

Women in Cambridgeport 1865-1975

The presence of women in Cambridgeport who played an active role in the life of the city is far greater than is popularly supposed. We list here only a sample of their participation in industry, business, social organizations, education, the arts and philanthropic movements.

Women in Industry



Carter's Ink

Located on the banks of the Charles River, the company, incorporated in the nineteenth century, manufactured and bottled ink and made pens. It began with a work force of fifty men and twenty-five women. These photographs from 1911 show the building with some of its employees (left) and women in the bottling department (right).



Seaverns Piano Action Company

Located on Main Street near the river, this company supplied the well known Victorian piano maker Ivers and Pond (located nearby) with the internal mechanism of hammers and jacks. Many women worked in this building. It ceased operation in the second decade of the twentieth century.



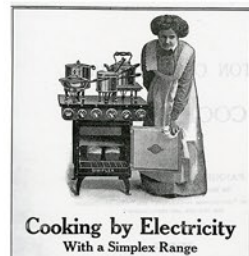
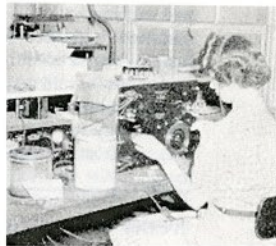
New England Confectionery Company (NECCO)

Integrating a number of Cambridge and Boston candy companies, the company took over the factory of Boston Confectionery Company on Massachusetts Avenue. Hundreds of women were employed every year from the late 19th century until recently. The drawing is from 1947 (left); the photograph is from 1987 (right).



General Radio

During the Second World War, this company took over part of the NECCO factory in Cambridgeport and hired one hundred of its employees to make spectographs for the Army. They also trained three groups of twelve young women, called GREIFS (General Radio Emergency Inspection Force), to calibrate and test the instruments. Some of these women went on to study engineering.



Women were not only employed by Simplex that had started making electric ranges and heaters but were appealed to, as consumers.

Riverside Press



The press began as a book printing and binding company in 1852 in Boston that would become part of the publishing firm of Houghton Mifflin. The bindery was located on Putnam Street and covered a number of blocks. It employed many women. One woman, Hannah Reid, who worked in the bindery for over fifty years starting in 1865, rose to the position of forewoman and received a gold watch in 1915 for her faithful service. Other women held professional positions as proofreaders for the press.

