

Women and Family Life

Women

Middle Class women worked as secretaries, post mistresses and so on.

Lower Class women were: washer women, nannies, midwives.

Upper Class women did not work. They prepared tea parties and formal gatherings. They were seen as trophy wives. Their leisure activities consisted of embroidery and crotchet. Some were involved in art.

Family Life

- Majority of the families of the lower class were based on "Common-Law" relationships. As a result there was a great number of illegitimate children- Born out of wedlock. A scornful term applied to them is Bastards
- Some of them got married when they became Christians since the Church did not approve of partners living together without getting married. In most instances this was after they had children. The blacks did not like to get married if they could not afford to invite a large crowd and have plenty food.
- Single Parent households were also very common. In most instances it was the woman who was left behind to look after the children. In the 1920's, 30's and 40's the men left to fight in the World Wars, work in Central America, the United States and Canada and England.
- In the slums and ghettos of the overcrowded town areas where the lower classes lived in tenement yards like one big family. This had a negative aspect to it where frequent quarrels broke out and competition was rife.
- Among the lower class, a number of fathers had children with several different women. The women had several children for different fathers.
- Women bore the brunt of domestic responsibilities
- Nuclear: Most of the nuclear families were of upper class

- The extended family African tradition was retained. A number of children were raised jointly by parents and grandparents and even uncles and aunts living with them.
- Large families- many children born to mothers of lower class especially Africans, Indians and to a lesser extent Chinese
- The men were the main income earners "bread winners" in the upper and middle class. In the lower class the women were forced to work outside of the homes especially after the 1930s.
- Older siblings were responsible for younger ones.
- Upper Class women were seen as "home makers". This is ironic since the maids tend to take care of the children of the Upper class women.