

[Please stand by for realtime captions.]

>> Good morning everybody. Thank you all for coming my name is Robert Lopresti and I am here to talk about government statistics and women and specifically my book about it and so let's get started. I put this picture up because I know there's people who are listening from around the country and I hate when I'm listening to someone and I don't know what the person looks like so there you go. I am the government information library at Western Washington University and Bellingham is the city of subdued excitement if you have never been there I recommend. This is the book when women didn't count the chronic miss measure and marginalization of American women in federal statistic and it came out from Prager this summer in July and it is -- Prager is a branch of NBC Clio for those of you who don't know and now we are going to start out with a quiz because the most interesting way to start a discussion is with a quiz and I said least one person who came prepared she printed out the answers. So we are going to be careful about watching you there is eight questions here and I -- let's try to figure out the answers. When did the Supreme Court the Cree the differences -- 1923. Very good. The you know what the case was? I can't hear you.

>> [Indiscernible - too far from mic]

>> Yes, it was 1923. The Supreme Court had already ruled minimum wage laws were unconstitutional however, that was only for men. So the question was whether it was still legal to have a minimum wage law for women or children. Several states have them so this case came to the Supreme Court saying was it illegal to have a minimum wage for women and the decision was since the 19 amendment had given the women to vote, differences had come almost vanishing point for women's limits and constitutional freedom to be paid as low as the employee wanted to pay them. That was 1923. By the way ashes mentioned all pictures you're going to see are from government publications, they do not appear in my book however. I forgot to mention Prager got so excited to hear that I was going to speak about in front a bunch of librarians that they give me a coupon, 25% off so you or your library can buy the book at 25% off, I think it's good until the end of November. There is also some at the door if you did not pick up one. Every tenant mention a government agency or publication in the next half hour is going to be referring to a publication of the U.S. federal government or an agency of the U.S. federal government. According to the 1930 index of occupation which of these jobs was not considered peculiar or unusual for women? Butcher, sheriffs, or stonemason. Butcher? Everyone agree? It was sheriff. About according to 1930 Census about 2% of women were sheriffs. I will discuss why it was important the phrase peculiar or unusual is important we will get back to that.

>> Question number three, which government agency was created because a stunning group of girls -- a group of attractive young women for those of you who don't speak sexist, a study -- a stunning group of women lobbied for labor. Any guesses. Anyone think it was the Census Bureau ask it was the Census Bureau. Some of you are saying wait a minute the census has been around since 1790, you are right but there was not a Census Bureau in 1790. Every time the census was coming up they would trade a census office from scratch looking around for someone who knew how it was done 10 years before and they would disband the census office. Maybe not the most efficient way to do it but that's how they did it after 1900 sentences and then according to a statistician who was there, the head of the census office hired a stunning group of girls, group of attracting young women and told them if they want to keep their job had to convince Congress to set up a permanent census office otherwise they would be let go at the end of the census reports and they succeeded in convince Congress that we needed a permanent agency which is the Census Bureau.

>> Number four, moving right along, if a person wrote on a census form in 1990 that they were the spouse of someone of the same sex, how did that appear in the report? The relationship was changed unmarried partner, the relationship was left blank or their sex was changed?

>> Their sex was changed and that was the cheapest sex operation in history. Is a man listed himself as being the spouse of another man or a woman being the spouse of another woman they change that

second person to be the opposite sex. That have happened in 1990. That's how it happened in 1990. What was the radio program that the Bureau later -- the Bureau later the Bureau of Labour statistics created -- a radio show is a big deal. And the Bureau of Labor Statistics created a radio show called either housewife versus Hitler, housewife versus hunger or housewife versus economist. Any guesses? Housewife versus economist Hendrix was the acting head of the agency, and this radio show consisted of him and advising of his actual life debating the cost of living. And over the course of the show he slowly commenced his -- that his statistics were more accurate than women intuition and anecdotal evidence about what the cost of living was and the reason for this was that the Bureau of Labor Statistics was arguing with the trade unions about what the cost of living was that trade unions set based on surveys of housewife the trade union said it was the cost of living was about twice as much as the Bureau of Labor Statistics said it was why does that matter? Wages. During world war two there were wage controls and in order to get a raise you had to prove the cost of living so the union said the cost of living was higher than the Bureau of Labor Statistics said. So this housewife versus economist was an economic propaganda. Brought to you by your U.S. government.

>> How did the 19 report explain the high moral standard of female cotton mill employees? Either they had no chance for promotion, no local churches or no time to drink. C , everyone agree? No chance for promotion. This by the way of the 1000 or so sources I looked at them creating this book, my favorite glass this set, report unconditional women and child wagers in United States. In 1907 Congress authorized a study by the labor Bureau on how working outside the home affected women and children. And I don't mean how women working outside the home that the children I mean how children working out that will affect the children. There was great debate over whether it was constitutional for Congress even do such a thing proposing this study. The southern states were especially against it because that's where most of the children workers were. They went ahead anyway and what cannot what a 19 volume fact, all available on the web, this particular volume, number 15 I think, was written by Mary Cunningham and it was a report specifically on whether newfangled occupations like factor in department stores led women to [Indiscernible] crime and it's an absolutely fascinating book. What she explained was that in cotton mills women had no chance to get a raise and no chance for promotion and therefore their bosses could bribe them into doing naughty things. They said that when his behavior was extremely moral and call meals because they couldn't -- they had no chance to do any better.

>> Number seven what did the national Institute of mental health do with the first decade of data on family violence, we say domestic violence now, the first decade of family violence that they collected? Accidentally raised it, copyrighted it or dated nothing. C call yes.

>> According to the Census Bureau conference on issues in federal statistical needs relating to women, one of the speakers was Congresswoman Barbara Mikulski who retired last year as a senator and she explained that when she has hearings on family violence the national Institute of mental health said we have been studying for 10 years, it's an epidemic proportion and she said what had he done with the data you collected? And they said nothing. Well, she said government statistics are not a butterfly collection. They are not collected for your personal amusement, they are collected with tax dollars and you have to make them available to the public. I wrote a blog piece I made can I call it not a butterfly collection.

>> Question number eight, and 2011 let me remind you senator Jon Kyl set on the floor of the Senate that he wanted to Planned Parenthood to be defunded because when someone wants an abortion they go to Planned Parenthood and that's 90% of what they do. And when it was pointed out that actual number was 3%, abortion is 3% of what they do, what did he do, I do apologize, change the official transcript, or denied saying it. You all know what he did. He changed the congressional record. So the congressional record now claimed that what he said if you want an abortion you go to Planned Parenthood and that was Planned Parenthood does.

>> I would have given out prices but there were so few people and I started the quiz that it didn't make sense. Sorry about that. All these pictures are real. The colors is action artifact of the copying process, it was a black and white picture but that's an official housewife uniform from 1918. No, they did not give them out at stores. It's a little confusing because it really did say official housewife uniform but it was not really an official uniform for housewife. It was a uniform for official housewife. During World War I they actually hired women to go out and explain to other women what food they should be using or how not to waste food and how not to use cash to use corn and those people who went door-to-door our community to committee were the official housewife of the food service and were wearing those uniforms. How do I get started why did this happen? When I was in library school, when you open a reference book for the first time you open it from the back. You can tell from the title at the front section is going to be. The apprentices, their weird things are going to be in the back but when I discovered when you open a prefix book, you should open it from the front and read the introduction because that's where they will explain what went wrong with the numbers that and I tell people this is not about the numbers. There is from numbers in it but this is not a book about statistical tables at the footnote at the bottom of the statistical tables, that's what my book is about. I was hoping someone with 1920 census specifically the volume on occupation and I was looking through the introduction and I found something that caught my attention immediately. I don't know if any of you have ever seen this, the census is from the same time.. Unusual occupation for women. The 14th census takers the ones who went door-to-door as in previous census recorded women alive occupations which would be very surprising to be in. When those records came back to the senses and they notice that women were in unusual occupation they looked to see what the mistake was. And if they figured out the mistake they corrected it so they changed a whole lot of doctors and nurses and Julie to jewelry store clerks think& And they said if we could not figure out what the mistake was we left it almost certain women were not working as blacksmith, plumbers telephone lineman etc. and reading this over 100 years of hindsight, how many women pioneers in their fields were just erased out of history because of what is known as the fallacy of personal -- it can't be true because I don't believe it. By the way it's worth pointing out that if a man was and that he was in one of those occupations nobody checked. Only if it was a woman. At this point I was realizing Emily a few years from possible retirement and I have been working at a university for 30 years and I never apply for sabbatical. Which is like one the best things you can have so I said what kind of project can I do, it has to be a big great project. I remember this interesting table, this interesting piece of information so I proposed that I get three quarters of an academic year to work on this book and they gave me to, and then I went to look for a publisher and number three, third choice rejected me, number one was ABC Clio, they bought it and immediately transmitted to breaker which is the more general section which is great and on the day after the contract and send it back to them the number two publisher offered to buy it. I called my wife and said this is as close as I'm ever going to get to Stephen King. What's in this book? You may well ask. I took the entire 250 page text, a lot of it is footnotes, and these are the 50 where they came up the most often. The first time I did it was with a different company word cloud system in the word that came up the most often with men. And I just had a heart attack. That I actually mentioned the word men more often than women? What had happened? They found the word men in the word women. So I found a better word cloud system so there you go.

>> Who is the target audience? Ideal reader, the one I was aiming at. The when I was aiming at were college students, who want to look for a topic to write about any of these areas. There are 27 chapters in the book and I was in the business for almost 30 years before I really decided what a reference book is. It used to be I ask a student with a reference book and they said a book you cannot check out. I realize that a reference book is a nonfiction book that is not meant to be read cover to cover that dictionaries and encyclopedias act lessons, you do not read cover to cover. You open them up to the Secretary. he wanted that's true of this book as well. You can open up on the chapter on women and the military, prostitution, housewives, and just read that chapter without reading all the others know

what's going on. And if a student was interested in was the definition of a housewife they can read chapter enables analog of topics to write a paper on and a lot of primary sources to work on. That's the purpose of this. And what are my main sources? Western Washington University has about 200,000 government documents so that was a major source. Another one was hoppy trust. And I think them in the book because all you ever heard from me were complaints. Lies the whole -- why isn't the whole text, this is public domain. And again I send them a love letter telling them how awesome they are. Government websites like the census one, I found the information about the 1990 census and the library alone, intra-library alone. So the take away? What's the most important thing I learned doing government -- doing this book? Is not going to be a surprise to you, it was not a surprise to me. Social statistics are very subjective. The speed of light presumably is the same all the time of the number of tailors in United States depends on who's counting tailors. And I like to point out if you're not counting how many women tailors they were, you don't know how many men tailors there were. It works both ways. To explain to someone to give you an example of gainful employment. When I proposed the book I do not have a chapter in the table of contents for gainful employment but I had to do one as it turned out so how many of you have heard the word gainfully employed, gainful occupation? What is the definition? The census did not know either. The first statistic on implement 1850 and there were only interested in statistics about three males, as in 1900 report said they were not interested in females or slaves. And in 1860 did it include statistics on women but they did not publish them. They collected them but they did not publish them. 1870 the finally got to statistic that men and women however, that's when the term info implement magically appeared. And again they did not the fine it. 91% of men were gainfully employed and only 16% of women which led to the obvious question what the heck were all those women doing all day sitting around eating bonbons presumably. So the man in charge of the census Francis Mesa Walker, he said it should not be hard to explain what these women were doing. Here is his explanation. Let's assume that about 100,000 women are poppers, criminals or vagrants, that gets rid of them. And for every family at the census recorded there must be a woman keeping house. And not working. Keeping house were the quotation marks for his. He did not go but the records to prove any of this, this is what scientists call handwaving. It must be true because it's really convenient if it is. So that left about one half million women doing nothing apparently and those are widows, and grown daughters living at home and people like that. Even then a lot of people said what they did not believe his isolation and of course since then a lot of people have not believed vaccination. Explanation that have been most prominent since then is the reason women were not listed with occupations is nobody asked the women if they had occupations. When they came to the door and ask them the had a job and they said yes. This is the case but this is Walker Nunez and in another report he said just human nature. Men are going to forget ask women if they had a job. That's the first thing in second unpaid independent women workers, classic examples women doing piecework, they go to the factory, they get cloth, they make a shirt, and they go back. Is the Census Bureau going to know about the stop? Probably not. Women take eggs and milk to the market. That's the Census Bureau that that know that that was an occupation probably not. And boarding houses most importantly in the early 20s century were the most important informal occupation for women. What's the difference between a larger or a border? Anyone know? A larger is something up a live in your house, a border has room and board and someone who has also -- who also eats. Let's take this as an example. Joe works in a factory and he gets paid one dollar per day say brings him home six dollars per week. His wife Mary takes in borders and she cooks for them she couldn't -- she cleans and she takes in seven dollars per week. According to the census these two are both gainfully employed. Joe gets a promotion and now making eight dollars per week. Mary job has not changed how she doing the same work, she is getting the same amount of money, she is no longer gainfully employed. According to the senses you only counted somewhere gainfully employed as a boarding housekeeper if that was the primary source of income for the house. Does that make sense? I should say do you understand me?

>> This is probably a good chance to point out that by the door they are coupons that are 20% off the book for you are your library. Feel free. We are still in 1870, jumping ahead to 1900. Do we have a definition for gainful implement yet? No, we don't. The census office the 1900 census they were beginning to get nervous about it so they wanted to point out in the interaction that we are talking about gainful employment, not productive employment. What's the difference? They give an example that professional athletes and clairvoyants, most people are not considered -- most people would not consider that productive employment but it is gainful employment. Those people would be lifted as gainfully employed by the senses. On the other hand a farm woman who is keeping the family business the books for the family business everyone would agree she is productively employed but she is not gainfully employed. In 1910 they finally used the magic word we have all been waiting for, pay. To be gainfully employed you have to be getting paid and here's an example. Doctor Jones hired a secretary and Pater two dollars per week to keep the books, check the appointment and run the office what we call practice management today so that's two dollars he is losing out of his household income every week. He marries her and now she is doing the same stuff and not getting paid for it. She is no longer gainfully employed. Because she's not getting paid, doing the same work but not getting paid for it. At the same time 1910 census number women gainfully employed rose by almost 1%. What happened? The answer is according to Alma Edwards, it was a man by the way, his isolation was the head of the census there was a change in census instructions which set it's just as important to record a woman or a child job as a man's job. You must ask whether they have jobs or not. Oddly enough that cost the number women employed to be according to this statistics to be raised dramatically and that happened especially with farm women. Infant parts of the country the number women working as farmworkers went up by almost 300% and left instructions about farmworkers the 1920 census they changed instructions and the numbers of employed women dropped. Ever since then people have been arguing whether 1919 20 were accurate in 1910 was artificially inflated or whether 1910 was the only one that was accurate. And that's never going to be settled. 1940 census they finally got rid of gainfully employed and replace it with -- anyone know? A different concept entirely. Labor force. The idea think about 1930, the Great Depression had just started, Mr. Jones you have an occupation, yes, I am a plumber. Have not working five years got 10 years, is listed as a plumber. Are they asking Mrs. Jones whether he has an occupation? Probably not. They realize that that was working severity for needed change to come to to the labor force and they did not ask whether you have an occupation, they said are you currently in the labor force? You have a job or are you looking for a job? At that point the statistics for women became a lot more accurate. At this point I will be happy to entertain questions. But I'm also having to take your picture because of my brother in law did not believe anyone would show up for this.

>> Smile. [laughter]

>> Questions.

>> [Indiscernible - too far from mic]

>> For those of you who could not hear, she was telling me how wonderful I am. She was saying I will paraphrase, she spends a lot of time telling people that statistics depend on who is collecting then and she was grateful to see this evidence for that fact. Is that a fair description? Thank you very much. In the introduction of the book and list some of the topics that are mentioned but I would love to see someone actually turn them into a book like when African Americans did not count. When the disabled did not count, when gays did not count. It would be wonderful to see whole series of these books and you're welcome to do it because I'm not going to write it. This took two years of my life.

>> I was going to concur with everyone that this is excellent work. What was your biggest challenge writing this book?

>> Finding the time to do it because I had six months off. I have to say my boss is very helpful in saying take Fridays off over the summer. You have to find time -- you can good-if at a time. The challenge the challenge was just making sure I found them all. There is a woman I'm not going to get her name right

but I think it might be HULS she wrote a big bibliography got the moment of terror that you find out you didn't use Jones's book, you don't want to find that out there was this great source that you did not know about Scott I'm an expert in this field. That was the challenge to make sure I quote everything.

>> That I mentioned the coupons in the back?

>> The issue with the census, the women was counted as part of the population, their occupation was not recorded.

>> They wanted to know how many women there were, there is a chapter in here on population. Just a second. Let me review my favorite passage beginning of the chapter on population and age. And especially part of 1900 sense of the office road with evidence satisfaction in regards to at least one question there is no ambiguity of terms and in United States is no unwillingness on the part of any race age or class of operations give correct answers to questions of sex. There's only two sexes, men or women and no disagreement about that. 100 years later that's not exactly a topic that's going on.

>> Did you develop a strategy for finding additional sources when you notice a hole in the census?

>> This primary source -- there is primary and secondary sources and I read the introduction of every volume of very census that had an introduction. When I found things that did not make sense I went to look for secondary sources and I looked in all the books and journal articles I could find that discussed women in the census so that was basically my strategy.

>> Other questions?

>> I also want to thank you for writing this book. I put in a purchase order before I came here so I bought it without benefit of your coupon.

>> I can't do anything about that.

>> That's fine. It seems to me that a couple of the examples you gave us about the census data collection, it's almost as though the Census Bureau tailored the questions to get the results that they wanted like the one year when they counted women and then they thought they got too many so was the reaction to that the next census they didn't do it the same way?

>> In my opinion absolutely did in 1920 change the question so they would get fewer people. To be fair I think they thought they were being more accurate by doing that. You following me? I'm not assuming that they dated with malice aforethought but everything obviously one farmworker can be a cash one farmworker in for can't be a woman. One writer and I don't remember which one commentator said by lowering the number of women farmworkers in 1910 and raising the number of women in 1920 which stated artificially, they got a smoother curve at the commentator said there is no obvious reason why a smoother curve is more accurate.

>> You mentioned the labor force numbers starting to reflect more accuracy. Do you think there's any correlation between that and introduction of sampling?

>> That's a great question I don't know.

>> My question is about data that were collected but never published. Had any of those ever been released and part of the official record now?

>> Not to my knowledge. Certainly -- does everyone know about pums? Is a sample of full records, 5% sample that has been released by the census so if you have that computer power you can crunch it anyway you want. I don't know if they have those 86 figures or not but one of the things that fascinating they get to find out how the people listed themselves as prostitutes which the Census Bureau did not give out that information the reason they would not give it out is because they said that they were inaccurately low because most people who are prostitutes listed themselves as seamstresses or something else.

>> When you are talking about changing women's profession because it was illogical that they were these professions, when that changed in the aggregate information and will that information to be in the population schedules?

>> Written population schedules are handwritten and they will say whatever people wrote on the or whatever the census taker wrote on them.

>> Sometimes if you're interested Google Robert Highline 1940 census. Famous science fiction writer everything that's written on that line is completely inaccurate.

>> [Indiscernible - too far from mic]

>> Other questions?

>> How do you think if you think this work might inform future censuses are be more inclusive to the future?

>> I have very little hope for the 2020 senses. I don't think I need to explain why God i don't know whether it will have an effect or not, I'm not egotistical enough to think that. Annie pessimist. I'm a pessimist. I would love to see if it did.

>> I will tell you my one favorite document that I found that

>> Did you find any congressional impact?

>> No. I did not find any evidence that Congress tried to change the census. Doesn't mean that it didn't happen but I did not find it.

>> I guess we are done. Thank you very much.

>> [Applause]

>> [Event concluded]

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