced Reference Skills

FYS100-First Year Seminar

## **Publications**

Bean, Teresa, and Sabrina Thomas. "Being Like Both: Library Instruction Methods that Outshine the One-Shot." *Public Services Quarterly* 6 (2010): 237-249. Print

## **Presentations (2006-2009)**

- *Marriage or Career: Economic Discrimination Against Married Teachers in the Depression* for the Women of Marshall Series at Marshall University, Huntington WV, March 16, 2010.
- *Weaving an Embedded Librarian into the Tapestry of Information Literacy* with Beverly Cooper and Nikki Thacker at the WVTSOL Conference in Charleston, WV, March 7, 2009.
- *Digital Interaction: Infusing Learning Objects into Information Literacy* at the WVLA Conference in Snowshoe, WV, October 2, 2009.

*Digital Learning Team: Meeting Students on Their Turf* with Floyd Csir, at the West Virginia Library Association conference in White Sulphur Springs, WV, December 4, 2008.

*Digital Salsa: Spicing Up Library Instruction With Online Tutorials and Videos*, West Virginia Higher Education Technology Conference presentation with Floyd Csir, October 1, 2008.

*Web 2.0 Seminar for Teachers: Hands-on Session* with Floyd Csir, Christine Lewis, & Dr. Monica Brooks, Appalachian Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators Third Annual Conference, Huntington, WV, November 2, 2007

*Millennial's Work Right Out of the Box: Can Older Models Upgrade to Librarian 2.0*, with Dr. Monica Brooks, for the spring 2007 meeting of the Western Pennsylvania/West Virginia regional chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries, La Roche College, Pittsburgh, PA, June 1, 2007.

*Upgrade Your Hard Drive to Librarian 2.0* with Dr. Monica Brooks, for the West Virginia Library Association (WVLA) fall conference, Morgantown, WV, October 1-2, 2007

## **Retention, Professional, & Faculty Development Participation**

*Admissions and Recruitment Open House and Orientation Events, 2008-10, exhibitor.*

*New Full-time & Adjunct Faculty Orientation, August 2007 and 2010 - presenter.*

*Admissions and Recruitment Open House, Undecided Majors Expo, and Orientation Events, 2007, exhibitor.*

*Information Literacy: Best Practices in Undergraduate Education, workshop, co-sponsored by ACRL and the TLT Group, December 2008*

## **Conference Participation**

- 2009 WVLA Conference-presenter
- 2009 Women's Studies Student Conference
- 2009 WVTESOL Conference-presenter
- 2008 Attended eHRAF database training
- 2008 Attended Equella webinar
- 2007 WVLA Conference: Strength Through Change
- Institute for Information Literacy Assessment of College and Research Literacy Immersion
- 2007 Teacher Track Program Spring 2007 meeting of the Western Pennsylvania/West Virginia regional chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries
- 2007 Attended E-Portfolio Presentation by Academic Affairs
- 2007 Attended ACRL/TLT Group online seminar called "Information Literacy and Assessment"
- 2007 Attended ArtStor training
- Attended training titled "Teaching with Technology; Enhancing Your Effectiveness in the Classroom and Online"

## **Computer Skills**

- BlackBoard course instructional design experience
- Microsoft Office proficiency
- Captivate 4.0
- PB Wiki
- Certified Wimba Trainer

## **University and Community Service**

- Multiple Sclerosis Walk, Kansas City Kansas 2008
- Technical Support, iSkills (Information and Communication Literacy) Assessment for students on August 29, October 6, and October 9-10, 2008
- Special Library Association Vice-President and Treasurer Fall 2005.
- American Library Association Program Manager Fall 2005.
- Presented paper entitled 'Preservation of Electronic Correspondence' at the First Annual SIRLS Graduate Student Symposium.
- Boys and Girls Club of America volunteer and advocate.

## **Professional Affiliations**

- Co-Chair Marshall University Libraries Marketing Committee 2007
- Chair of Drinko Core Instructors Committee
- Member COM Subcommittee on Students with Disabilities
- Member of Information Literacy Committee
- Member First Year Seminar Faculty Development Institute
- Member of Drinko Art Committee
- Member: American Library Association
- Member: Special Library Association
- Member: Society of American Archivists
- Member: Association of College and Research Libraries
- Member: West Virginia Library Association

## **Ad hoc University Committee or Task Force**

- Quality of Faculty Work Life Ad Hoc Committee 2010

- Marshall University Libraries Statistics Ad Hoc Committee 2010
- Member of Assessment Day Ad hoc Committee 2007
- One Book Marshall Committee 2007