A decorative scroll with a white background and a dark green border. The scroll is unrolled in the center, with the ends curling downwards. The text is centered on the scroll in a black, serif font. The scroll is surrounded by ornate, dark green floral and scrollwork decorations.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN  
AT THE TRANS-MISS

# ATTENDANCE QUESTION

Good morning! Answer this question in your notebook. We will share our answers in five minutes.

What do you know about the role of women in American society in the 1890s? Were they able to vote and go to college? What kinds of jobs were common for women?



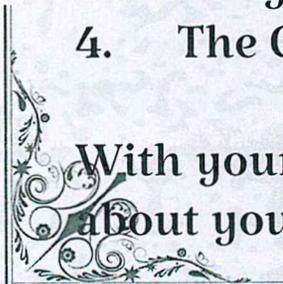


# WOMEN'S WORK AT THE EXPO

The Women's Club of Omaha desired that women should have a role in the Exposition. Led by Mrs. Lillian Resler Harford, they were put in charge of the Bureau of Education. 27 women were elected from throughout Nebraska to help with the organizational efforts. Two women from each state outside of Nebraska served on an advisory council.

Women were tasked with organizing exhibits and events in four categories:

1. Educational Exhibits – Collective and Individual
2. Women's Work
3. Congresses
4. The Girls' and Boys' Building



With your partner, read the section about your category. Then, answer the questions about your section on the back of your presentation notes.

Analyzing the Work of Women  
at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition

DIRECTIONS: Answer these questions using the reading you and your partner were given.

1. *What are two things a visitor to these exhibits or lectures would have heard or seen?*
2. *What is one thing a visitor to these exhibits would have learned about?*
3. *What made this collection of exhibits special, exciting, or rare?*
4. *Why do you think women were in charge of organizing this collection of exhibits? What does it tell you about the kinds of things women were expected to be interested in or care about?*
5. *If you were in charge of these exhibits for an Exposition held in 2025, what would you add? Think about topics or items that are relevant today.*

Name:

## Women's Work at the Expo: Educational Exhibits

**DIRECTIONS:** Work with your partner to read the section you were given about your assigned category. Then answer the questions on the back of your presentation notes sheet.

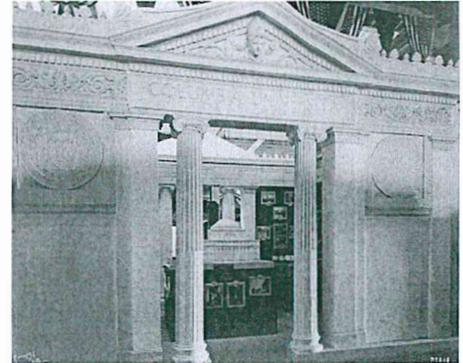
### Educational Exhibits at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition

At the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, there was a special effort to include educational exhibits.

#### Collective Exhibits

The Bureau of Education wrote letters and visited many schools to get them involved. Some big universities like Columbia University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of California shared their exhibits. Several business colleges also took part.

Nebraska's exhibit was one of the largest and included displays from kindergarten through university, as well as exhibits from schools that served students with special needs. Colorado and Kansas had similar displays. Missouri focused on original work by university students and also highlighted work done by schools serving Black students, especially in practical skills. Other states like Oregon, Montana, and Los Angeles County, California, also sent displays.



To encourage participation, the Bureau offered special diplomas to the best state exhibit, the top ten county exhibits, and the best exhibit in each of 32 different categories. In total, 33 special awards were given out.

One of the most interesting exhibits was the manual training (shop class) from Omaha High School (now Central High School), run by Mr. John Wigman. It drew a lot of attention from visitors. There was also a popular exhibit of ceramic products from Colorado and Nebraska.

#### Individual Exhibits

For students whose schools didn't have an exhibit, the Bureau created a separate contest for individual entries. Students could enter in subjects like drawing, penmanship, composition, history, nature study, and manual training. 320 total entries came in.

Small diplomas were given to students with good work. About 200 of these diplomas were awarded.

In the end, the educational exhibits showed the dedication of schools and students to sharing their learning and skills with Exposition visitors.

Name:

## Women's Work at the Expo: Women's Work

**DIRECTIONS:** Work with your partner to read the section you were given about your assigned category. Then answer the questions on the back of your presentation notes sheet.

At the request of the Department of Exhibits, the Bureau of Education organized a section called "Woman's Work" for the 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition. Unlike other expositions where women's exhibits were kept separate, here the work of women was shown throughout all the exhibit buildings.

The Bureau of Education focused on the exhibits it was directly responsible for. For example, there were two working exhibits about food and household items. Mrs. Mac Murphy ran one in the Agricultural Building, and Miss Ranche ran another in the Girls' and Boys' Building. These exhibits included daily cooking demonstrations that many people attended.

Art needlework and ceramics (pottery and painted china) were displayed in the Liberal Arts Building. The Nebraska Ceramic Club had an especially attractive collection of hand-painted china. Women from Colorado and Missouri also created impressive exhibits of needlework and ceramics.

The Nebraska Federation of Women's Clubs set up a booth that shared information about their programs and club activities. All of these booths were set up as comfortable places for visitors to rest.



Name:

## Women's Work at the Expo: Congresses

**DIRECTIONS:** Work with your partner to read the section you were given about your assigned category. Then answer the questions on the back of your presentation notes sheet.

### The Congresses at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition organized by the Women's Bureau of Education



During the 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition, many different “Congresses” were held. These were like mini-conferences where experts came together to talk about important topics.

#### Art Congress

The Art Congress lasted three days and had six sessions. It included talks with slides about different kinds of art. These were given by some of the best-known critics and artists from the West.

#### Music Congress

The Music Congress lasted four days and included 12 sessions. More than 30 musicians and composers participated. One highlight was Indian Music Day, where experts like Miss Alice Fletcher and Mr. Francis LaFlesche shared songs from Native American cultures. Another day focused on American music, and yet another on the music of the composer Richard Wagner.

#### Monetary Congress

This congress lasted three days with five sessions. It included talks by leading bankers and finance experts from all over the United States.

#### Religion Congress

The Liberal Congress of Religion lasted four days and included nine sessions. Speakers came from many different backgrounds, including Dr. Thomas, Rabbi Hirsch, and President David Starr Jordan. This congress attracted the largest crowds of all.

#### Women's Congresses

There were several congresses focused on women's issues:

- **National Council of Women** — five days, ten sessions
- **Trans-Mississippi Congress of Women's Clubs** — three days, eight sessions
- **Suffrage Day** — one day, two sessions (led by Miss Susan B. Anthony!)
- **W.C.T.U. Day** — one session, focused on temperance
- **Mother's Congress** — two days, five sessions
- **Jewish Council of Women** — two days, six sessions

These congresses at the Exposition gave visitors a chance to learn, share ideas, and celebrate the region's progress.

Name:

## Women's Work at the Expo: Girls' and Boys' Building

**DIRECTIONS:** Work with your partner to read the section you were given about your assigned category. Then answer the questions on the back of your presentation notes sheet.

The Women's Bureau of Education wanted to make the 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition even better by building a special place just for kids. They called it the Girls' and Boys' Building. To make sure every child could take part in helping build it, they asked kids from Nebraska and nearby states to each donate five cents.

A perfect spot for the building was chosen on the northeast corner of the Grand Court. Inside, there were rooms where girls and boys could relax and enjoy books, pictures, and fun displays made just for them.

The building had 13 different exhibits. These included an International Doll Collection, a model school room, a reading room, a model kitchen with daily cooking lessons, and even a restaurant on the second floor. There were also rooms where families could rest after a long day of exploring the Exposition.

One part of the building was set aside for sleeping rooms, a dining room, and a play area for babies. For a small fee, parents could leave their young children there with trained nurses while they explored the Exposition. More than 2,000 children were cared for in this area during the Exposition.

The Girls' and Boys' Building was designed to make sure every child had a fun, safe, and educational experience at the Exposition,

