

“A Man's World” (excerpted from the online article “A Man’s Job”)

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 9.16

Flesch Reading Ease Score: 58.53

Many of the women who worked in the mines thought they were alone; they didn’t realize that what was happening to them was happening to other women, too. But it was – to other women in the mines, and to other women around the country. Women were breaking into men’s professions and they often weren’t welcome.

University of Minnesota history professor Sara Evans is the author of several books about the history of American women. Evans says people forget what it was like in the 70s, because these days, families generally have two breadwinners, and women expect to work.

“That is a fundamental shift in American culture,” she says. In the 1960s and 70s, “women who wanted to do meaningful work outside the home ... were the unusual ones, and they were the suspect ones. People assumed that work was – *real* work, you know, work with benefits, full time work, work you would identify with – was something men did.”

In 1970, nearly half the women in the United States had paying jobs, but most women worked for low pay. Women were waitresses, clerks and cleaning ladies. Less than 5 percent of lawyers were women. About 3 percent of police officers were women.

In the iron mines of northern Minnesota, zero percent of the steelworkers were women.

Congress had passed Title 9 of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, making job discrimination based on sex illegal. But sex discrimination was still common in the 70s. Evans says newspapers had two want ad sections: “help wanted – male” and “help wanted – female.” When the National Organization for Women formed, it held rallies calling on newspapers to end the practice.

Evans says women who wanted to break into men’s professions often had to sue, and not just in the blue-collar world. For example, she says, a woman sued the University of Minnesota after the department of chemistry refused to give her tenure in the 1970s.

“There was a note that was found crumpled up in a wastebasket that said, ‘No woman will ever get tenure in chemistry,’” Evans says. “And there are plenty of stories in the chemistry department of the university of women opening a drawer in their desk and finding dog feces in there or some kind of harassment like that.”

Evans says in some workplaces, men assumed there would be no women, and a locker-room atmosphere prevailed. Women who entered those places faced hostility and resentment.

“Wherever there were places women’s presence was deeply threatening to the men who worked

there, there was enormous resistance,” she says. “Whoever spoke up probably got greater harassment in the short term, for sure, so they were incredibly brave.”

When three women at Eveleth Mines spoke up, they were harassed by men and shunned by other women. In the end, their fight would break new legal ground, making way for women around the country to demand an end to harassment on the job. But they didn’t set out to be pioneers. They were just trying to make a living.

Questions

1) According to the article, the National Organization for Women demanded that newspapers

- A)** hire more women reporters.
- B)** stop running separate help wanted ads for women and men.
- C)** write more stories exposing sexual harassment.
- D)** support women’s rights in their editorials.

2) “Evans says in some workplaces, men assumed there would be no women, and a locker-room atmosphere prevailed.”

In this sentence, prevailed means

- E)** to be hidden
- F)** to be discouraged
- G)** to be common and widespread
- H)** to be enjoyed

3) The MAIN IDEA of the article is that women who started working in male-dominated professions during the 1970’s

- A)** were legally discriminated against.
- B)** weren’t welcomed in many professions by their male co-workers.
- C)** could only work in less important positions.
- D)** had a harder time as more women joined.

4) The author of the article MOST LIKELY believes that

- E)** women should be allowed to work in whatever profession they choose.
- F)** harassment was OK because it was “A Man’s World”.
- G)** women who sued were seeking revenge.
- H)** sexual harassment was less important than discrimination.

5) According to Dr. Sara Evans, women who spoke up about harrassment

- A)** were causing trouble for other women who wanted to work.
- B)** thought that it was OK because it was “A Man’s World”.
- C)** where incredibly brave.
- D)** were left alone.

6) What changed for women who went to work in the 1970’s?

- E)** Very few women ever had paying jobs before.
- F)** Women began to work in professions that provided higher paying jobs.
- G)** Title 9 of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prevented women from holding several jobs.
- H)** Most women were getting married after graduating.