CHANGES IN FERTILITY BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS DURING 1940–1950

CLYDE V. KISER[1]

THAT spectacular increases in the birth rate in this country have occurred since 1940 is well known. However, there have been no clear-cut and unequivocal answers to such questions as (a) the significance of the increase in birth rates to size of completed family, (b) the incidence of the increase by color, age, and socio-economic status, (c) the impact of the increased birth rate on patterns of differential fertility, (d) the trend of marriage rates by socio-economic status, and (e) the joint impact of trends in marriage rates and trends in marital fertility on the pattern of differential fertility of all women regardless of marital status.

The previously existing data on recent trends in fertility differentials in this country have been based in large part on the Current Population Survey.[2] In 1947 and for several years thereafter the Bureau of the Census published releases concerning fertility ratios according to such indices of socio-economic status as education of the woman, tenure and rental value of the home, and occupation of the husband. Although they filled a distinct need, these data had two main deficiencies: (a) because of limited size of samples these data could not be subdivided sufficiently for adequate analysis, (b) because they are affected by timing of births, and by mortality and place of residence of children, the fertility ratios are not very adequate indices of lifetime fertility. This deficiency is not present

[1] From The Milbank Memorial Fund. This is a preliminary report on a section of data which will be treated in more detail in a forthcoming 1950 Census monograph on fertility being prepared by the present author, P. K. Whelpton, and Wilson H. Grabill.

[2] U. S. Bureau of the Census: *Current Population Reports*—Population Characteristics, Series P-20, No. 18, June 30, 1948; Series P-20, No. 27, February 3, 1950; Series P-20, No. 46, December 31, 1953.

Kiser, Clyde V.: Fertility Trends and Differentials in the United States. *Journal of the American Statistical Association,* 47, No. 257, March 1952, pp. 25–48.

Westoff, Charles F.: Differential Fertility in the United States: 1900 to 1952. *American Sociological Review,* 19, No. 5, October, 1954, pp. 549–561.

in Current Population Survey data relating to 1952 and 1954 based upon the total number of children ever born but again the samples are too small to permit close analysis.

Although the 1950 Census data regarding children ever born are less recent than those just mentioned, they are based upon more adequate samples. The delay in the issuance of 1950 Census data on differential fertility by socio-economic status has been due largely to lack of funds for the tabulations. The original plan for rather detailed tabulations, including some by duration of marriage interval, had to be abandoned. Through the financial assistance of The Population Council and the Milbank Memorial Fund, some tabulations of the 1950 Census data were made, including those on children ever born and own children under 5 in relation to residence, age, color, marital status, education of the wife, and occupation of the husband. The basic tables have been published recently as a special report of the Bureau of the Census.[3]

The present paper gives a preview of some of the 1940–1950 changes in fertility by socio-economic status and of their effects upon patterns of differential fertility. It does not attempt to answer many of the questions posed in the first paragraph. Neither will it be concerned much with efforts to interpret existing trends in fertility and fertility differentials. These more detailed matters will be considered in the Census monograph on fertility.

Nature of the Data. In the 1950 Census a question "How many children has she ever borne, not counting stillbirths?" was asked of a 3.33 per cent sample of ever-married women. Although it was restricted to a small sample, the question was by no means an innovation. A similar question was asked in the 1940 Census of a 5 per cent sample of ever-married women. It was asked of all ever-married women in the Censuses of 1890, 1900, and 1910.

Although the question on total number of children ever born

[3] United States Bureau of the Census: FERTILITY, Special Report, P-E No. 5C, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1955, 184 pp.

first appeared in the 1890 Census, the data remained unused on the original enumeration schedules. Indeed, it was not until the late 'twenties that the data from the 1900 and 1910 schedules were transcribed for studies of differential fertility. In 1928 a sample of records was extracted from the 1910 Census for about 100,000 urban and rural native-white married women living in Northern and Western states. This was done through a cooperative arrangement of the Census Bureau and the Milbank Memorial Fund and it resulted in the study by Sydenstricker and Notestein "Differential Fertility According to Social Class," published in the March, 1930, issue of the *Journal of the American Statistical Association.* Somewhat later, analogous materials were secured from the 1900 Census for selected samples of married women living in the East North Central states. This was done largely through the stimulus of Professor W. F. Ogburn who was then director of the President's (Hoover's) Research Committee on Recent Social Trends. During the 'forties the Census Bureau tabulated the data for samples from the 1910 Census for comparisons with 1940 and published a fine series of tabulations on various aspects of differential fertility in 1940 and 1910.[4]

Many students of population have hoped that the fertility data collected in the 1950 Census could be tabulated in as much detail as were those for 1910 and 1940. Indeed there were suggestions for some much more refined tabulations involving such matters as order of birth, interval between marriage and

[4] United States Bureau of the Census: POPULATION, DIFFERENTIAL FERTILITY, 1940 AND 1910, FERTILITY BY STATES AND LARGE CITIES. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1943, 281 pp.

————: POPULATION, DIFFERENTIAL FERTILITY, 1940 AND 1910, STANDARDIZED FERTILITY RATES AND REPRODUCTION RATES. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1944, 40 pp.

————: POPULATION, DIFFERENTIAL FERTILITY, 1940 AND 1910, WOMEN BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OLD. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1945, 265 pp.

————: POPULATION, DIFFERENTIAL FERTILITY, 1940 AND 1910, WOMEN BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1945, 410 pp.

United States Bureau of the Census: POPULATION, DIFFERENTIAL FERTILITY, 1940 AND 1910. FERTILITY BY DURATION OF MARRIAGE. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1947, 338 pp.

first birth and between successive births, age of woman in single years, and duration of marriage in single years. It was argued that not until more refined data are available could the significance of the recent increases in fertility be assessed adequately. It was believed by some that more refined fertility data would be needed for intelligent approaches to questions of future population growth. As expected, however, there were also demands from other quarters for tabulations of other types of data. Although the "minimum tabulations" of fertility data that were finally made are far from ideal, they do provide the bases for significant advances in our knowledge of fertility trends and differentials within this country.

Percentage Changes in Fertility Rates During 1940–1950, By Age, Marital Status, Color, and Residence. This topic will be treated in full in the forthcoming monograph. However, since the variables of age, color, and residence must be considered in the discussion of trends in differential fertility by socioeconomic status, a brief treatment of the 1940–1950 trends in fertility by the broader demographic factors is given for purposes of interpretation.

Age and Marital Status. For a quick grasp of the overall trends in fertility during 1940–1950 by age and marital status, skeleton figures from the Bureau of the Census are presented in Table 1. The data give for 1940 and 1950 by age of the woman (a) number of children ever born per 1,000 women and per 1,000 ever-married women and (b) number of own children under 5 years of age per 1,000 women and ever-married women.

In the first place, it will be noted that when the fertility rates and fertility ratios refer to *all women* (single and ever married combined) the 1940–1950 percentage changes are sharply and consistently related to age. There is virtually a straight progression from highest percentage *increase* at youngest age to highest percentage *decrease* at relatively old age. The 1940–1950 increase in the fertility rate (children ever born) is 54 per cent for age 15–19; the *decrease* is 16 per cent for the 45–49 age group. Likewise, the percentage changes of the fertility ratios

range from an increase of 58 per cent at ages 15–19 to a decrease of 12 per cent at ages 45–49.

That increases in general fertility rates have resulted from increases in proportions married at given ages as well as from increases in marital fertility, is very apparent by comparing the magnitude and age-pattern of the 1940–1950 increases in marital fertility rates and ratios with those based upon all women regardless of marital status. (Table 1.) The percentage increases in the indices of marital fertility are much lower than the increases in the indices of *general* fertility. Thus as compared with the 54 per cent increase in the *general* fertility rate, at ages 15–19 there is only a 6 per cent increase in the fertility

Table 1. Number of children ever born and number of own children under five years of age per 1,000 women 15–49 years of age, by age and marital status of the woman. United States, 1940 and 1950.[1]

Age of Woman	1940	1950	Per Cent Increase 1940–50	1940	1950	Per Cent Increase 1940–50
	Children ever born per 1,000 women			Children ever born per 1,000 women ever married		
15–19	68	105	54.4	572	604	5.6
20–24	522	738	41.4	987	1,082	9.6
25–29	1,132	1,436	26.9	1,463	1,654	13.1
30–34	1,678	1,871	11.5	1,964	2,059	4.8
35–39	2,145	2,061	−3.9	2,414	2,247	−6.9
40–44	2,490	2,170	−12.9	2,754	2,364	−14.2
45–49	2,740	2,292	−16.4	2,998	2,492	−16.9
	Children under 5 per 1,000 women			Children under 5 per 1,000 women ever married		
15–19	59	93	57.6	493	536	8.7
20–24	396	603	52.3	747	883	18.2
25–29	538	782	45.4	695	900	29.5
30–34	434	594	36.9	508	653	28.5
35–39	284	366	28.9	319	399	25.1
40–44	140	167	19.3	155	181	16.8
45–49	43	38	−11.6	47	41	−12.8

[1] Adapted from U.S. Bureau of the Census: Fertility, *Special Report*, P.E. No. 5C, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1955, Tables A and B.

of married women at these young ages. The corresponding figures for fertility ratios are 58 per cent and 9 per cent. After age 35, the 1940–1950 percentage changes in marital fertilty rates are about the same as those of the general fertility rates. This virtual equality arises from the fact that even in 1940 only a small minority of women 35 and over were unmarried and that 1940–1950 *increases* in proportions ever married at these late ages are negligible.

As for age-pattern of the increases of marital fertility rates, the maximum (13 per cent) is found for the age group 25–29. The highest 1940–1950 percentage increase in the marital fertility *ratio* (30 per cent) is also found at ages 25–29. In general, the 1940–1950 percentage increases in fertility ratios are higher than those of comparable fertility rates based upon children ever born because the fertility ratio in the nature of the case relates only to fertility during the five years preceding the year considered—not to the total past fertility. The 1945–49 period, of course, was one of unusually high rates of marriage and natality.

Fertility rates for 1940 and 1950 by age, color, and residence are provided in the new 1950 Census report on FERTILITY. As indicated in Table 2 for the United States as a whole, the 1940–

Table 2. 1940–1950 percentage increase in number of children ever born per 1,000 ever-married women, by color, age, and residence.[1]

Age of Wife	White				Nonwhite			
	Total	Urban	Rural Nonfarm	Rural Farm	Total	Urban	Rural Nonfarm	Rural Farm
15–19	1.3	3.4	2.5	1.4	28.1	33.4	24.1	26.0
20–24	8.7	15.4	9.6	3.9	18.0	33.6	29.2	19.5
25–29	14.2	24.2	9.3	7.0	7.3	20.8	20.7	13.2
30–34	5.5	12.8	2.7	−2.3	0.1	5.8	13.5	13.9
35–39	−6.8	−2.6	−7.6	−9.5	−7.6	−6.2	3.4	8.3
40–44	−14.4	−13.0	−13.8	−12.3	−13.0	−12.7	−3.4	4.2
45–49	−17.3	−16.8	−16.8	−11.7	−14.8	−6.5	−15.2	−0.8

[1] Computed from U.S. Census Bureau: FERTILITY, *Special Report*, P.E. No. 5C, Tables 4–6. For this table the 1950 classification by residence is based on the "old" definition of urban. With respect to percentage increases by color, the 1940 data relate to native whites and all Negroes instead of "white" and "nonwhite" as in 1950.

1950 percentage increase in fertility was lower for whites than for nonwhites at ages under 25 and higher for whites than for nonwhites at ages 25–34. There was little difference by color in the percentage *decrease* in fertility at ages 35–49.

Among the whites, the highest percentage increase in fertility of ever-married women was that observed at ages 25–29. Among the nonwhites the maximum percentage increase was at youngest ages.

Among the whites, the observed percentage increases in fertility rates tended to be highest in urban areas and lowest in rural-farm areas. The observed percentage decreases were directly related with age in each type of community. To some extent, these patterns were also found for the nonwhites.

Percentage Changes in Fertility Rates During 1940–1950, by Occupation and Education. Previous analyses have indicated that the highest proportionate increases in fertility ratios since 1940 were experienced by groups formerly characterized by lowest fertility. Thus it was found that the percentage increases were higher for the Northeast than for the South, higher for urban than for rural areas, higher for professional groups than for farmers and higher for the people of college status than for those of lower educational attainment.

With certain qualifications the current data bear out the generalizations regarding changes in fertility by occupational and educational status. Among urban white married women (married once—husband present) under 40 years of age, the percentage increase in fertility was in virtually all cases higher for the wives of professional men than for any other occupational group.[5] (Figure 1 and Table 3.) This held true for all

[5] It should be acknowledged that on several scores the 1950 fertility rates by occupation and education are not precisely comparable with those of 1940. The tabulations of the 1950 data utilize the new definition of urban. The 1950 tabulations were made for whites and nonwhites rather than for native-whites and Negroes as in 1940. The 1950 data are presumably more accurate with reference to percentages childless; the 1950 Census schedule contained provision for explicitly indicating "no child" if the respondent reported childlessness. Furthermore, some adjustments of the data to remove biases of other types were made in the 1950 distributions. (*See* United States Bureau of the Census: FERTILITY *Ibid.* pp. 6–8.) Analyses by the Census Bureau have indicated that a large proportion of the "unknowns" with

(Continued on page 400)

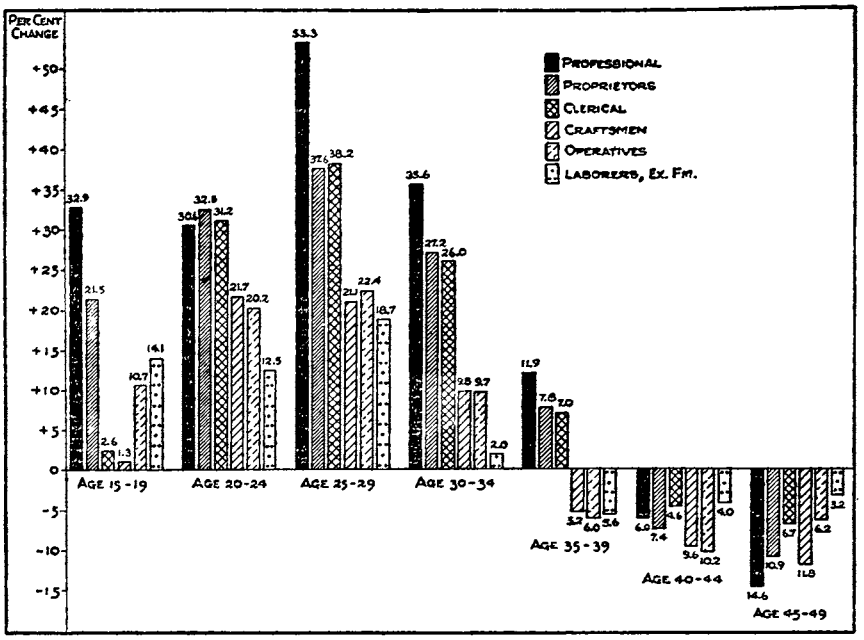

Fig. 1. Per cent change, 1940–1950, in the number of children ever born per 1,000 white women (married once—husband present), by age of wife and occupation group of the husband. Urban areas of the United States as defined in 1940 and 1950. The 1940 data relate to native whites. (*See* Table 3.)

age groups except one (20–24) in which case the percentage increases were practically the same (31–33 per cent) for the professional, proprietary, and clerical classes. By age, the 1940–1950 percentage increase in fertility of all urban white women (married once—husband present) is highest (22 per cent) at ages 25–29. At this same age it is also highest (53 per cent) for the professional class.

Whereas, the percentage change in fertility rates of the professional class during 1940–50 ranged from 12 to 53 per cent for age groups under 40, the corresponding range for urban wives of unskilled laborers was from a decrease of 6 per cent (at ages 35–39) to an increase of 19 per cent at ages 25–29. At ages of 40 and over decreases rather than increases in fer-

reference to number of children in the 1940 Census enumeration were in fact childless women.

Although the net effect of the above-mentioned differences between the 1940 and 1950 Censuses cannot be stated, the biases do not run in the same direction and they probably do not affect the differentials in percentage increases very greatly.

tility rates during 1940–1950 were the rule rather than the exception.

The pattern of change in fertility rates by education of urban white ever-married women is much the same as the one by

Table 3. 1940–1950 percentage increase in number of children ever born per 1,000 white women (married once—husband present) by age of wife, occupation group of husband, and residence.[1]

Occupation Group of the Husband	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49
	URBAN						
Professional	32.9	30.6	53.3	35.6	11.9	−6.0	−14.6
Proprietors	21.5	32.5	37.6	27.2	7.8	−7.4	−10.9
Clerical	2.6	31.2	38.2	26.0	7.0	−4.6	−6.7
Craftsmen	1.3	21.7	21.1	9.8	−5.2	−9.6	−11.8
Operatives	10.7	20.2	22.4	9.7	−6.0	−10.2	−6.2
Service Workers	7.4	25.0	31.1	13.8	−3.6	−13.8	−8.9
Laborers, Exc. Farm	14.1	12.5	18.7	2.0	−5.6	−4.0	−3.2
Farmers	*	*	*	*	37.0	28.1	14.8
Farm Laborers	*	−2.0	25.6	23.6	*	*	*
	RURAL NONFARM						
Professional	*	38.3	40.6	36.6	8.9	−6.4	−19.5
Proprietors	14.2	12.6	28.9	18.3	3.1	−8.7	−11.5
Clerical	19.9	17.8	29.9	19.7	−0.5	−9.4	−14.9
Craftsmen	−0.3	10.5	16.2	8.9	−4.1	−6.5	−12.2
Operatives	7.7	10.1	9.7	2.0	−2.0	−8.4	−12.2
Service Workers	*	29.8	29.2	6.6	−1.3	−13.0	−15.4
Laborers, Exc. Farm	−12.5	11.7	9.2	5.1	−2.4	−9.7	−10.4
Farmers	*	−2.6	10.9	−6.9	−13.8	−19.1	−18.9
Farm Laborers	−8.0	19.5	18.5	18.2	9.6	3.5	2.9
	RURAL FARM						
Professional	*	*	25.7	53.4	−0.2	3.5	3.0
Proprietors	*	*	19.2	19.4	2.8	−13.0	−20.9
Clerical	*	1.1	3.6	13.3	−9.6	−0.1	−7.0
Craftsmen	*	3.5	9.1	7.9	−4.6	−12.0	−13.0
Operatives	12.8	7.4	13.0	1.7	−3.9	−8.9	−5.5
Laborers, Exc. Farm	−8.8	10.7	9.5	−0.6	−3.7	−2.4	−0.4
Farmers	−11.0	0.9	3.5	−3.4	−11.5	−14.2	−13.9
Farm Laborers	−5.9	6.6	11.0	−2.3	1.9	−10.3	−3.4

* Percentage change not shown because fertility rate for 1940 or 1950 was not computed because of inadequate numbers.

[1] Computed from data given in 1950 and 1940 Census reports on number of children ever born per 1,000 women (once married-husband present). *See* text for discussion of comparability of 1940 and 1950 data.

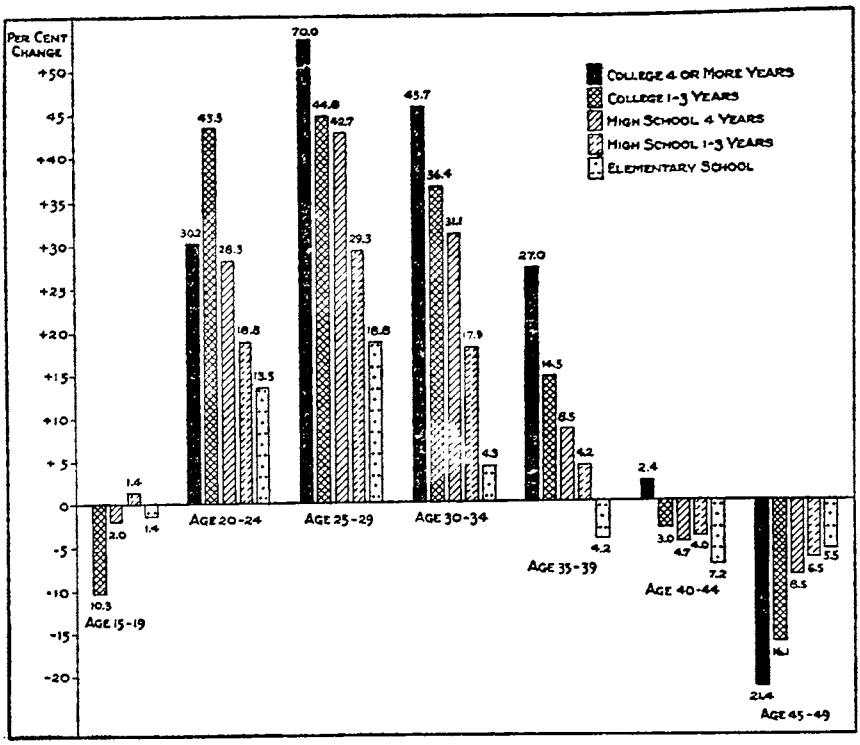

Fig. 2. Per cent change, 1940–1950, in the number of children ever born per 1,000 white ever-married women, by age and number of years of school completed by the wife. Urban areas of the United States as defined in 1940 and 1950. The data for 1940 relate to native whites. (*See* Table 4.)

occupation. (Figure 2 and Table 4.) However, perhaps partly because educational attainment itself is more amenable to quantitative ranking than is occupational group, the data by education much more than those by occupation illustrate the principle of a direct relation of socio-economic status to 1940–1950 percentage increase in fertility among urban-white married women 20–39 years of age. For instance, at ages 25–29 the percentage increases in fertility during the decade of the 'forties ranged from 70 per cent for the college graduates to 19 per cent for those of "elementary school" status. Again, after age 40 decreases rather than increases are the rule and for women 45–49 years of age there is a consistently direct relation between amount of education and amount of decrease in fertility during the decade.

As previously indicated, the fact that women 40–44 and 45–49 in 1950 reported fewer children than did those of comparable age in 1940 simply reflects the earlier trend of generally declining fertility. These women did not participate in the baby boom of the 'forties. They had already completed their families for the most part.

The percentage changes in fertility rates by education and

Table 4. Per cent fertility rate for urban white ever-married women in 1950 is higher or lower than comparable rate for native-white ever-married women in 1940.[1]

Education of the Wife	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49
	URBAN						
Total[2]	3.4	15.4	24.2	12.8	−2.6	−13.0	−16.8
College 4+	*	30.2	70.0	45.7	27.0	2.4	−21.4
College 1–3	−10.3	43.5	44.8	36.4	14.5	−3.0	−16.1
High School 4	−2.0	28.3	42.7	31.1	8.5	−4.7	−8.5
High School 1–3	1.4	18.8	29.3	17.9	4.2	−4.0	−6.5
Elementary or Below	−1.4	13.5	18.8	4.3	−4.2	−7.2	−5.5
	RURAL NONFARM						
Total[2]	2.5	9.6	9.3	2.7	−7.6	−13.8	−16.8
College 4+	*	64.1	52.9	46.5	15.9	0.9	−21.1
College 1–3	*	49.1	39.3	28.5	8.2	1.5	−15.6
High School 4	−12.7	21.3	22.4	22.5	9.4	−3.6	−10.0
High School 1–3	−3.5	9.9	18.1	9.0	−2.9	−3.8	−14.7
Elementary or Below	0.5	8.9	7.5	1.9	−1.8	−6.2	−6.1
	RURAL FARM						
Total[2]	1.4	3.9	7.0	−2.3	−9.5	−12.3	−11.7
College 4+	*	*	58.6	37.3	7.7	−14.9	−17.4
College 1–3	*	8.9	21.5	18.0	8.7	−9.6	−20.1
High School 4	−14.6	14.4	17.9	8.3	−1.0	−9.5	−6.6
High School 1–3	−0.2	9.4	8.1	3.2	−7.6	−9.0	−8.8
Elementary or Below	−5.7	4.8	7.2	−4.5	−6.3	−8.2	−7.9

* Percentage change not shown because fertility rate for 1940 or 1950 (or both) was not computed because of inadequate numbers.

[1] Computed from data given in 1950 and 1940 Census reports on number of children ever born per 1,000 ever-married women.

[2] For "Total" rows only, the data are based upon "old" definition of urban for 1950.

occupation were of about the same pattern in rural-nonfarm as in urban areas. Within rural-farm areas a conspicuous feature was the decrease in the fertility of farmers and farm laborers at ages 30–49.

1940–1950 Increases in General Fertility Rates by Educational Attainment. The above discussion of 1940–1950 percentage increases in fertility by educational attainment has related to ever-married women. Similar data are also available in relation to all women of given education regardless of marital status. Table 5 presents for three age-groups 20–24, 25–29,

Table 5. Children ever born per 1,000 total women and ever-married women in 1940 and 1950, and percentage increase (1940–1950) in each type of fertility rate. Urban white women of specified age and education.[1]

Education of the Woman	All Women			Ever-Married Women			Per Cent of Women Ever Married	
	Fertility Rate		Per Cent Increase	Fertility Rate		Per Cent Increase		
	1940	1950		1940	1950		1940	1950
	Women aged 20–24							
College 4+	61	165	170.5	285	371	30.2	24.9	44.5
College 1–3	108	260	140.7	432	620	43.5	28.4	41.9
High School 4	221	495	124.0	607	779	28.3	40.1	63.5
High School 1–3	520	882	69.6	941	1,118	18.8	58.8	78.9
Elementary or Below	610	967	58.5	1,125	1,277	13.5	58.1	75.7
	Women aged 25–29							
College 4+	272	731	168.8	607	1,032	70.0	52.4	70.8
College 1–3	498	986	98.0	846	1,225	44.8	66.9	80.5
High School 4	560	1,128	101.4	930	1,327	42.7	68.6	85.0
High School 1–3	908	1,498	65.0	1,279	1,654	29.3	80.4	90.6
Elementary or Below	1,081	1,629	50.7	1,572	1,867	18.8	79.2	87.3
	Women aged 30–34							
College 4+	607	1,222	101.3	1,070	1,559	45.7	65.3	78.4
College 1–3	824	1,416	71.8	1,192	1,626	36.4	77.6	87.1
High School 4	901	1,509	67.5	1,287	1,687	31.1	78.8	89.4
High School 1–3	1,271	1,797	41.4	1,639	1,933	17.9	87.0	92.9
Elementary or Below	1,575	1,929	22.5	2,046	2,134	4.3	87.2	90.4

[1] *See* text for discussion of comparability of 1940 and 1950 data.

and 30–34, fertility rates by educational attainment, for urban white women and ever-married women for 1940 and 1950, the percentage increase in the general and marital fertility rates and the percentages ever married. The increase in marriage among college women since 1940 has been as striking as the increase in marital fertility of this group. This subject is considered more fully in a later section (Table 11.) As noted in Table 5, among urban white "College 4+" women 20–24 years of age the proportion ever married was 25 per cent in 1940 and 44 per cent in 1950. Among comparable women of elementary school status, 58 per cent were married in 1940 and 76 per cent in 1950. It will also be noticed that by ages 30–34, the proportion ever married among urban white women of College 4+ status was 65 per cent in 1940 and 78 per cent in 1950. In the 1950 data the proportions of "College 4+" urban white women reported as ever married decrease slightly at successively later ages. However, the proportion is slightly higher for 1950 than for 1940 at all ages represented.

The impact of the increase in marriage upon the general fertility rates of women of college status has been tremendous. Thus, whereas the marital fertility rate of urban white women of "College 4+" status and 25–29 years of age increased 71 per cent, the general fertility rate of this group increased by 169 per cent. Among "College 4+" women 30–34 years of age the increase in the marital fertility rate was 46 per cent and the increase of the general fertility rate was 101 per cent.

Fertility Rates by Socio-Economic Status

Fertility Rates by Educational Attainment of the Wife. The classifications by educational attainment of the wife are based upon the question regarding highest grade in school completed. For all of the categories utilized, except the lowest, it will be understood that the woman *completed* one of the grades in the group. The category labeled "Elementary School" includes women reporting that they had never completed any of the grades as well as those completing given grades within the elementary school.

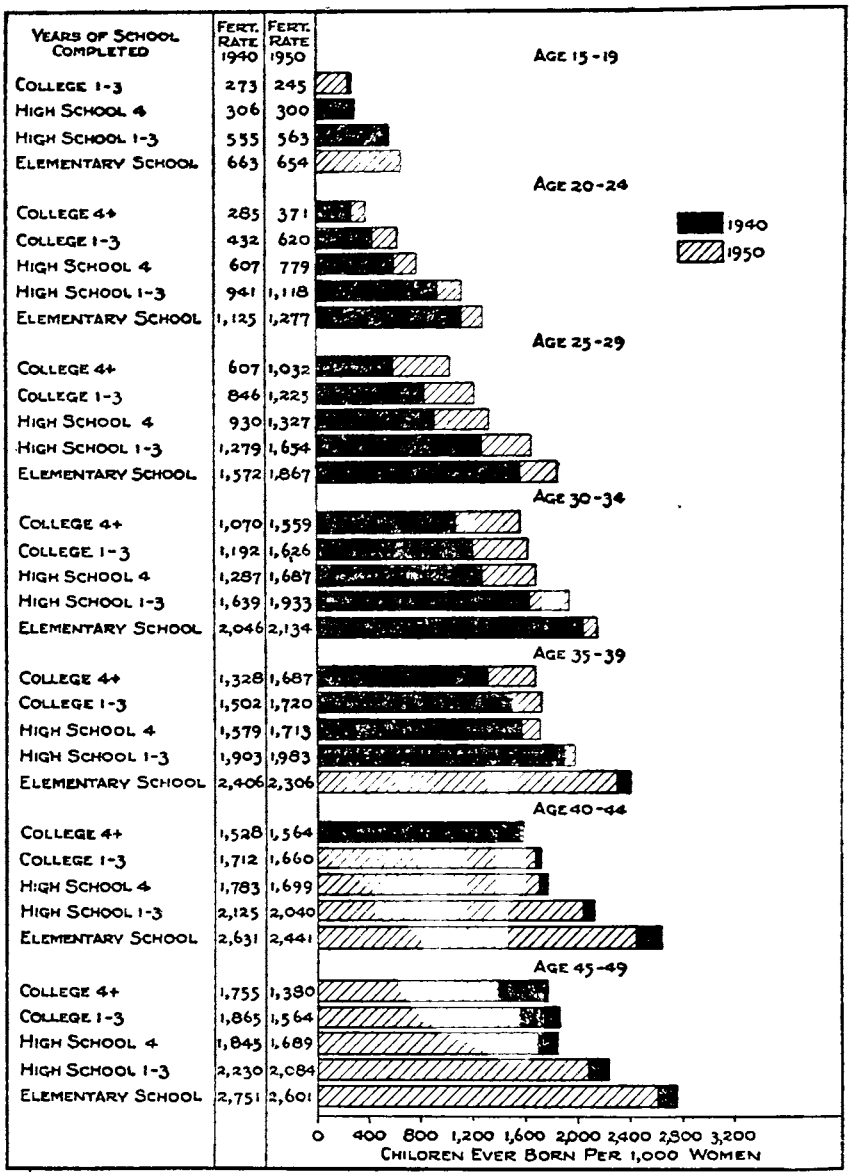

Fig. 3. Children ever born per 1,000 ever-married white women in 1950 and native-white women in 1940, by age and number of years of school completed by the wife. Urban areas of the United States as defined in 1940 and 1950.

Fertility rates among ever-married white women of given age and educational attainment are presented in Figures 3–5 for the urban, rural-nonfarm and rural farm areas, respectively.

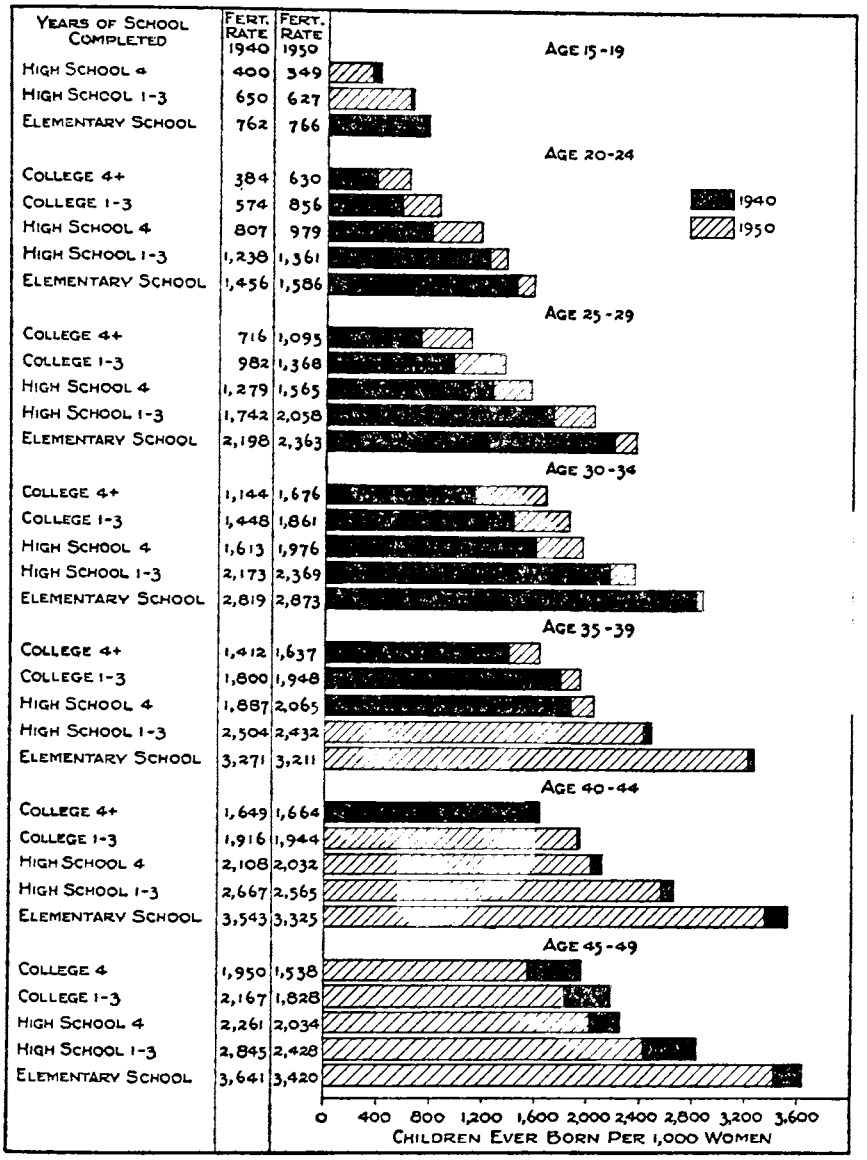

Fig. 4. Children ever born per 1,000 ever-married white women in 1950 and native-white women in 1940, by age and number of years of school completed by the wife. Rural nonfarm population of the United States as defined in 1940 and 1950.

Despite the fact that the 1940–1950 *percentage increases* in fertility among ever-married women under 40 years of age tended to be related directly with educational attainment, the

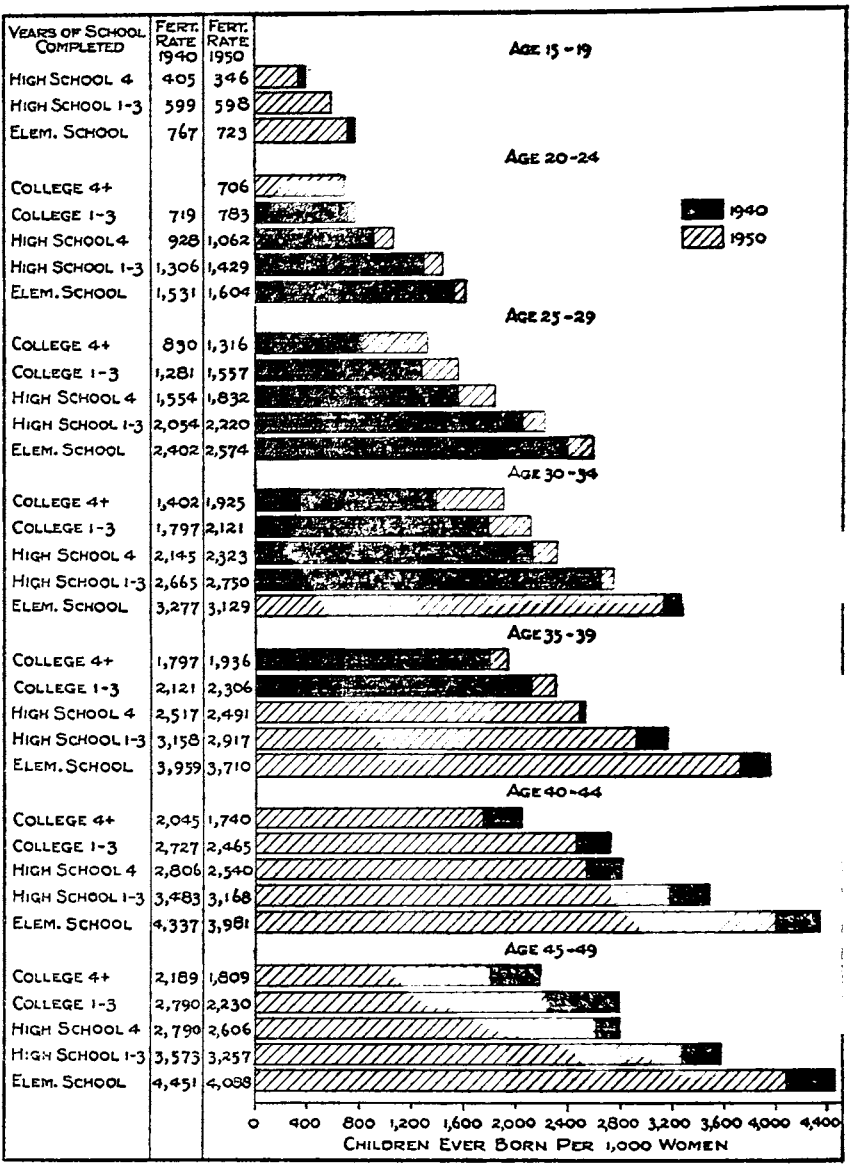

Fig. 5. Children ever born per 1,000 ever-married white women in 1950 and native-white women in 1940, by age and number of years of school completed by the wife. Rural farm population of the United States as defined in 1940 and 1950.

1950 fertility rates themselves were, with minor exceptions, still inversely related to educational attainment at all ages and within each type of community. Among urban white ever-

married women 25–39 years of age, this inverse relation was not so sharp in 1950 as in 1940 but it was rather consistently manifested.

Figure 3 points up the persistence of lowest lifetime fertility rates among urban white "College 4+" wives despite the relatively high percentage increases in the fertility of this group during 1940–1950. However, the conspicuous extent to which fertility differentials by education narrowed during the decade, especially at ages 30–39, is also pointed up in the same chart.

It is possible to present fertility rates by educational attainment in terms of children ever born per 1,000 women (under the assumption that all never-married women are childless), per 1,000 ever married women, and per 1,000 women "married once—husband present."[6] The magnitude of these rates increase in the order mentioned.

Since the 1940–1950 percentage increases in proportions married were larger among college women than among women of lower educational attainment the narrowing of fertility differentials among urban whites was more pronounced among all women than among the "ever married" or "married once—husband present" groups. The trend in the general fertility rates, of course, is affected by changes in proportions married as well as by changes in marital fertility. To put the situation in a somewhat broader context, one might say that since 1940 we have not only witnessed substantial increases in number and proportion of women going to college, but also a marked increase in marriage rates among college women under 30 years of age, and marked increases in marital as well as general fertility rates of women who have attended college.

Fertility Rates by Occupation Group of the Husband, 1910 1940, and 1950. Fertility rates by occupation group of the husband are presented for the "married once–husband present" groups for 1910, 1940, and 1950 in Figures 6–8. Despite the previously described relatively high percentage increase in the

[6] U. S. Bureau of the Census: FERTILITY, Special Report, P-E No. 5C, *Ibid.*, Tables 20–23.

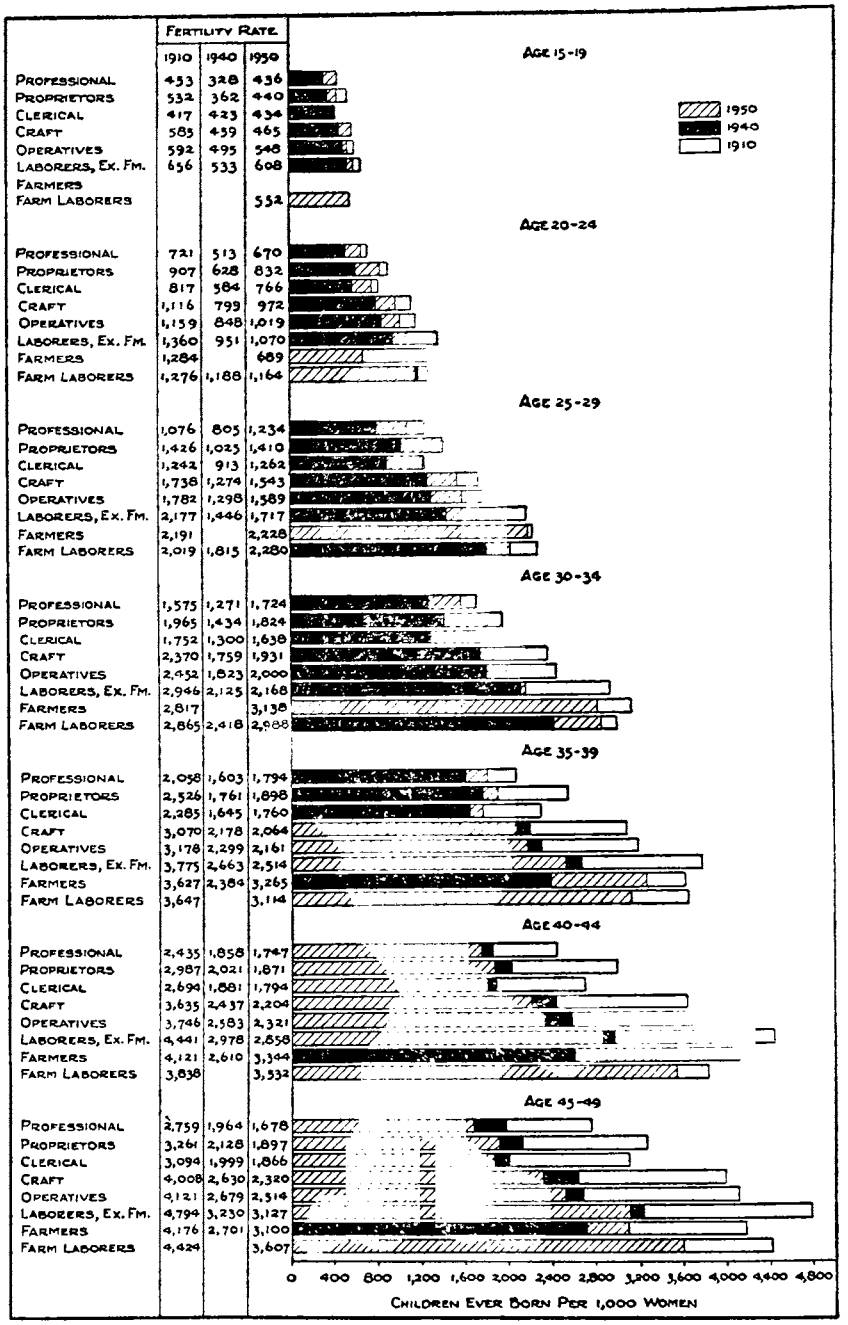

Fig. 6. Children ever born per 1,000 white women in 1950 and native-white women in 1940 and 1910 (married once—husband present), by age of wife and occupation group of the husband. Urban areas of the United States as defined in 1910, 1940, and 1950.

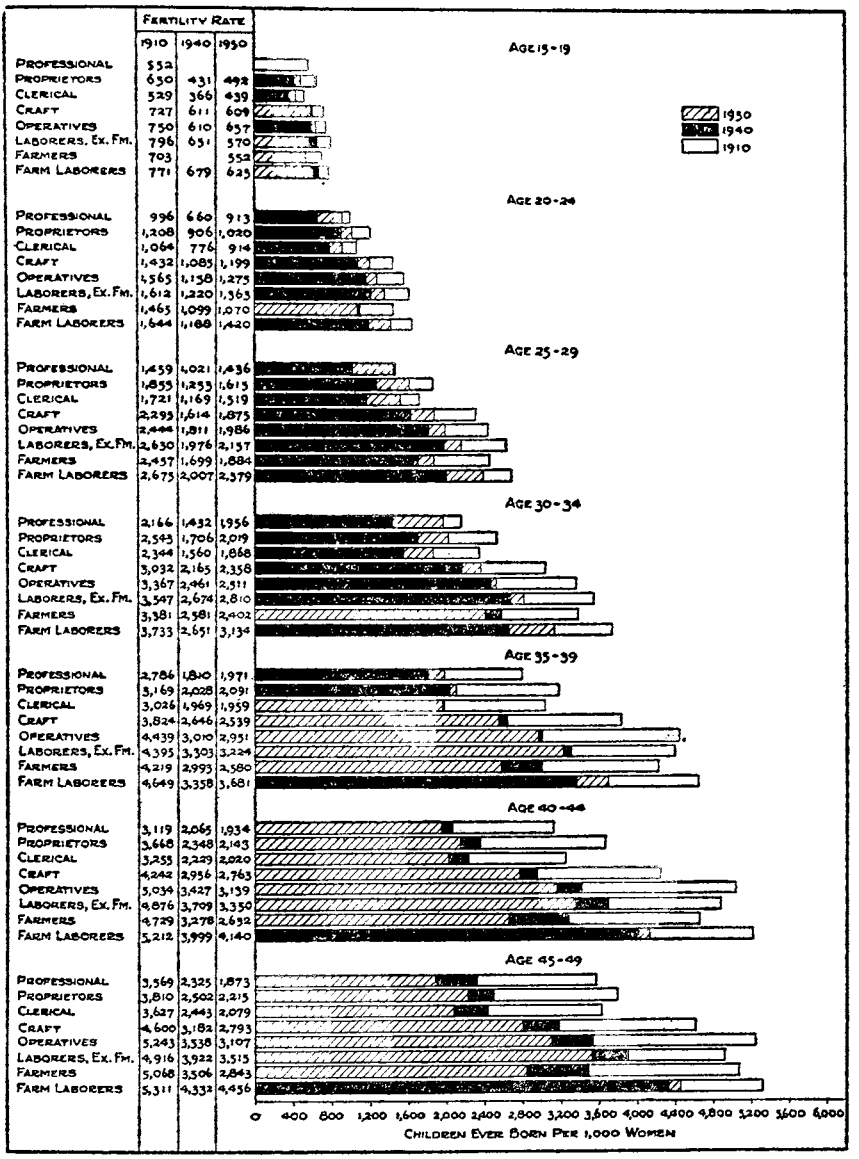

Fig. 7. Children ever born per 1,000 white women in 1950 and native-white women in 1940 and 1910 (married once—husband present), by age of wife and occupation group of the husband. Rural nonfarm population of the United States as defined in 1910, 1940, and 1950.

fertility of wives of professional men, this occupation group was still characterized by lowest fertility rates at most of the ages represented. Exceptions among the urban whites were

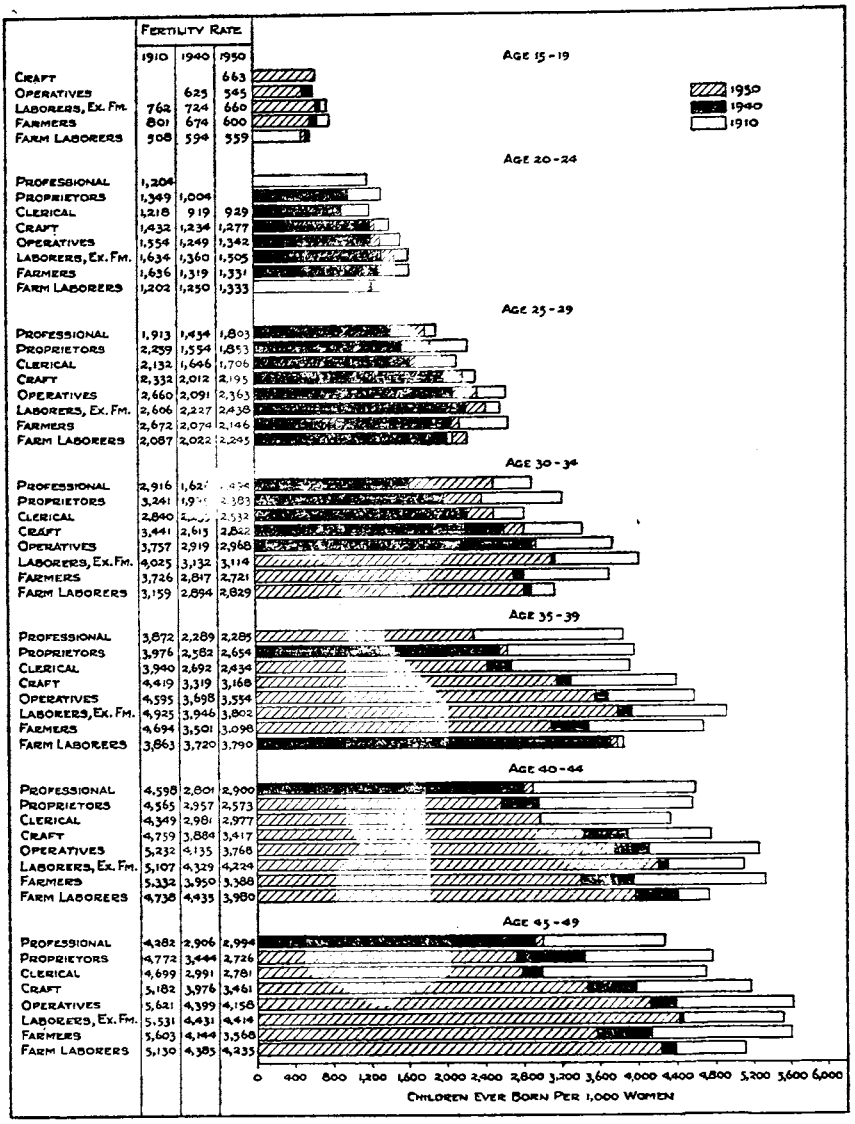

Fig. 8. Children ever born per 1,000 white women in 1950 and native-white women in 1940 and 1910 (married once—husband present), by age of wife and occupation group of the husband. Rural farm population of the United States as defined in 1910, 1940, and 1950.

those for wives aged 15–19 and 30–34 in which cases the clerical workers exhibited the lowest fertility rates.

The patterns of change in age-specific fertility rates of urban whites by occupation since 1910 and by education since 1940

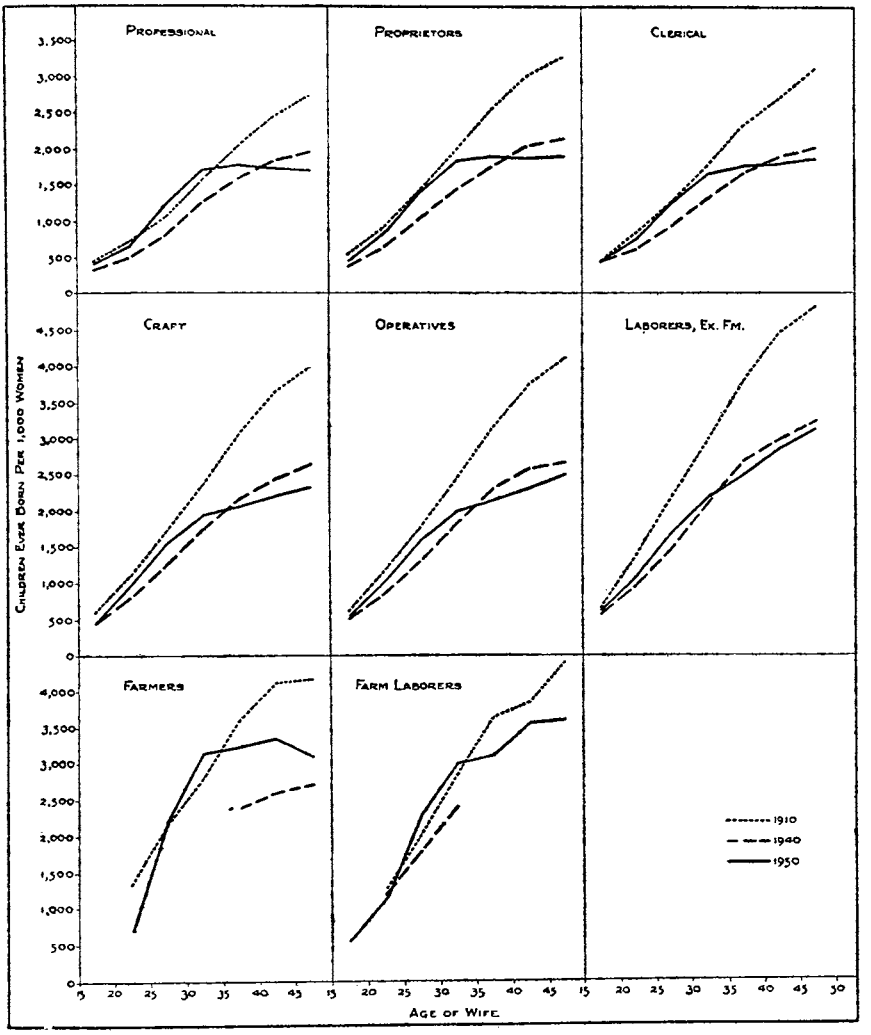

Fig. 9. Comparison of the age-specific fertility of native-white women (married once—husband present) in 1910 and 1940 with that of white women of the same marital status in 1950; by occupation group of the husband. Urban areas of the United States as defined in 1910, 1940, and 1950. (*See* Figure 6.)

are depicted in another form in Figures 9 and 10, respectively. In Figure 9 the rather universally high position of the fertility rates in 1910 is emphasized for each occupational group. Of special interest, however, is the fact that in 1950 the fertility rate for urban white wives of professional men was actually

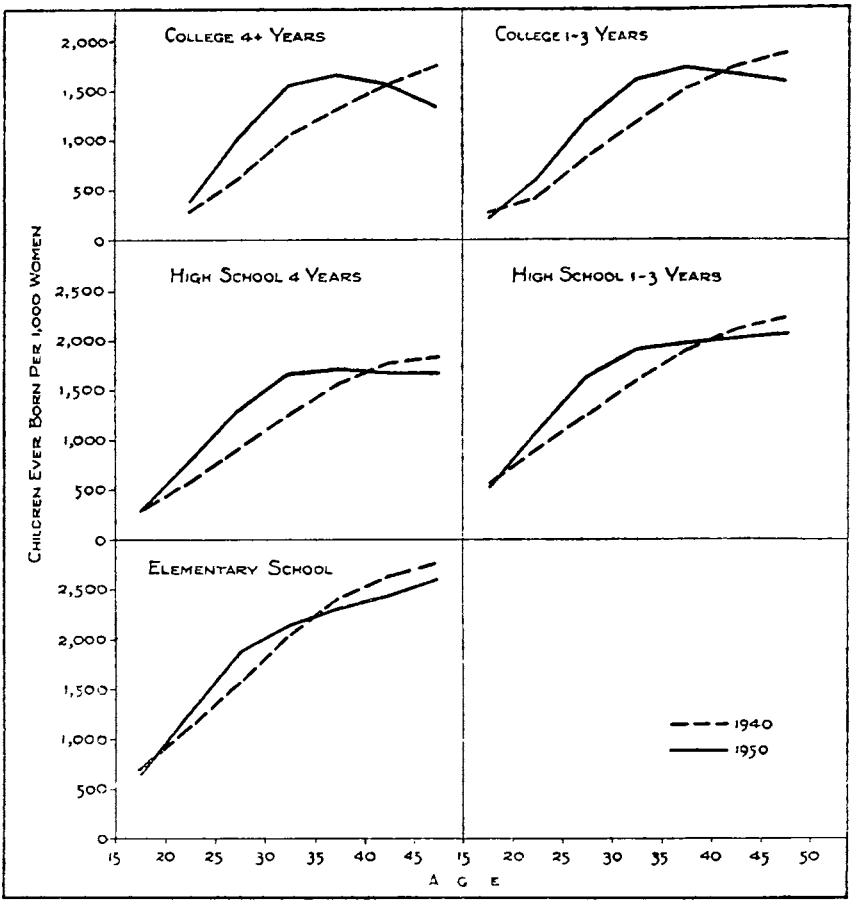

Fig. 10. Comparison of the age-specific fertility of ever-married native-white women in 1940 with that of white women of the same marital status in 1950, by number of years of school completed by the wife. Urban areas of the United States as defined in 1940 and 1950. (*See* Figure 3.)

higher at ages 30–34 than at ages 45–49. This suggests that the average size of completed family for the urban white professional class may easily increase during the 1950–1960 decade.

Fertility Differentials Within Rural Areas. For purposes of simplicity the preceding discussion has been restricted largely to urban whites. Because of certain basic similarities it is needless to replicate the discussion for the rural areas. In general the inverse relation of fertility to educational and occupational status holds within rural nonfarm and rural-farm areas. The tendency for fertility to be lowest in urban areas, inter-

mediate in rural nonfarm areas, and highest in rural-farm areas tends to hold within specific occupational groups.[7] The narrowing of the differentials in fertility during 1940–1950 was more pronounced in urban areas than in either type of rural area.

Attention may also be called to the fact that among the rural-farm whites, age-specific fertility rates tend to be higher for farm laborers than for farm owners and managers. However, the age-specific fertility rates of farm laborers tend to be lower than those of "laborers except farm and mine." It seems possible that this latter situation arises partly from selective factors. Unskilled laborers residing on a "farm" but working at

Table 6. Children ever born per 1,000 nonwhite women (married once—husband present), by age, occupation group of husband, and residence. United States, 1950.[1]

Occupation	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49
	URBAN						
Professional	*	*	1,242	1,560	1,426	1,685	*
Proprietors	*	*	1,184	1,891	1,730	2,150	2,309
Clerical	*	1,197	1,536	1,591	1,857	1,656	1,719
Craftsmen	932	1,310	1,583	2,063	2,292	2,418	2,561
Operatives	888	1,310	1,816	2,106	2,196	2,485	2,550
Service Workers	738	1,350	1,464	1,658	1,716	2,015	2,266
Laborers, Exc. Farm	952	1,498	1,855	1,974	2,324	2,424	2,670
	RURAL NONFARM						
Craftsmen	*	*	*	2,987	*	*	*
Operatives	951	1,641	2,735	3,317	3,844	3,290	3,557
Laborers, Exc. Farm	910	1,853	2,851	3,210	3,742	4,131	3,833
Farm Laborers	883	1,849	2,446	3,829	4,174	3,649	3,759
	RURAL FARM						
Farmers	1,090	2,080	3,237	4,464	5,070	5,382	5,413
Farm Laborers	838	1,786	2,740	3,286	4,074	*	*

* Rate not shown if based on fewer than 4,000 cases in the inflated sample.
[1] Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau: Fertility, *Special Report*, P.E. No. 5C, 1955, Table 29.

[7] The rural-nonfarm families differ from the rural-farm in that the latter lived on a "farm," according to the census definition. Persons may have the occupation of farming without living on a farm and persons living on a farm may have a nonfarm occupation.

something else as a major occupation may be a select group with respect to high fertility.

Class Differentials in Fertility Among the Nonwhites. Owing to the heavy concentration of the nonwhites in the "lower" occupational and educational classes, (especially in the rural-farm areas) a 3.33 per cent sample is not sufficient for an adequate analysis of the "upper" classes.[8] (Tables 6–7.)

In general, the inverse relation of fertility to educational and occupational attainment is observed for nonwhites as well as whites within the urban, rural-nonfarm, and rural-farm areas. Among the nonwhites fertility appears to be more sharply re-

Table 7. Children ever born per 1,000 nonwhite ever-married women, by age, years of school completed by woman, and residence, United States. 1950.[1]

Education of Wife	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49
	URBAN						
College 4+	*	581	854	1,071	1,046	1,173	1,239
College 1–3	*	927	1,165	1,335	1,263	1,370	1,901
High School 4	584	1,090	1,308	1,462	1,494	1,645	1,852
High School 1–3	924	1,417	1,798	1,955	1,864	2,129	2,274
Elementary School 8	959	1,453	1,747	1,907	1,955	2,009	2,275
Elementary Under 8	958	1,496	1,914	1,981	2,123	2,253	2,350
	RURAL NONFARM						
High School 4	*	1,399	1,853	*	*	*	*
High School 1–3	896	1,537	2,328	2,830	2,877	3,145	*
Elementary School 8	926	1,747	2,535	2,805	3,598	2,907	3,277
Elementary Under 8	1,085	1,882	2,684	3,164	3,421	3,530	3,253
	RURAL FARM						
High School 4	*	1,194	1,857	*	*	*	*
High School 1–3	866	1,606	2,753	3,465	4,648	4,636	*
Elementary School 8	931	2,065	3,194	3,953	4,222	4,248	4,545
Elementary Under 8	952	2,081	3,089	4,131	4,604	4,881	4,984

* Rate not shown if based on fewer than 4,000 cases in the inflated sample.

[1] Adapted from U.S. Bureau of the Census: Fertility, *Special Report*, P.E. No. 5C, 1955, Table 22.

[8] In the published reports on fertility the numbers are inflated to the sizes of the relevant populations. However, significance is determined by sample size. Fertility rates were not computed for cells having fewer than 4,000 cases after the inflation was done.

lated to educational attainment than to occupation group. To a less degree a similar situation was observed for the whites. There may be several reasons for this. Education relates to the wife rather than to the husband. In the nature of the case the highest grade completed is directly amenable to precise quantitative gradation. Finally, highest educational attainment is a virtually stable characteristic; it does not change in time as does occupational class of the individual.

Distribution of Women by Number of Children Ever Born. The previous discussion has been restricted to *average* fertility rates among women of given age. Differentials in the distributions of women by number of children ever born are also of interest. Without attempting to retrace the pattern of analysis just presented, a few of the highlights with respect to distributions of children in relation to socio-economic status in 1940 and 1950 may be noted. First of all, the 1940–1950 *decrease* in fertility rates of women of completed fertility has been due in considerable measure to decrease in proportion of large families, say families with five or more children. The *increases* in fertility of women under age 40 during 1940–1950, however, have not accrued from increases in proportions of families with five or more children, but from increases in proportion with two, three, and four children.

Figure 11 presents selected distributions of urban, white, ever-married women in 1940 and 1950, by number of children ever born, according to age and educational attainment of the women. The data are shown for three age groups: 25–29, 35–39, and 45–49. In a previous section it was noted that the highest percentage increase in fertility, especially for the "upper" socio-economic classes, was that exhibited by the 25–29 age group. It was also noted that the 45–49 age group, i.e., the women of recently completed fertility, had rather uniformly lower fertility in 1950 than did women of similar age in 1940. Accordingly, these age groups, together with the intermediate one (35–39), were selected for exhibition in Figure 11.

That there was a 70 per cent increase during 1940–1950 in

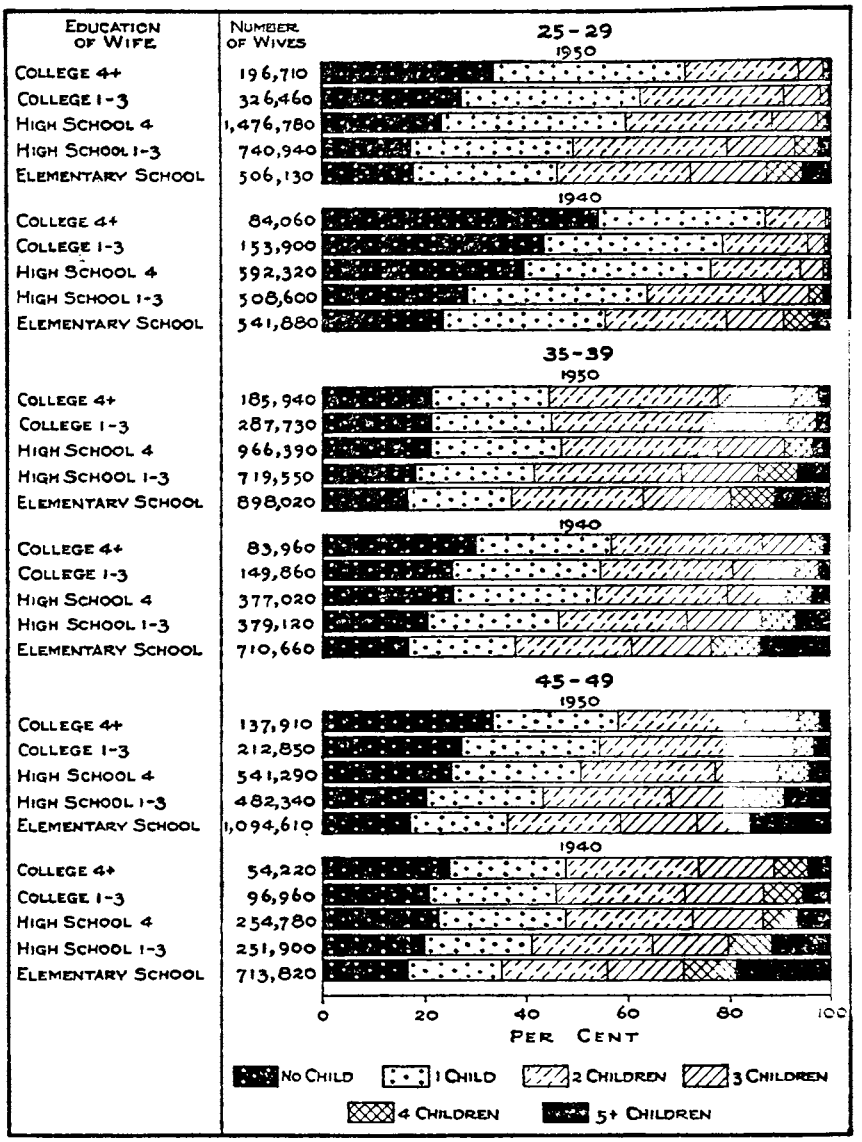

Fig. 11. Percentage distributions by number of children ever born among urban white, ever-married women of specified age and educational attainment. United States, 1940 and 1950.

the fertility rate of "College 4+" ever-married urban white women 25–29 years of age has already been noted. In 1940 over half (54 per cent) of the women of this class had not borne a child and an additional one-third had borne only one

child. Thus, only about 13 per cent had two or more children. In 1950, however, only about one-third (34 per cent) were childless, 38 per cent had borne one child, and 28 per cent had borne two or more children. A somewhat similar situation is found for the "College 1–3" women.

Among ever-married urban white women of elementary school status and 25–29 years of age, the proportion reporting "no live births" was 24 per cent in 1940 and 18 per cent in 1950. About 45 per cent in 1940 and 53 per cent in 1950 reported two or more children.

As already indicated, the women who were 45–49 years of age at the time of the 1950 Census were affected very little, if at all, by the increases in fertility during the 'forties. On the contrary, women of this age in 1950 had lower fertility than women of the same age in 1940. As already stated, the *decreases* in *completed fertility* were directly related to socio-economic status.

Childlessness. The proportions childless among couples of given age, color, residence, and socio-economic status constitute important features of distributions by number of children ever born. As noted above, the proportion childless was generally higher in 1950 than in 1940 for women aged 40 and over. This reflects in large part, the pre-1940 declines in fertility.[9] However, at ages 35–39, the proportions childless were generally smaller in 1950 than in 1940. Among urban white ever-married women 35–39 years of age, the proportions childless were smaller in 1950 than in 1940 for each educational class except "elementary school."

Another favorable prognosis for future increase in size of completed family may be noted. The proportion childless among ever-married urban white women 25–29 years of age in 1950 was no higher than that for women 45–49 years of age and of comparable residence, education, and marital status. As expected, the prevalence of childlessness by socio-economic

[9] It is recognized that the proportions of reported childlessness in 1940 generally are too low because of biases explained in another section of this report.

status is consistent with the pattern of fertility differentials. Thus, among urban white ever-married women of completed fertility in 1950 (45–49 years of age) the proportion childless extended from 14.8 per cent for the "elementary, less than 8 years" group to 33.3 per cent for the "College 4+" group. The corresponding range at ages 35–39, was from 16.0 to 21.5 reflecting again the trend toward convergence of fertility rates by educational attainment.[10]

By occupational group of the husband, the proportion childless for urban white wives (married once–husband present) 45–49 years of age ranged from 13.2 for the unskilled "laborers, except farm and mine" to 25.0 per cent for the professional class. At ages 35–39, the percentage childless ranged from 11.9 for wives of farmers to 18.0 for wives of professional men. The percentages were 20.1 for the "clerical, sales and kindred workers" and 21.1 for the "service workers, including private household."[11]

The data on childlessness of urban nonwhite women are of special interest. Previous analyses relating to fertility ratios in the 1930 Census data,[12] to number of children ever born as reported in private studies[13] and in the 1940 Census data[14] indicate relatively high proportions childless among Negro marriages in urban areas.

Table 8 presents skeleton data for 1950 on percentages childless by age, residence and color. In the first two columns the data are shown for ever-married women 40–44 years of age regardless of duration of marriage. In the last two columns they

[10] U. S. Bureau of the Census: FERTILITY, Special Report, P-E. No. 5C, *Ibid,* Table 20.

[11] *Ibid,* Table 28.

[12] Notestein, Frank W.: Differential Fertility in the East North Central States. The Milbank Memorial Fund *Quarterly,* April, 1938, XVI, No. 2, pp. 173–191.

[13] Kiser, Clyde V.: Fertility of Harlem Negroes. The Milbank Memorial Fund *Quarterly,* July, 1935, XIII, No. 3, pp. 273–285.

————: Birth Rates Among Rural Migrants in Cities. The Milbank Memorial Fund *Quarterly,* October, 1938, XVI, No. 4, pp. 369–391.

Beebe, Gilbert W.: Differential Fertility by Color for Coal Miners in Logan County, West Virginia. The Milbank Memorial Fund *Quarterly,* April, 1941, XIX, No. 2, pp. 189–195.

[14] *See* reports listed under reference 4.

are shown for women "once married–husband present" 35–39 years of age and married 15–19 years. Among urban ever-married women of recently completed fertility, approximately one-fifth of the whites and one-third of the nonwhites reported no live births. Relatively smaller differentials by color are seen for the rural-nonfarm and rural-farm areas.

On the assumption that the higher proportion of childlessness among the nonwhites might accrue partly from more frequent (if less formal) dissolution of marriage the data were also examined with age and duration of marriage held constant and with the analysis restricted to the "married once–husband present" group. This type of restriction lowered all percentages of childlessness, but the differentials by color persisted and were actually increased on a relative basis.

This whole question of the prevalence of childlessness in relation to color, residence, and other factors will be considered more fully in the forthcoming monograph on fertility. It may be noted here, however, that the proportions childless among the urban nonwhite females of given age increase with educational attainment. Thus, at ages 40–44 the percentages extend from 31.3 for the "elementary, less than 8" group to 48.1 for the "College 4+" group.

Table 8. Comparison of percentages childless among white and nonwhite women of given residence, age, marital status, and duration of marriage. 1950.[1]

Residence	Percentages Childless			
	Ever Married Women 40–44 Years of Age		Women 35–39 Years of Age and Married 15–19 Years. Married Once Husband Present	
	White	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite
Total U.S.	18.9	29.6	10.0	20.2
Urban	20.7	33.7	11.0	25.4
Rural Nonfarm	17.3	24.9	9.4	16.7
Rural Farm	12.4	15.5	6.9	9.4

[1] Adapted from U.S. Bureau of the Census. Fertility, *Special Report*, P.E. No. 5C., Washington, Government Printing Office, 1955, Tables 18, 19, 20, and 22.

Fertility Ratios

Fertility Ratios by Education of the Wife. Despite their limitations, the fertility ratios (relating as they do only to conditions during the preceding five years) express current fertility much more explicitly than do the fertility rates concerning total number of children ever born. It is this feature which partially accounts for an apparently greater degree of narrowing of the differentials in fertility ratios than in fertility rates during the 1940–1950 decade.

Table 9. Own children under 5 per 1,000 ever married white and nonwhite women by age, number of school years completed, and residence. United States, 1950.[1]

Education of Wife	White					Nonwhite				
	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39
	URBAN									
College 4+	*	337	856	861	527	*	521	565	575	249
College 1–3	178	573	889	755	431	*	812	584	465	264
High School 4	275	713	879	662	380	527	853	664	406	257
High School 1–3	522	927	842	562	321	761	980	652	381	254
Elementary School 8	549	939	841	569	320	833	858	635	387	232
Elementary Under 8	589	1,004	904	614	378	773	875	656	425	283
	RURAL NONFARM									
College 4+	*	520	894	950	515	*	*	*	*	*
College 1–3	*	776	973	776	500	*	*	*	*	*
High School 4	322	887	985	677	417	*	1,231	1,010	*	*
High School 1–3	586	1,116	943	588	353	807	1,136	962	671	388
Elementary School 8	624	1,177	935	635	442	791	1,120	949	703	514
Elementary Under 8	761	1,235	1,084	783	528	896	1,195	963	772	532
	RURAL FARM									
College 4+	*	622	986	948	689	*	*	*	*	*
College 1–3	*	744	1,129	938	513	*	*	*	*	*
High School 4	306	976	1,124	749	463	*	1,033	1,088	*	*
High School 1–3	533	1,142	1,029	693	428	781	1,193	1,262	1,042	828
Elementary School 8	613	1,206	1,136	749	514	855	1,417	1,268	953	693
Elementary Under 8	623	1,251	1,211	874	679	798	1,372	1,242	1,008	749

* Rate not shown if based on fewer than 4,000 cases in the inflated sample.

[1] Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau: Fertility, *Special Report*, P.E. No. 5C, 1955, Tables 44–45.

Among urban white ever-married women (or among the married once–husband present) the fertility ratios were consistently higher for those reporting "less than 8 years" in elementary school than for any other educational class at each age group under 30. (Table 9.) However, within each of the three age groups in the 30–44 range, the fertility ratios were consistently higher for the "College 4+" group than for any other educational class. In fact, within the 35–39 age group there is a virtually direct association of fertility ratio to educational attainment of ever-married urban white women.

It should be pointed out, however, that there is a spurious element in the tendency for fertility ratios to be relatively high for "College 4+" women. Since "College 4+" women in the nature of the case marry later than those of lower educational attainment, they also start having their families later. The fact that a college graduate has more children under 5 than does a woman of lower educational attainment does not necessarily mean a higher total fertility. This is illustrated by the fact that among urban ever-married white women 35–39 the college graduates had the *highest fertility ratio* but the *lowest fertility rate* in 1950.[15]

In the Census Bureau's *Special Report*, fertility ratios by educational attainment are given for four marital status categories: Total women, ever-married women, women married once–husband present, and other ever-married women.[16] The

[15] The figures adapted from the U. S. Bureau of the Census: FERTILITY, Special Report, P-E No. 5C, pp. 71 and 167, are as follows:

EDUCATION	CHILDREN EVER BORN PER 1,000 WOMEN		CHILDREN UNDER FIVE PER 1,000 WOMEN	
	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank
College 4+	1,746	6	527	1
College 1–3	1,791	4	431	2
High School 4	1,781	5	380	3
High School 1–3	2,034	3	321	5
Elementary 8	2,173	2	320	6
Elementary Under 8	2,630	1	378	4

[16] U. S. Bureau of the Census: FERTILITY, *Ibid.*, Table 34.

last two categories are simply subdivisions of the "ever married." As with children ever born, the fertility ratios for the "total women" are computed simply by adding single women to the population base of "ever married" women and assuming that the single women had no children under five years of age. This assumption, of course, is more justified for the whites than for the nonwhites.

Within each education group, fertility ratios are generally highest for the "married once–husband present" group. At ages 15–19 and 20–24 the lowest fertility ratios are those for "total women" because the single women constitute significant proportions of the total at these ages. However, at ages 25 and over the lowest ratios are those for the "other women ever married" groups—i.e., the "ever married" other than the "married once–husband present."

The fertility ratios (like the fertility rates) by occupation group of the husband are given only for the "married once—husband present" women. (Table 10.) Among urban white wives 25–29, there is only a narrow range of variation in fertility ratios by occupation group. If the somewhat anomalous groups of farmers and farm laborers living in urban areas are excluded, the highest rate in urban areas (972) is that for unskilled "laborers, except farm and mine" and the lowest rate (883) is that for "clerical, sales and kindred workers." The rate for the professional class is 931. At ages 30–34 and 35–39 the fertility ratios for the professional class actually exceed those for unskilled laborers.

As in the case of the fertility rates, the fertility ratios at each educational and occupational level increase as one proceeds from urban to rural nonfarm to rural farm areas. Within the rural nonfarm as within the urban areas, the fertility ratios tend to be higher for the College 4+ than for any other educational class of white women within the 30–44 age spans. A frequent pattern is that of relatively high fertility ratios at the lowest and highest educational levels and lowest fertility ratios for the High School 1–3 or High School 4 group.

The relation of residence and color to fertility ratios may be summarized briefly by stating that within urban areas the ratios for nonwhites were lower than those for whites within the 25–44 age groups. Within rural-nonfarm and rural-farm areas

Table 10. Own children under 5 per 1,000 white and nonwhite women (married once—husband present), by age, occupation group of husband, and residence. United States, 1950.[1]

Occupation Group of the Husband	White					Nonwhite				
	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39
	URBAN									
Professional	376	615	931	852	498	*	*	755	576	386
Proprietors	424	743	914	722	405	*	*	530	610	357
Clerical	386	704	883	709	413	*	962	771	515	331
Craftsmen	442	861	926	652	373	888	993	687	544	340
Operatives	525	889	928	646	379	815	968	808	549	342
Service Workers	438	847	939	635	386	691	1,009	685	438	264
Laborers, Exc. Farm	568	914	972	700	451	798	1,122	793	470	412
Farmers	*	816	941	946	476	*	*	*	*	*
Farm Laborers	493	924	1,091	944	577	*	*	*	*	*
	RURAL NONFARM									
Professional	*	802	1,021	866	521	*	*	*	*	*
Proprietors	464	883	943	675	413	*	*	*	*	*
Clerical	396	820	957	697	429	*	*	*	*	*
Craftsmen	581	1,038	978	685	422	*	*	*	739	*
Operatives	614	1,079	1,030	693	490	834	1,226	1,103	894	661
Service Workers	*	1,055	934	663	448	*	*	*	*	*
Laborers, Exc. Farm	539	1,153	1,051	777	550	807	1,310	1,191	872	664
Farmers	455	919	1,034	748	512	*	*	*	*	*
Farm Laborers	578	1,157	1,173	857	595	773	1,305	1,025	900	793
	RURAL FARM									
Professional	*	*	985	874	369	*	*	*	*	*
Proprietors	*	*	1,054	740	475	*	*	*	*	*
Clerical	*	777	1,028	831	490	*	*	*	*	*
Craftsmen	663	1,038	1,094	724	502	*	*	*	*	*
Operatives	479	1,109	1,110	794	572	*	*	*	*	*
Laborers, Exc. Farm	605	1,240	1,129	716	639	*	*	*	*	*
Farmers	539	1,126	1,163	813	527	988	1,455	1,417	1,193	889
Farm Laborers	484	1,083	1,172	843	648	704	1,294	1,309	826	588

* Rate not shown if based on fewer than 4,000 cases in the inflated sample.
[1] Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau: Fertility, *Special Report*, P.E., No. 5C, Tables 48–49.

the ratios for nonwhites tended to surpass those for whites of similar age and education or occupation.

Within most age groups within the rural nonfarm areas, there were too few nonwhite women of college status to afford reliable fertility ratios and the data were even more meagre in this respect in the rural-farm areas. Within the urban areas the nonwhites of college attainment exhibited relatively high fertility ratios after age 30 in comparison with groups of lower education. Since data already discussed have also indicated relatively high proportions childless among the nonwhite wives of college status, it is apparent that the relatively high fertility ratios of "College 4+" women tend to indicate relatively late ages at getting a family started rather than relatively large number of total progeny.

Proportions Ever Married by Age and Educational Status. Since single women as well as ever-married women in the 1950 Census fertility sample tabulations were classified by educational attainment, it was possible to compute percentages ever-married by this variable. This could also be done from the 1940 Census data. Table 11 presents percentages ever married by residence, age, and educational attainment for native-white women in 1940 and white women in 1950.

The increases in proportions married at young ages are especially noteworthy among the college graduates. Thus in 1940 the proportions ever-married among "College 4+" urban women were about one-fourth for the 20–24 age group, about one-half for the 25–29 age group, and two-thirds for the 30–34 age group. In 1950 the comparable proportions were respectively, 44 per cent, 71 per cent and 78 per cent.

The differentials by educational status in the proportions ever married within certain age groups underwent some contraction during the decade. Thus in 1940 the proportions ever married among urban native-whites 25–29 years of age extended from 52 per cent for the "College 4+" group to 79 per cent for the "Elementary" group. In 1950 the corresponding range was from 71 to 87 per cent.

Table 11. Proportions ever married among native-white women in 1940 and white women in 1950, according to age, residence, and education of the woman.[1]

Age and Years of School Completed by Woman	1940			1950		
	Urban	Rural Nonfarm	Rural Farm	Urban	Rural Nonfarm	Rural Farm
15–19						
College 4+	*	*	*	13.5	*	*
College 1–3	4.6	5.9	2.8	6.6	12.9	10.1
High School 4	8.6	15.2	12.7	17.2	30.3	27.7
High School 1–3	7.0	11.5	9.3	12.9	18.0	11.6
Elementary or Below	13.9	21.8	19.3	20.3	25.9	20.2
20–24						
College 4+	24.9	22.9	19.6	44.3	49.8	48.6
College 1–3	28.4	33.7	21.6	41.9	57.6	57.9
High School 4	40.1	55.6	49.0	63.5	78.4	74.1
High School 1–3	58.8	76.6	70.0	78.9	88.3	83.9
Elementary or Below	58.1	73.6	67.3	75.7	83.4	75.4
25–29						
College 4+	52.4	56.0	47.2	70.8	80.4	78.4
College 1–3	66.9	74.6	67.2	80.5	89.7	89.1
High School 4	68.6	82.1	79.2	85.0	92.9	91.4
High School 1–3	80.4	91.5	89.0	90.6	95.9	94.5
Elementary or Below	79.2	88.2	85.7	87.3	91.6	89.9
30–34						
College 4+	65.3	71.4	67.1	78.4	87.2	86.6
College 1–3	77.6	84.2	83.5	87.1	93.2	92.3
High School 4	78.8	88.8	87.9	89.4	95.2	94.2
High School 1–3	87.0	94.0	92.2	92.9	96.9	96.0
Elementary or Below	87.2	92.3	90.4	90.4	93.8	93.0
35–39						
College 4+	67.1	76.1	71.2	76.7	86.0	85.5
College 1–3	81.5	87.7	86.5	88.4	93.6	94.1
High School 4	82.5	90.8	91.3	89.8	94.6	95.0
High School 1–3	88.9	94.1	93.7	93.6	96.8	96.7
Elementary or Below	90.2	93.6	93.4	92.1	94.5	94.8
40–44						
College 4+	66.9	76.5	76.4	76.3	84.0	87.6
College 1–3	82.1	89.7	91.8	88.4	93.2	92.9
High School 4	84.1	91.4	94.7	89.2	94.4	96.0
High School 1–3	89.1	94.2	95.0	93.8	96.5	96.7
Elementary or Below	91.1	93.9	94.4	92.9	94.5	95.4
45–49						
College 4+	66.4	78.8	83.2	73.2	79.6	88.0
College 1–3	81.7	87.8	90.4	87.2	92.1	95.3
High School 4	85.6	90.8	94.7	89.1	94.5	95.3
High School 1–3	89.8	94.3	96.0	93.0	95.5	95.8
Elementary or Below	91.5	93.8	95.3	93.6	95.1	95.5

* Percentages not shown because of inadequate numbers.
[1] Computed from U.S. Census data for 1940 and 1950.

Somewhat contrary to expectations the increases in proportions ever married among "College 4+" women during the 1940–1950 decade were somewhat more pronounced within rural-farm than within urban and rural-nonfarm areas. Thus at ages 25–29 the percentages ever married among the whites of "College 4+" status in 1940 and 1950 were 52 and 71 per cent for the urban areas, 56 and 80 for the rural-nonfarm areas, and 47 and 78 for the rural-farm areas. Also interesting was the finding that in both 1940 and 1950, at virtually all educational levels, and at nearly all ages in the 15–40 span, the proportions ever married tended to be highest in the rural-nonfarm areas and lowest in the urban areas.

Summary

The forthcoming Census monograph will afford a broader and more intensive treatment of differential fertility data than was attempted in this preliminary report. The preliminary report, however, has pointed up the opposite nature of the 1940–1950 changes in number of children ever born among ever-married women under 35 years of age as compared with those 35 years of age and over. Among the younger women this fertility rate increased and the increase was sharpest at ages 25–29. Among the older women the rate was lower in 1950 than in 1940.

Among the younger women the 1940–1950 increases in fertility tended to be sharpest in the "upper" educational and occupational groups. Since these classes were those of lowest fertility in 1940 the 1940–1950 increases tended to diminish the range of fertility differentials by education and occupation. Nevertheless, the inverse relation of lifetime fertility to socio-economic status persisted albeit in somewhat diminished strength in 1950.

The 1940–1950 changes in *fertility ratios* by education and occupation are more drastic than the changes in total fertility rates because the former reflect more exclusively the differential increases in *current fertility*. In some age groups, particu-

larly 30–34, the highest fertility ratio for 1950 is for college graduates. However, data were adduced to indicate that at this age the "College 4+" women could have the lowest fertility rate but highest fertility ratio.

The diversity of patterns of fertility trends and differentials by age, and particularly the sharp difference between the younger and older women point up the fact that during a period of changing fertility one can never be quite up to date in the assessment of trends in differential fertility. The younger women exhibit certain new patterns of fertility differentials but one does not know what the situation of this cohort will be at the end of its childbearing period. The experience of the women 40–44 or 45–49 at the present can be observed but the 1950 Census data indicate abundantly that the sizes of their families and differentials in the sizes of their families were set in the past.

Despite the difficulties of ascertaining the full significance of trends in fertility differentials, one can, if he has sufficiently refined data and several measures of fertility available, discover the direction of the trend and a great deal more besides.