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Working Women in Hawai'i. Hawai'i Committee for the Humanities.

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I recently viewed a fine exhibit, "Into the Marketplace: Working- Class Women in 20th Century Hawai'i." The exhibit shows changes in the working lives of women in Hawai'i during this century. <p> It begins with a depiction of a heavily agricultural workforce, in which women worked both in the fields, as well as in the packing houses. The work is hard, the wages low. Women are seen both in the rural areas and the towns. The exhibit shows the great diversity of women, native, Filipino, Japanese and Anglo. The effect of the large military presence in the island is also depicted, including a presentation of government regulated prostitution. Women are shown at work, at home, and engaging in protest. We see the work of Progressive women to win better working conditions. We also see the organizing efforts which led to important strike victories, many led by the ILWU. <p> The exhibit shows the effects of World War II on women in daily life, and then progresses, to depict their entrance into the post-war economy. With the decline of agricultural labor we are shown how women take jobs in the rapidly-emerging service sectors, including tourism. The actions of women, the role of unions, and the powers of the State are all well presented. In summary, the exhibit is powerful and highly educational. <p> The style of the display is simple and effective. It consists mostly of panels, with different images overlaid on a main theme. Above and around the display itself are articles of household life. A project of the Hawai'i Committee for the Humanities, this exhibit certainly deserves wide attention. <p>

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