

Insight into "my mother never worked"

[Family](#), [Mother](#)



In her essay in *Women: A Journal of Liberation* magazine published in 1975, "My Mother Never Worked," Bonnie Smith-Yackel, author of several essays, book reviews and short stories in various magazines and newspapers, proclaims that society belittles women and the work they do. She does so by sharing a glimpse of the hard labor her mother did in her adult life, such as doing strenuous work on a farm with her husband, raising eight children and many more tasks as a mother, such as, keeping the house clean, sewing and cooking for her enormous family. She ends the essay with a discouraging view of a conversation with a social security office worker, shortly after her mother's death, who denies her of a death benefit check, simply because her mother did not work under the government for her pay. Smith-Yackel develops her thesis by looking at the overwhelming responsibilities her mother had, that the social security office did not consider a profession. She begins by framing the essay with the phone conversation dialogue. She then goes on to reminisce about her mother's effort throughout her lifetime, giving a brief biography of her mother's exhausted list of skills she learned to help manage the farm, while still fulfilling the role of a mom of a rather large family. One of the last thoughts she has is of her mother still cooking, ironing and sewing at the age of 75, from her wheelchair. She then ends the essay with the sudden and painful realization that her mother did not work, in government terms, according to the social security office. Bonnie's purpose is to show society's lack of acknowledgement to ladies who undertake the vigorous role as a wife, mother and homemaker, in order to make her readers aware of the depreciation culture has put on women and to convict a stirring emotion about the character women play in society- under

government pay check or not. Smith-Yackel's audience was those sensitive to feministic viewpoints, seeing how it was published in *Women: A Journal of Liberation* and *Ms.* in the mid 70's. Her tone is softly convicting and arousing of compassion, in the effort to conjure thoughts of second guessing what the society says about women's roles. This essay is significant because it challenges her readers to reconsider the way humanity degrades women and the responsibilities they have.