



The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century (Economic History)

A. Clark

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Working life of Women in the Seventeenth Century, originally published in 1919, was the first comprehensive analysis of the daily lives of ordinary women in early modern England. It remains the most wide ranging introduction to the subject.

Clark uses a variety of documentary sources to illuminate the experience of women in the past. Gentlewomen left memoirs, letters, and household accounts detailing administration of their family estates; craftsmen's wives and widows figure in the apprenticeship and licensing records of guilds and towns; the wives of yeomen, husbandmen and labourers are glimpsed in court evidence, petitions and the registers of parish poor relief. Alice Clark's evidence dates from the later sixteenth to the early eighteenth century, and her analysis addresses a broad transition, from a medieval subsistence economy to the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Clark's conclusions about the effects of industrial capitalism on women's working conditions and contribution to the economy were controversial in her own time and remain so today. Her vivid portrayal of the everyday lives of working women - and all women who worked - in seventeenth-century England remains unsurpassed. This book was first published in 1919.



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