

DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF ORAN 2 MOHAMED BEN AHMED



FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

A Dissertation submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy  
for the Degree of Doctorate in Science (American Civilization)

***The Rise of Feminism in the United States and its Impact  
on the American Society (1840's-1990's)***

**Presented by:**

**Mrs. Amina CHIALI**

**Board of Examiners:**

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*Academic Year 2022/2023*

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## **DEDICATION**

*To the memory of my father who taught me to believe in myself.*

*I miss you more than words can say, and I look forward to the day we meet again.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*First of all, I would like to thank the Almighty God for giving me enough courage to complete this humble research work.*

*I am deeply grateful to my supervisor Dr. Farouk BENABDI for his endless support, patience and precious advice throughout the whole process of writing this thesis.*

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*Last but not least, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my family, notably my husband and daughters. Without their understanding and constant support, this process would have been much more difficult. Thank you for being there, even on the tough days.*



## **DECLARATION**

I hereby certify that this thesis is the result of my own research work, and that references to other people's research have been duly cited. I have read the university's current research ethics guidelines, and I am aware of and understand the university's policy on plagiarism.

Amina CHIALI

**Abstract****The Rise of Feminism in the United States and its Impact on the American Society (1840's-1990's)**

This thesis is concerned with the rise of the feminist movement in the United States of America. It aims to examine the divergence of the movement, and how it changed the American social life due to the appearance of the "new independent woman". Therefore, the work analyses the evolution of feminism from a movement asking for White women's basic rights to a movement attacking the institutions of marriage and motherhood. The main focus is on the first two waves. While the first wave leaders' intention was to guarantee women's civil and political rights, the "second wavers" blamed society for having renewed the notion of housewifery after World War II. In addition, we discuss the main reasons that pushed, later on, Black women to organize their own feminist movement.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Patriarchy, Suffrage, Woman's rights.

**Résumé****L'Emergence du Féminisme aux États-Unis et son Impact sur la Société Américaine (1840's-1990's)**

Cette thèse s'intéresse à l'émergence du mouvement féministe aux États-Unis d'Amérique. Elle vise à examiner les divergences du mouvement et la manière dont il a changé la vie sociale américaine suite à l'apparition de la "nouvelle femme indépendante". Par conséquent, cette recherche analyse l'évolution du féminisme, d'un mouvement demandant les droits fondamentaux des femmes blanches à un mouvement s'attaquant aux institutions de mariage et maternité. L'accent est mis sur les deux premières vagues. Alors que l'intention des leaders de la première vague était de garantir les droits civils et politiques des femmes, la deuxième vague a reproché à la société d'avoir renouvelé la notion de la femme soumise après la Seconde Guerre mondiale. De plus, nous tentons de clarifier les principales raisons qui ont poussé les femmes Noires à organiser leur propre mouvement féministe.

**Mots clés :** Féminisme, Patriarcat, Suffrage, Droits de la femme.

**ملخص****نهوض الحركة النسوية في الولايات المتحدة وتأثيرها على المجتمع الأمريكي (1840-1990)**

تهتم هذه الأطروحة بدراسة نهوض الحركة النسوية في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية وتهدف الى فحص انحراف الحركة وكيف أثرت على المجتمع الأمريكي نتيجة الظهور الجديد "للمرأة المستقلة". لهذا الغرض، قمنا بتحليل تطور الحركة النسوية من حركة تطالب بالحقوق الأساسية للنساء البيض إلى حركة تهاجم الزواج والأمومة. ومنه، فقد تم تسليط الضوء على الموجتين الأوليين. في حين كانت نية قادة الموجة الأولى ضمان الحقوق المدنية والسياسية للمرأة، ألقى قادة الموجة الثانية اللوم على المجتمع بسبب تجديد فكرة المكوث بالبيت والاهتمام بالأسرة، بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تحاول هذه الأطروحة استفسار الأسباب التي دفعت النساء السود الى تنظيم حركة نسوية خاصة بهن.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الحركة النسوية، الأبوية، الاقتراع، حقوق المرأة.

## **List of Acronyms**

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>ADA</b>   | Americans with Disabilities Act                             |
| <b>AERA</b>  | American Equal Rights Association                           |
| <b>AFDC</b>  | Aid to Families with Dependent Children                     |
| <b>ANC</b>   | Aid to Needy Children                                       |
| <b>ARC</b>   | American Red Cross  |
| <b>AWSA</b>  | American Woman Suffrage Association                         |
| <b>CIA</b>   | Central Intelligence Agency                                 |
| <b>CRC</b>   | Combahee River Collective                                   |
| <b>ERA</b>   | Equal Rights Amendment                                      |
| <b>FBI</b>   | Federal Bureau of Investigation                             |
| <b>FMLA</b>  | Family and Medical Leave Act                                |
| <b>LGBTQ</b> | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer               |
| <b>NAACP</b> | National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People |
| <b>NACW</b>  | National Association of Coloured Women                      |
| <b>NASA</b>  | National Aeronautics and Space Administration               |
| <b>NAWSA</b> | National American Woman Suffrage Association                |
| <b>NBFO</b>  | National Black Feminist Organization                        |
| <b>NFAAW</b> | National Federation of Afro American Women                  |
| <b>NOW</b>   | National Organization for Women                             |
| <b>NWPC</b>  | National Women’s Political Caucus                           |
| <b>NWRO</b>  | National Welfare Rights Organization                        |
| <b>NWSA</b>  | National Woman Suffrage Association                         |
| <b>SCLC</b>  | Southern Christian Leadership Conference                    |
| <b>SNCC</b>  | Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee                   |
| <b>SPAR</b>  | Semper Paratus Always Ready                                 |
| <b>STOP</b>  | Stop Taking Our Privileges                                  |
| <b>USO</b>   | United Service Organization                                 |
| <b>VAWA</b>  | Violence Against Women Act                                  |
| <b>WAC</b>   | Women’s Army Corps  |

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>WAFS</b>  | Women's Auxiliary Ferry Squadron               |
| <b>WASP</b>  | Women's Airforce Service Pilots                |
| <b>WAVES</b> | Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service |
| <b>WCTU</b>  | Woman's Christian Temperance Union             |
| <b>WEAL</b>  | Women's Equity Action League                   |
| <b>WFTD</b>  | Women's Flying Training Detachment             |
| <b>WMC</b>   | War Manpower Commission                        |

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Feminism is frequently portrayed as a social movement composed of liberal women concerned with the equality between the sexes, and more rights for women in all domains of life. It was born out of that doctrine based on the belief that women have been suffering from a patriarchal system which has always oppressed them. The movement's leaders argue that dominant social and political ideology has widely accepted and affirmed that women are physically and mentally inferior to men, and that their role should be limited to child-bearing and raising, as well as household responsibilities; while men's place is in the public sphere. According to feminists, there are no intrinsic gender distinctions, and the so-called gender roles are only the result of social convention. They, therefore, believe that women should possess the same economic, political and social rights as those enjoyed by men.

Accordingly, feminism (also known as the Women's Rights Movement) took place in different places of the world to fight against gender inequality and sex discrimination. For example, it appeared in such European countries as France, Greece, Germany and Great Britain. Then, the idea spread to the United States of America and Arab countries. Women asked for their right to education, their right to have a job, their right to vote and participate, directly, in political matters. In short, they wanted to be considered as full human beings and not to be marginalized.



A long time before the rise of feminism, as an organized movement, some sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries women had tried to challenge the patriarchal system, which refused to grant merit to women's views. Anne Hutchinson, Mary Dyer, Mary Wollstonecraft, Abigail Adams, Catherine the Great, Olympe de Gouge were some examples. In the United States, Abigail Adams discussed women's rights and women's marginalization in her correspondence with her husband John Adams, the second American president (1797-1801). In Great Britain, Mary Wollstonecraft became well known for her 1792 *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, where she argued that women were not naturally inferior to men as claimed by society. She emphasized that women should have an education appropriate to their social status since they were supposed to be necessary to the country for the only reason that it was women's responsibility to educate their nation's children, and to be "companions" to their husbands rather than just wives. Wollstonecraft is now considered as one of the founding feminist philosophers, and her life and works are, frequently, cited by feminists as being important and influential.

Then, gradually, through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, women started to speak out, publicly, against the daily gender inequality they faced. For instance, in her article, *Appels aux Femmes (Call to Women)*, the French Jeanne Deroin criticized the unfair treatment vis-à-vis French women. The German Louise Otto published a weekly periodical, *Frauen Zeitung (Women's Journal)*, to encourage German women to organize themselves and to fight against men's supremacy. Simone de Beauvoir's treatise, *The Other Sex*, also dealt with women's oppression. In addition to those early women's advocates, various female organizations were established throughout the twentieth century, and helped women to mostly overcome the quasi-universal restrictions that existed against them.

On the basis of different readings, one may note that some historians and scholars find feminism as a movement that has brought women more autonomy and consideration.

However, others view that movement as the worst thing that has happened for it has caused harm to women and society. Due to these two opposed views, an attempt is made in this study to analyse the case of feminism in the United States, its evolution, its accomplishments, and its impact on the American society to demonstrate the negative side – very often neglected – of that social movement. Thus, the following research questions may be raised: How did feminism emerge in the United States? What caused the movement's deviation? Why did Black women give birth to their own feminist movement? How did feminism change the American social life?

The nature of this topic requires a qualitative analysis of significant historical events and achievements during a specific period in the American history. For this reason, four main chapters have been elaborated to provide the reader with clear answers to the above questions. The first chapter deals with the first feminist wave, led by middle-class White women from 1848 until 1920, to focus on education and women's suffrage. A general description of White women, during the colonial and revolutionary periods, is made to give the reader an idea about the crucial roles women played before being marginalized by men. Then, some examples about early women's advocates, who expressed their discontent before the rise of feminism as an organized movement, are cited. The chapter also talks about the anti-slavery movement and how it provided women with the necessary experience to organize, later on, their own movement. The last point to be discussed in chapter one is the rise of the Women's Rights Movement, and the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to grant all American women their right to vote.

Regarding chapter two, the main focus is on the second feminist wave that emerged, about two decades after World War II (1939-1945), to fight against sex discrimination in the workplace, in addition to asking for other rights. Its liberal feminist leaders encouraged women to free themselves from the burdens of marriage, childcare, and domestic labour, and

to undertake professional careers. Gradually, the idea of domesticity that was renewed and well accepted by the majority of American people, immediately after the end of World War II, started to be rejected during the 1960's because of new feminist influence.

The third chapter of this dissertation will examine the circumstances that pushed Black women to organize their own feminist movement separately from the one led by White women. In this chapter, the reader will understand how Black feminism accelerated with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement, to protect Black women from sex and race discrimination. I will also explain how women of colour made substantial strides in different fields of life despite the sex and race discrimination they had witnessed since their arrival, as slaves, on the American soil.

As far as chapter four is concerned, it highlights the situation of feminism during the 1980's and 1990's, mainly during the Reagan, Bush and Clinton Administrations, to explain the Republicans' and Democrats' reaction towards women's demands. In addition to this, the chapter discusses how the media opposed the movement, and how the latter harmed both society and women (White and Black) because of the negative changes it caused.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **The Rise of First Wave Feminism in the United States of America (1840-1920)**

American first wave feminism refers to a period of feminist activity that lasted from the middle of the nineteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century. In fact, feminism occurred in a lot of countries throughout the world during a period when women were unsatisfied with the life they were having, and started to think of a better status within their societies. In the United States of America (see map 1 on page 6), White middle class women established their own Women's Rights Movement to denounce gender inequalities, and to fight against men's supremacy. At the beginning, the movement focused on education and other civil rights, then, by the end of the nineteenth century, it insisted on the issue of gaining the right to vote for women and became known as the Woman's Suffrage Movement.

A long time before the emergence of an officially organized feminist movement, American women had expressed their grievances in different ways. They had tried to prove that they had the potential to be involved in the public sphere, just as much as men. The following chapter attempts to answer the following questions: How was American women's life before the rise of the Women's Rights Movement? Why did they protest against their society, particularly men? Who were those courageous women who dared to challenge that patriarchal society? What did they do? What did they ask for, and how did they influence the

younger generation to establish the American Women's Rights Movement to bring social reforms in America?

Map 1: United States Map



**Source:** <https://www.infoandopinion.com/maps/usa-map-download-free-map-of-united-states/>

## 1. Women's Status in Colonial and Revolutionary America

A number of English middle-class men went to America during the seventeenth century to look for new economic opportunities. The women who accompanied those men (their wives, mothers, sisters and daughters) during that period were very often referred to as the Founding Mothers because of the great role they played to found what is today the United States of America. They helped their men in different kinds of tasks to build their own nation

but, unfortunately, after independence in 1783, men started to consider women as inferior beings and to ignore their strong presence in the development of the American society. As it was noticed by the author Carl N. Degler: “If one examines the past with the object of seeing women, they do in fact emerge as much more important and in a greater number of activities than traditional history has allowed.”<sup>1</sup>

Women were responsible for cleaning the house, washing, cooking, taking care of their children as well as their husbands. They also grew vegetables, cultivated such crops as corn and beans, and gathered fruit and some plants needed for the preparation of certain kinds of medicine. In addition, they made soap, candles and many other important items since the colonists were not rich enough to import everything from the mother country. Moreover, they learned from Native Americans how to prepare some pills and syrups by themselves to cure their family members. It was also their responsibility to Chop trees, to carry logs in order to make fire, and to make their own clothes. The latter activity required them both time and effort because they had, first, to produce thread before they transformed it into cloth to finally obtain beautiful and functional garments.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, women engaged in other activities to improve the living standards of their families and to make wealth. They, therefore, ran taverns and print shops, they worked as shoemakers and blacksmiths, and they sold large quantities of butter they produced from their cows’ milk. Some of them were at the origin of America’s first bakeries, and used their own recipes to make apple tarts, almond pudding and orange cream.<sup>3</sup>

By the second half of the eighteenth century, and thanks to women’s help, American settlers had become financially stronger and had been able to improve their economic situation. The fact that encouraged the British King George III (1760-1820) to impose taxes

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<sup>1</sup> Carl N. Degler, *Is There a History of Women?* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph G. Rayback, *A History of American Labour*, New York, First Free Press Edition, 1966, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Elaine Landau, *Hidden Heroines : Women in American History*, New York, Julian Messner, 1975, p. 24.

on such important items as textiles, milk, sugar and tea in order to make the colonists participate in the homeland's treasury. However, the colonists grew angry and refused to pay any taxes since they had no representation in the British parliament. They, therefore, decided to boycott the importation of certain British products to affect Britain's economy.<sup>4</sup>

The boycott was highly supported by women who, soon, organized the Non-Importation Association. The latter encouraged the population to stop purchasing and consuming British products, notably tea; the favourite drink of the colonists.<sup>5</sup> To prove her determination to support the boycott, a woman from Philadelphia said: "I have removed every English import from the family dinner table. We have not drunk tea since last Christmas and do not expect to again until we have won the war."<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the King ignored the colonists' discontent and continued to impose taxes on the above-mentioned products.

To express their wish for an official separation from Great Britain, and to express their desire to be totally free in a new republic with a new government, prominent leaders as George Washington, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, issued the famous document: *The Declaration of Independence* on July 4, 1776 (see appendix I). By that document, the American colonists made it clear that they wanted to set up their own nation where people should be free, and protected by their government. They proclaimed: "all men are created equal."<sup>7</sup> as a result, the conflict between the colonists and the British – about taxation – developed into a war (the War of Independence) that lasted until 1783.

Once again, American men relied on women to help them achieve independence and, as usual, women did their best to support the war. In this respect, Christopher Gadsden (1724-

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<sup>4</sup> Linda K. Kerber, 'L'Action des Femmes dans la Révolution Américaine' in Christine Fauré, *Encyclopédie : Politique et Historique des Femmes*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1997, p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> Elaine Landau, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth Prewitt & Sidney Verba, *Principles of American Government*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, New York, Harper & Row Publishers, 1980, pp. 327-328.

1805), an American patriot from South Carolina, acknowledged the very generous contributions that had been made by women during the War of Independence. He said: “unless we persuaded our wives to support us, we could not succeed.”<sup>8</sup>

From the day the American Revolution broke out, women responded positively and engaged in different kinds of tasks and activities because of the necessity of their contribution to the war effort. Therefore, they formed a patriotic organization known as the *Daughters of Liberty*. Its programme was to spin large quantities of cloth to make soldiers’ uniforms. Every woman wrote her name on the uniforms she sewed to prove her participation in the war, and her desire to be involved in the cause. In addition to making uniforms, women knitted countless socks, sweaters, scarves and made bandages for the American troops. They also cooked for the soldiers and did the laundry. Some of them joined the army’s camps to help the sick and the wounded.<sup>9</sup>

The *Ladies Association* was another female patriotic organization. Founded in Philadelphia in May, 1780, by Esther De Berdt Reed (1746-1780) and Sarah Franklin Bache (1743-1808), the organization aimed at raising as much money as possible to buy military supplies. Hence, its members, whose number exceeded one thousand and a half, decided to go from door to door to collect money, and, of course, women from all classes responded enthusiastically to this call and gave whatever they could. Some of them donated valuable items like golden clocks, forks, and spoons. A poor woman, whose husband had been killed during the fight, insisted on offering her gold wedding ring to the organization saying: “My husband gave his life for our freedom. Now it’s my turn to help. I am giving my most precious remembrance of him.”<sup>10</sup> The *Ladies Association* was able to raise \$300,000 and the

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<sup>8</sup> Linda K. Kerber, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>9</sup> Linda Grant De Pauw, *Founding Mothers: Women of America in the Revolutionary Era*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975, p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> Elaine Landau, op. cit., pp. 39-40.



equivalent of \$7,500 in gold.<sup>11</sup> The *Ladies Association* was so successful that the idea spread to other colonies among which New Jersey, South Carolina and Massachusetts.<sup>12</sup>

Besides the above-mentioned female organizations, other more courageous women expressed their patriotism in a different way. For the sake of illustration, it is worthwhile to cite some examples. Deborah Sampson (1760-1827) disguised herself as a man and served in the American Army for two years, under the name of Robert Shurtliff, before her identity was discovered because of a serious wound.<sup>13</sup>

Another woman called Mary Ludwig McCauley accompanied her husband to his camp in New Jersey where she met other women who had come with their sons. They were called camp followers, and were supposed to cook for the soldiers and wash their clothes. On a hot summer morning, Mary noticed the soldiers' physical weakness that really required some help. She, therefore, took her husband's weapon and encouraged the other women to do the same in order to fight the advancing enemy.<sup>14</sup>

It is also important to speak about Sybil Ludington (1761-1839) and Elizabeth Burgin (1760-1787) who were the most remarkable spies during the American Revolution. The former was only sixteen years old when she, courageously, rode about forty-four miles at night to inform the patriots about an attack on Danbury, Connecticut, (see map 2) that the British were preparing.<sup>15</sup> Burgin, on the other hand, helped American prisoners to escape and she gave information to the patriots about the British plans to attack the American Army.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Linda Grant De Pauw, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

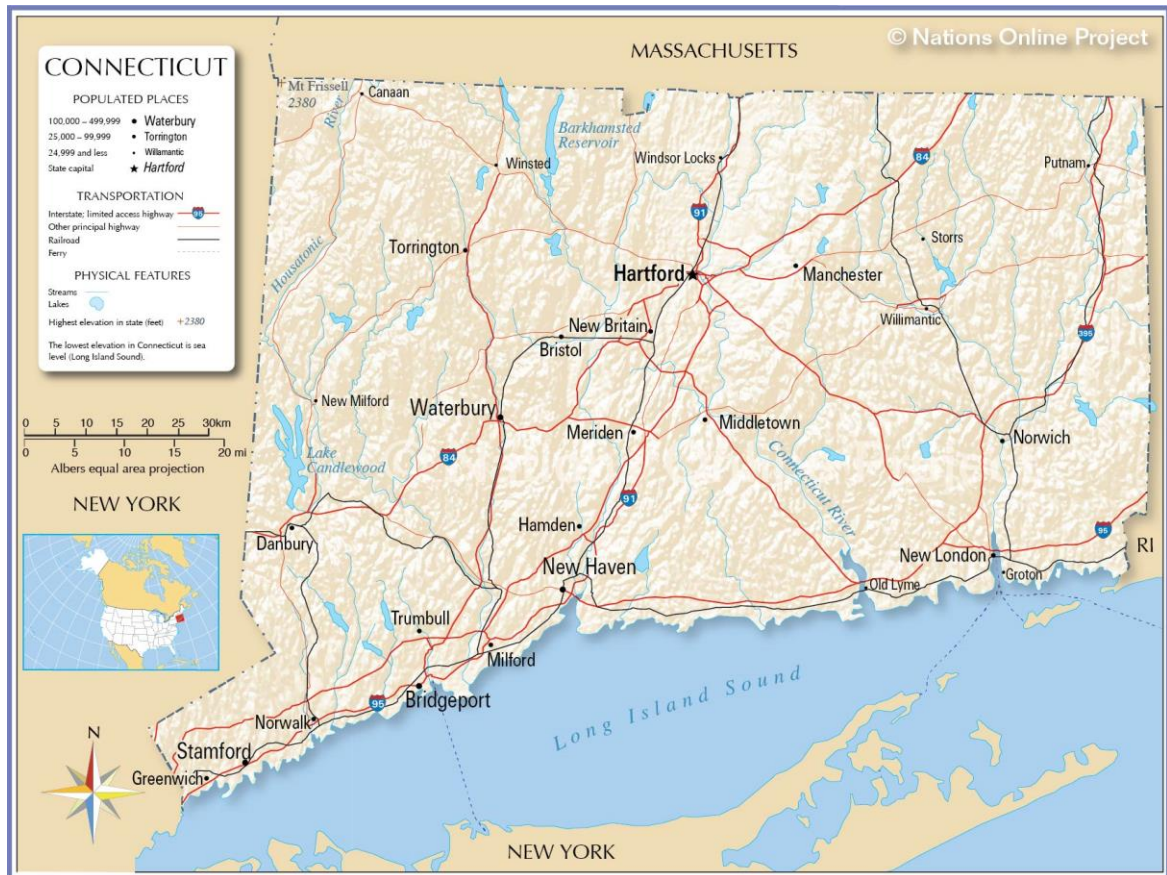
<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Lisa Tendrich Frank, *An Encyclopedia of American Women at War: From the Home Front to the Battlefields*, Vol 1, ABC-CLIO, 2013, p. 365.

<sup>16</sup> Don N. Hagist, "Elizabeth Burgin Helps the Prisoners...Somehow", available at <https://allthingsliberty.com/2014/09/elizabeth-burgin-helps-the-prisoners-somehow/> (Accessed on August 25, 2019)

## Map 2: Connecticut State Map



**Source:** [https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/USA/connecticut\\_map.htm](https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/USA/connecticut_map.htm)

In spite of the countless efforts women had made since the day they sat foot on America, and in spite of the great role they had played during the War of Independence, they suffered severe sex discrimination. American men, who struggled for their freedom and who mentioned in their *Declaration of Independence* that “all men are created equal”, did not take women into consideration and deprived them of their inalienable rights for more than a century. That traditional belief, which characterized the American society, and which put women under men’s control, had been inherited by the new American settlers from their old English Common Law.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The Common Law is usually defined as the unwritten law. In this sense, it consists in rules based primarily on customs growing out of the wisdom and experiences of mankind. Early in England’s history, judges rather than

The Common Law was universally known for its severity and hostility towards women, particularly married ones. Women had no standing in accordance with the law, thus, married women experienced a “civil death” in the sense that they were virtually “owned” by their husbands.<sup>18</sup> They were not allowed to speak out, they were supposed to follow not to lead; their homes and children were, legally, not theirs. In case of a problem, women did not have the right to go to the court and to complain. It was the role of the husband to speak for his wife.

The American society adopted a patriarchal system based on the principle that men had their proper roles and women theirs. Women were, mainly, supposed to take care of the house, the children and the husband, and to do their daily domestic chores, but not to interfere in other domains of life such as politics, education or economy. Men, however, were given total freedom to control everything; even their wives’ behaviour. It was conventionally accepted that men could control everything because they were, naturally, physically and mentally stronger than women who – being more gentle, more pious and more sentimental – would be, no more, than perfect wives and mothers.<sup>19</sup> In his book *Women Struggle for Equality: The First Phase (1828-1876)*, Jean V. Mathew wrote: “Men’s sphere was the public

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legislatures had to decide cases according to what they felt most persons would think was right. When a large number of judges had decided the same question in the same way, the decision became law. One of the Common Law rules stated that women’s role was to stay at home and not to be mixed in society. *The World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol 3, Chicago, Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1975, p. 708.

<sup>18</sup> “In 18th century English law, females were bound by the laws of coverture. Under coverture, the husband and wife were one person (the entirety) and that one person was the husband in the eyes of the Common Law. Therefore, as to her personal and property rights, the wife’s legal existence was suspended during the marriage and merged into that of the husband. She lost the capacity to contract for herself, or to sue or be sued, without joining the husband as plaintiff or defendant. The husband was entitled to all of the wife’s personal property and “choses in action” (lawsuits), and in turn, the husband became liable for all torts committed by the wife, whether before or after marriage.” Available at *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/coverture>

<sup>19</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, *Women in Movement : Feminism and Social Action*, New York, Routledge, 1992, p. 87.

world, women's the private."<sup>20</sup> The American people, notably men, were convinced that if women took part in public activities they would be unladylike.<sup>21</sup>

The Common Law considered all husbands as the perfect people to correct their wives' behaviour and teach them good manners, and viewed all women as weak, incapable beings, born only to bear children and to do housework. The main proof about the cruelty of that law towards married women was that it allowed men to beat their spouses with a "reasonable instrument", in case they misbehaved or refused to obey them.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, in order to avoid men's harshness, to protect their families and to be good wives, most American married women accepted to live under such conditions and to be kept at the level of the brutes. In this respect, the French feminist Simone De Beauvoir (1908-1986) stated: "The tragedy of being a woman consisted in not only having one's life and choices impoverished and limited, but also in the fact that to be a good woman was to be a second-rate human being."<sup>23</sup> It became, therefore, a duty for American women to respect men and obey them whatever the situation might be. Benjamin Rush (1746-1813), one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, advised a young lady who was about to marry:

Don't be offended when I add that from the day you marry you must have no will of your own. The subordination of your sex to ours is enforced by nature, by reason, and by revelation...In no situation whatever, let the words 'I will' or 'I won't' fall from your lips till you have first found out your husband's inclinations in a matter that interests you both. The happiest marriages I have known have been those when the subordination I have recommended has been most complete.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Jean V. Mathew, *Women Struggle for Equality: The First Phase (1828-1876)*, Chicago, American Ways Series, 1997, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Anne Firor Scott, *The American Woman: Who was She?*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall. Inc, 1971, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Graebner & Fite, *A History of the American People*, Vol 1, USA, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1971, p. 458.

<sup>23</sup> Sean Sayers & Peter Osborne, *Socialism, Feminism and Philosophy: A Radical Philosophy Reader*, New York, Routledge, 1990, p. 219.

<sup>24</sup> Linda Grant De Pauw, op. cit., p. 61.

The various harmful situations experienced by American married women pushed their daughters and grand-daughters to protest, at a later time, against that unfair law, which always favoured men. For instance, extra marital relationships were tolerated for men; the fact that made some wives refuse to live under such conditions. As a result, their relationship with their husbands developed from indifference to irritation to physical cruelty and finally to, in very rare cases, murder. If the wife murdered her husband, she would be burned, but in the opposite case, the murder would be tolerated and termed 'passion shooting'. Other women simply ran away because of the horrible life they were having. A woman called Margaret Franks, of South Carolina, said:

My now being absent from him was occasioned by his most cruel and inhuman treatment to me, ...by his severe threats, blows, and turning me out of doors, in the dead of night, leaving me, and a poor helpless infant, whom I had by a former husband, naked and exposed to the inclemency of the weather.<sup>25</sup>

Another factor that encouraged women to organize themselves and give birth to their own feminist movement, by the middle of the nineteenth century, was that men were allowed to virtually own their wives and children. Women were viewed as objects; even the personal properties a woman brought with her the day of marriage became her husband's. Unfortunately, it was difficult and even impossible for married women to defend themselves since the legal system deprived them of going to the court and to complain about their sufferings. Men, however, could easily get divorced and keep their children with them.<sup>26</sup>

Widows were, more or less, luckier because the law was less severe with them. After their husbands' death, widows became more independent. The law allowed a widow to inherit her husband's property or to run his business and to make her own money. She could also sell

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 56.

<sup>26</sup> Barker Benfield & Catherine Clinton, *Portraits of American Women from Settlement to the Present*, New York, St Martin's Press. Inc, 1991, p. 88.

and buy property, collect and keep rents. Therefore, the majority of American widows preferred to remain unmarried in spite of the intense social pressure they received from their families and friends to remarry. Although it seems that the law was less hostile towards widows, it obliged them to pay taxes to support their government; while they had no representation. Other ladies simply preferred to stay single for their whole life, despite the constant humiliations they received, rather than having an infernal life full of injuries.<sup>27</sup>

The Common Law did not give the girls the chance to receive formal education, as was the case for boys, because it was thought that females' brains could not bear rigorous intellectual pursuits.<sup>28</sup> Medical experts explained that an exaggerated use of books would affect women's reproductive functions in a negative way.<sup>29</sup> In this sense, Dr Edward Clarke, a trustee of Harvard's Medical School, published a book entitled *Sex in Education* in which he wrote: "young women could not compete intellectually with men and develop their ovaries at the same time."<sup>30</sup> Consequently, fathers kept their daughters at home and deprived them from going to school. They insisted on preparing young girls for marriage and motherhood. Only a few parents taught their daughters basic reading skills at home so that they could read the Bible. From this description, one may conclude that without college training, women remained illiterate and unable to enter the professional world that had been monopolized by men for so many years.

The fact that women lacked formal education encouraged men to keep them in their inferior position, and to describe them as ignorant people unable to understand the rules that

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> David Mawk & John Oakland, *American Civilization: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, New York, Routledge, 1997, p. 88.

<sup>29</sup> Linda K. Kerber & Jane Sherron De Hart, *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 273.

<sup>30</sup> Barker Benfield & Catherine Clinton, op. cit., p. 305.

governed their society. When the members of the Continental Congress<sup>31</sup> started to draft the new constitution of the new American republic, they did not pay attention to women's views. As a matter of fact, all political meetings and decisions were organized and made by men. Females did not have the right to be politically represented, then, it became impossible for them to find some open-minded men to change the existing unfair law, and to defend the women's cause.<sup>32</sup>

It had been assumed that the main reason that pushed men to keep women away from political life was their fear of a possible disorder inside the families. They argued that women might neglect their houses and might lose their female characteristics such as tenderness, kindness and sweetness, while being involved in political matters.<sup>33</sup> Because of that negative image and bad treatment vis-à-vis women, the latter tried to express their sufferings in different ways. Their objective was to ameliorate their lives, and to be considered as full human beings.

## **2. The Early Forms of Feminism in the United States of America**

Despite the patriarchal system that characterized the American nation, some courageous women dared to express their discontent against sex discrimination in order to alter their horrible social, economic and political status. They worked hard to show their society that even women could be educated, could run their own businesses and could have influential political ideas. They wanted to make it clear that gender was not an acceptable basis for discrimination, oppression and eradication. However, they did not bring any change because no organized women's rights movement existed at that time. For the sake of illustration, it is

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<sup>31</sup>The Continental Congress was a series of legislative bodies, with some executive function, for thirteen of Britain's colonies in North America, and the newly declared United States just before, during, and after the American Revolutionary War. Available at *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental\\_Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_Congress) (Accessed on June 12, 2022)

<sup>32</sup> Michelle Barzach, *Etats Généraux des Femmes*, Paris, Des Femmes, 1990, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> Anne Firor Scott, op. cit., p. 5.

necessary to speak, in this section, about those heroines to explain what they did in order to defend women and to encourage later feminists to organize their own feminist movement to ask for more respect, more gratitude and more freedom.

Abigail Adams (1744 - 1818) was one of those eighteenth century American women who were at the origin of a later movement that fought for women's rights. She privately revealed her progressive ideas regarding women and African Americans through her correspondence with her husband John Adams (1797-1801), the second American president after George Washington (1789-1797). The majority of her post-death published letters denounced women's inferior social and legal status.<sup>34</sup>

Though she never attended school, Abigail Adams strongly supported women's liberation. She, herself, received a fine education at home by using her maternal grandfather's extensive library. She, therefore, became a devoted reader of history as well as politics; the fact that helped her to be a smart woman of her time, able to express her dislike of that injustice towards women in colonial America. Moreover, the fact that her husband used to be away from home for long periods of time strengthened her independence and self-confidence. (John Adams was an important part of the Continental Congress responsible for drafting the Declaration of Independence to officially ask for the freedom of the Thirteen American Colonies) (see map 3 on the following page). During John's absence, Abigail managed the family's farm. Even though eighteenth century American married women were not allowed to have their own property, she bought and sold property all the time, and made a very handy income to support her family. Abigail thought of herself as the equal of any man.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Edith B. Gelles, *Abigail Adams: A Writing Life*, New York and London, Routledge, 2002, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*



### Map 3: Colonial America: The Thirteen Colonies



**Source:** <https://mrnussbaum.com/13-colonies-interactive-profile-map>

The separation was so difficult for the couple that they regularly wrote letters to each other discussing a wide range of subjects. Unlike the first American president George Washington and his wife Martha, the Adams did not burn their letters and more than 1,100 still survive. Both John and Abigail used the term “dearest friend” to refer to each other because they opposed that tradition, which used to consider women as inferior beings controlled by men.<sup>36</sup> They both thought that the relationship between husband and wife should be based on mutual trust, love and respect.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

Abigail believed that women should not submit to laws clearly not made in their interest, and that women should not content themselves with the role of being decorous companions of their husbands. In this respect, Abigail wrote her famous letter *Remember the Ladies*, in 1776, to encourage her husband and, through him, Congressmen to include protective legislation for women and not to be very severe with them once the new Republic of America would be established.<sup>38</sup> She, thus, wrote:

I long to hear that you have declared an independency –and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have not voice, or Representation. That your sex are Naturally Tyrannical is a Truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute, but such of you wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of Master for the more tender and endearing one of Friend. Why then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the Lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity. Men of Sense in all Ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your Sex. Regard us then as Beings placed by providence under your protection and in imitation of the Supreme Being make use of that power only for our happiness.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to asking for female emancipation and protection, Mrs. Adams believed that women should have equal access to education like their fellow men, and should be recognized for their intellectual capacities. According to her, educated women would be able to assume responsibilities of managing household, family and financial affairs. They would also have

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<sup>38</sup> Charles W. Akers, *Abigail Adams : An American Woman*, Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1980, p. 99.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams April 5, 1776. *Adams Family Papers Project: An Electronic Archive*.

[https://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/doc?id=L17760814aasecond&bc=%2Fdigitaladams%2Farchive%2Fbrowse%2Fletters\\_AA.php](https://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/doc?id=L17760814aasecond&bc=%2Fdigitaladams%2Farchive%2Fbrowse%2Fletters_AA.php)

more capacity to morally guide and influence their children's and husbands' lives.<sup>40</sup> Thus, education was such an important issue for her that she wrote two letters to focus on that matter

I most sincerely wish that some more liberal plan might be laid and executed for the benefit of the rising Generation, and that our new constitution may be distinguished for Learning and Virtue. If we mean to have Heroes, Statesmen and Philosophers, we should have learned women. The world perhaps would laugh at me, and accuse me of vanity, But you I know have a mind too enlarged and liberal to disregard the Sentiment. If much depends as is allowed upon the early Education of youth and the first principals which are instilled take the deepest root, great benefit must arise from literary accomplishments in women.<sup>41</sup>

In 1778, Abigail wrote her second letter to express her strong desire for an equal education between men and women:

It is really mortifying Sir, when a woman possessed of a common share of understanding considers the difference of Education between the male and female Sex, even in those families where Education is attended too. Every assistance and advantage which can be procured is afforded to the sons, whilst the daughters are totally neglected in point of Literature.<sup>42</sup>

Mrs. Adams did not write on behalf of women only, but she also evoked, in her correspondence, the issue of slavery. She was fiercely opposed to that institution and denounced it. She, therefore, addressed a letter to her husband to remind him, and the rest of Congressmen, that slavery was a threat to American democracy. In her letter, Abigail made it clear that the Founding Fathers were, on the one hand, asking for total freedom of the colonies and, on the other hand, allowed the colonists to import slaves to serve the White Man. Abigail wrote:

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<sup>40</sup> Edith B. Gelles, *The World of Abigail Adams*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992, p. 48.

<sup>41</sup> Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, August 14, 1776, *Adams Family Papers Project: An Electronic Archive*. op. cit

<sup>42</sup> L. H. Butterfield, *Adams Family Correspondence*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 391.

I wish more sincerely there was not a Slave in the province. It always appeared a most iniquitous Scheme to me – to fight ourselves for what we are daily robbing and plundering from those who have as good a right to freedom as we have. You know my mind upon this Subject.<sup>43</sup>

She also intervened to provide school education to her free Black servant as stated below:

After about a week, Neighbour Faxon came in one Evening and requested to speak to me. His Errand was to inform me that if James went to school, it would break up the School for the other Lads refused to go. Pray Mr. Faxon has the Boy misbehaved? If he has let the Master turn him out of school. Oh no, there was no complaint of that kind, but they did not choose to go to School with a Black Boy. [...] This Mr. Faxon is attacking the principle of Liberty and equality upon the only Ground upon which it ought to be supported, an equality of Rights. The Boy is a Freeman as much as any of the young Men, and merely because his Face is Black is he to be denied instruction? [...] Is this the Christian principle of doing to others, as we would have others do to us?<sup>44</sup>

In addition to supporting women's education and opposing slavery, Abigail Adams – very often described as “a political junkie” – did not hesitate to discuss political matters in her correspondence. She, therefore, took the liberty of advising her husband about women's status in the future American Republic.<sup>45</sup> In 1799, she wrote another letter on the equality between the sexes:

I will never consent to have our Sex considered in an inferior point of light. Let each planet shine in its own orbit, God and nature designed it so. If man is Lord, woman is Lordess – that is what I contend for, and if a woman does not hold the Reigns of Government, I see no reason for her not judging how they are conducted.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Letters from Abigail Adams to John Adams, September 22, 1774, *Adams Family Papers Project: An Electronic Archive*, op., cit.

<sup>44</sup> Letters from Abigail Adams to John Adams, February 13, 1797, *Adams Family Papers Project: An Electronic Archive*, op., cit.

<sup>45</sup> Woody Holton, *Abigail Adams*, New York: Free Press, 2009, p. 172.

<sup>46</sup> Linda Garbaye, “Women and Politics in North America: The Experience of Abigail Adams”, <https://journals.openedition.org/nuevomundo/66603> (Accessed on August 20, 2019)

Besides, Abigail Adams insinuated that women should have the right to vote when she, once, participated in the counting of votes in the 1780 Massachusetts elections. She wrote to John: “if I cannot be a voter upon this occasion, I will be a writer of votes. I can do something in that way but fear I shall have the mortification of a defeat.”<sup>47</sup>

It is noteworthy to say that Abigail Adams is an example of how some eighteenth century American women advocated in favour of women’s rights before the rise of feminism as an organized movement. Throughout her correspondence, she tried to defend married women who suffered a lack of property rights. She also did her best to remind her husband, and the rest of the Founding Fathers, of the necessity to educate women and to introduce new laws to protect them legally against abusive husbands and against the lack of women’s political representation. And finally, she objected slavery and supported the idea of giving black people their freedom. However, her ideas were expressed privately because, at that time, works published by women were not well regarded. Furthermore, such claims from the part of an eighteenth century American woman were unprecedented.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to Abigail Adams, other women played a crucial role in defending the “female sex” against men’s supremacy. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821), who was a prolific reader, read various books – from the Bible to contemporary novels – the fact that helped her to be able to analyze that strict society in which she was living. She married at the age of nineteen and though she was very busy in managing her home and taking care of both her husband and children, Elizabeth was among the founders of the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children. It was a group of prominent ladies who visited the sick poor in their homes to see what they could do to help them

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<sup>47</sup> Linda Kerber, *Toward an Intellectual History of Women Essays*, North Carolina, UNC Press Books, 1997, p. 82.

<sup>48</sup> Edith B. Gelles, *Abigail Adams: A Writing Life*, op. cit, p. 15.

Elizabeth's husband died in 1803, leaving her with five young children. Since she had already taught her youngest sisters-in-law during the first years of her marriage and enjoyed her teaching experience, Elizabeth started an academy for young ladies, at home, in order to support her family. Three years later, she met Louis William Dubourg, a visiting priest to the United States, who suggested her to direct the educational program of a newly established sisterhood modeled on the Daughters of Charity of Paris.<sup>49</sup>

The sisterhood was a congregation of religious women to help the elderly and to provide female education rooted in the Catholic faith. After so many years of experience, Elizabeth Seton opened Saint Joseph's Free School, on February 22, 1810, to educate needy girls. It was a way to ask for women's education in the United States during the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries.<sup>50</sup>

Thanks to her family large library, which allowed her to read on such different subjects as history, philosophy, geography and literature, Judith Sargent Murray (1751-1820), was another example of eighteenth century American women's advocates. This remarkable woman developed her writing talents, and wrote an early feminist essay *On the Equality of the Sexes* in 1779. Judith Sargent Murray discussed women's marginalization within the American society and tackled the serious amount of gender discrepancies women faced daily, because she, herself, experienced discrimination when she noticed that her brother was allowed to receive more advanced education. He was allowed to go to Harvard while she, being a female, was only taught basic reading and writing at home in addition to some

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<sup>49</sup> The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul were founded in 1633 by St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac in Paris, France. Deeply concerned with the poverty and suffering around them, they brought together a group of young women who shared their dedication of helping the poor and the sick. Available at Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 13 Jun. 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Daughters-of-Charity-of-Saint-Vincent-de-Paul>. (Accessed on December 11, 2022)

<sup>50</sup> Ashlee Anderson, "Elizabeth Ann Seton." *National Women's History Museum*, 2018, [www.womenshistory.org/students-and-educators/biographies/elizabeth-ann-seton](http://www.womenshistory.org/students-and-educators/biographies/elizabeth-ann-seton).

training in the domestic skills of sewing and household management to be prepared for married life.

On the basis of her 1779 essay, in addition to another one written in 1784, (*Desultory Thoughts upon the Utility of Encouraging a Degree of Self-Complacency, Especially in Female Bosoms* to forcefully argue for improved female education) Judith became among America's earliest champions of equal rights for women and was, very often, credited as an early feminist theorist. Unfortunately, her essays were written and published under different pseudonyms like *Honora*, *Martesia* and *Constantia* because eighteenth century American society did not accept female writers.<sup>51</sup>

The ambitious and courageous Judith Sargent Murray, who strongly supported the idea of educating women and giving them the opportunity to develop their educational capacities, took the initiative to teach her nieces and some of her husband's friends' daughters at home. In 1802, she helped found a school for girls in Dorchester, Massachusetts, for she believed that with quality education, women's accomplishments would equal those of men's. Asking for women's education was not her unique concern, Judith Sargent Murray dared to write a series of essays called *The Gleaner* to give her opinion about the politics of the new American nation, and about religious and moral themes including women's rights.<sup>52</sup>

Even though her meetings with the Washingtons and the Adams raised her desire to discuss the role of women in the New Republic, Judith had understood that the only way to have a voice and to transmit her ideas was through writing. She, therefore, continued to publish additional essays to encourage later American women to enter their long struggle in order to become fully functioning members of society and to achieve their social, political and

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<sup>51</sup>Debra, Michals, "Judith Sargent Murray" *National Women's History Museum*, 2015, <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/judith-sargent-murray> (Accessed on August 22, 2019)

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

economic independence. In one of her essays, Judith wrote: “I expect to see our young women forming a new era in female history...”<sup>53</sup> To conclude, Judith Sargent Murray was among those rare eighteenth-century American women who played an important role when asking for women’s equality and women’s education throughout writing either privately or anonymously.<sup>54</sup>

Mary Peabody Mann (1806-1887) is another example of early American women who supported women’s education, and who were convinced that educated women might raise a successful future generation to govern the New Republic of America. Mary Peabody was well educated by her mother Eliza Palmer Peabody, and was an early advocate of women’s rights. She carried a passion for educating children, and believed that school committees should be formed of women since men knew very little about the needs of little children just out of nurseries. A decade before the first official women’s rights meeting – the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 – Mary Peabody Mann founded and operated, with the help of her sister, one of the first private schools in Boston to admit both girls and boys.<sup>55</sup>

Other precious female works appeared during the nineteenth century to release the “female sex” from male oppression. Unlike eighteenth century American women, who expressed themselves privately by writing letters or anonymously by publishing works under different pseudonyms, nineteenth century women were more direct in their protest. They published their works under their own names to defend the woman cause. Fortunately, during that period of time the American society started to accept books written by women; mainly by those educated at home by their parents or self-educated throughout the use of the variety of books available in their families’ libraries.

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<sup>53</sup> “Judith Sargent Murray”, *History of American Women*, <https://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2011/10/judith-sargent-murray.html> (Accessed on August 22, 2019)

<sup>54</sup> Debra Michals, op. cit.

<sup>55</sup> “Mary Peabody Mann”, *History of American Women*, <https://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2016/02/mary-peabody-mann.html> (Accessed on August 23, 2019)



It is worth mentioning Margaret Fuller's (1810-1850) work, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, published in 1845, and which is considered as the first major feminist work in the U.S.A during the nineteenth century. The work is very often compared to the English Mary Wollstonecraft's (1759-1797) book *A Vindication for the Rights of Woman*, 1792.<sup>56</sup> The latter was an innovative piece of literature written by that eighteenth century British "proto-feminist" who expressed her anger towards the precarious situation in which the majority of women were forced to live. Mary Wollstonecraft asked for the right of women to be educated and to be granted the right to work and support themselves.<sup>57</sup>

Fuller was educated at home by her father, a famous lawyer and a representative of Congress for eight years, since women were denied the right to go to school. Both her education and her precocious intelligence enabled her to build not only a strong personality, but also a great self-confidence and self-belief in her own capacities; the fact that encouraged her to take roles rarely allowed for women. She used to organize classes of "conversations" for women to give them the opportunity to express themselves freely and discuss about their lives, their hopes, their objectives, and above all, about their sufferings as women. No one before had done such an activity since the foundation of the United States of America. Fuller's purpose was to enrich, throughout those discussions, women's lives and to make them reject the social conventions imposed on the "other sex" – women. She encouraged the women of her time not to be satisfied with domesticity, but to seek greater independence from the home and family in order to prove that they could play a greater role in society. She defended women, and argued that they ought to be allowed to do whatever work appeals to them. She once said: "Let them be sea-captains, if they will."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Abby Slatter, *In Search of Margaret Fuller*, New York, Delacorte Press, 1978, p. 89.

<sup>57</sup> "Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication for the Rights of Woman*", *British Library*, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/mary-wollstonecraft> (Accessed on August 30, 2019)

<sup>58</sup> Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, New York, Dover Publications. Inc, 2012, p. 98.

Fuller became the editor of a famous transcendentalist journal, *The Dial*. It paved the way for her to give voice to her social critic on woman's place in society. And in 1845, her famous book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* was published to examine the place of women within society, and to make American women aware of the unfair laws and restrictions imposed on them. She said: "we would have every arbitrary barrier thrown down. We would have every path laid open to Woman as freely as to Man."<sup>59</sup>

Through her book, Fuller made it clear that women should receive the same education as men because she felt that a full education would open new opportunities for women, and would help them obtain more independence as well. She was convinced that educated women would have a different vision of life and would be more prepared to face the external world than the illiterate ones. The book also advocated the reform of property laws that were very severe and strict vis-à-vis women. (As mentioned earlier, women, mainly married ones, could neither run businesses to make money, nor could they keep an inherited property. Everything went directly to the husband because the Common Law considered husband and wife one person, and that person was the husband.)

Like many other previous courageous women, Fuller talked about that inequality between men and women, and expressed her passionate belief in justice and equality for all humankind. She criticized her society and compared women to slaves because they were restricted in so many ways that they were essentially "owned" by men. In this respect, Fuller said: "There exists in the minds of men a tone of feeling toward women as toward slaves..."<sup>60</sup> Thanks to *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* and its clear discussions about that patriarchal society, Fuller brought the issue of women's rights to the nation's attention. She, thus, became an influential early feminist who had a profound impact on later Women's Rights

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 102.

Movement's leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Those two giant American suffragists, of the nineteenth century, were so influenced by the work of Margaret Fuller that they said about her: "she possessed more influence on the thought of American women than any woman previous to her time."<sup>61</sup>

Asking for the equality of the "sexes" was not always done throughout writing letters, essays and books. We have here a nineteenth century woman who chose another way to prove what a woman could do. Anne Whitney (1821-1915), for instance, made it clear that even women could be as capable as men in some domains of life. She was the daughter of wealthy liberal parents who encouraged her and supported her financially to develop her artistic talents and to become a well-known female sculptor in a society that did not, readily, accept female artists. She supported several social reforms, including Abolitionism and women's equality throughout her artistic works. She, therefore, sculpted some abolitionists and feminists to express her political and social beliefs. Anne Whitney participated in a national competition for a sculpture of the abolitionist Charles Sumner, and her model won the commission. Unfortunately, when the judges discovered that the model had been done by a woman, they took the job from her. On the basis of sex- discrimination, the commission members argued that a woman could not accurately sculpt a man's legs.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to the above-mentioned women's names who had paved the way for the rise of feminism in the United States, it seems necessary to discuss about Abolitionism and Temperance. A great number of women played important roles in those two movements which, in turn, influenced female activists to lead their own movement.

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<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony & Matilda Joslyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol 1, Gianluca Ruffini, 2019.

<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth Rogers Payne, "Anne Whitney: Art and Social Justice", *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol 12, N°2, the Massachusetts Review. Inc, 1971, p. 245.

### **3. American Women's Involvement in the Abolitionist and Temperance Movements**

It has always been assumed that the first wave of feminism in the United States was directly linked to the Anti-Slavery Movement. That movement, which emerged during the 1830's to abolish slavery in America, helped American women to learn how to organize themselves and how to prove both their existence and their ability to bring reforms to their society. The main objective of abolitionists was to stop slavery and to guarantee the freedom of the Black population, and that issue was directly linked to women's liberation.

White American women were convinced that both slaves and white females were suffering from white men's oppression. They were fed up with being constantly humiliated and considered as inferior human beings, fed up with being continually deprived of their inalienable rights, fed up with having no protection from the government. Therefore, as soon as Abolitionism appeared in America, white middle-class American women – among whom Lucretia Mott (1793-1880) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) – seized the opportunity, and decided to join the movement. They ignored that traditional belief which obliged women to stay at home and they, immediately, took part in the movement to free both white women and the Black population. They could no longer accept that exaggerated control white men had over them.<sup>63</sup>

Mrs Mott and Mrs Stanton, who had already received some education at home, like some other women of their time, flooded the government with petitions against slavery and did much of the work of propaganda. In addition to this, and with the help of other women from the middle class and the rising bourgeoisie, a lot of money was raised throughout well-organized fairs. The money was used to hire lawyers for runaway slaves. Moreover, a number

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<sup>63</sup> Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race and Class*, New York, Random House. Inc, 1981, p. 34.

of Female Anti-Slavery Societies were established to argue that slavery must be outlawed because of its cruelty, and to ask for the immediate emancipation of the Black population.<sup>64</sup>

In 1833, the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society was set up under the leadership of Lucretia Mott. It was composed of both White and Black women among whom Sarah Douglass, Harriet Purvis, and Sarah and Margaretta Forten. Mrs Mott believed it might be easier to abolish slavery if White women joined in masse their Black sisters.<sup>65</sup> The Society's members taught the people of Philadelphia about the importance of the Abolitionist Movement, and they emphasized the fact that the Black people should be allowed to use the public transport system. They also wrote a petition with a thousand signatures to call for a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery. Furthermore, they tried to promote education for Black people and to give them help in their trades and business. The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society was, in reality, a direct reaction to what happened during the American Anti-Slavery Society that had been organized by male abolitionists some time earlier.<sup>66</sup>

The American male Anti-Slavery Society was established in Philadelphia, in 1833 (a few days before the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society), to discuss the issue of slavery. Such women activists as Lucretia Mott and four other women wished to be members of the meeting alongside men to give the Society more power and influence. Some of the leaders allowed them to attend as listeners only. They were refused to sign any of the meeting documents because women were still believed to be inferior to men, and unable to understand deeply what was happening.<sup>67</sup>

Mrs Mott became furious when she noticed that some male members were absent and that because of their absence, no document concerning the future of the Blacks could be

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>66</sup> Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History*, Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1991, p. 48.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

signed. She, suddenly, arose from her 'listener and spectator' seat, in the balcony, to audaciously address the men at the convention saying: "Right principles are stronger than names..."<sup>68</sup> Her reaction shocked the audience and the American society as a whole because, at that period, women were still denied the right to speak out in public. Mott's reaction also proved that she was determined to throw down those barriers that blocked her ways. That incident led, a few days later, to the establishment of the above mentioned Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>69</sup>

Two other female Anti-Slavery Societies, including White and Black women, followed the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. They were the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, in 1833, and the Massachusetts Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1835. The latter's participants circulated hundreds of tracts and books about the association's programme. Gradually, the establishment of such female Anti-Slavery Societies became a routine in the United States of America and reached a total of 1,006 Societies by 1837.<sup>70</sup>

In 1840, men abolitionists sat up the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London and, once again, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton wished to attend as representatives of the American Female Anti-Slavery Societies to speak about that resemblance between white women's situation and Black people's. For the second time, male delegates, except W. Garrison, Nathaniel Rogers, Phillips Wendell, F. Douglass and Charles Remond, refused women's attendance and participation. The leaders thought that the Abolitionist Movement had a political aspect and that women did not have enough experience to take part in such matters; purely dominated by men. The latter were, in fact, amazed by what white American women had done to support the movement and how they were able to defy their patriarchal society, and to mingle in public affairs strictly reserved for men. They, really, started to fear

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<sup>68</sup> Angela Y. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, p. 39.

<sup>70</sup> Barbara Rayan, *Feminism and Women's Movement: Dynamics of Change in Social Movement, Ideology and Activism*, New York, Routledge, 1992, p. 15.

the well-organized female Anti-Slavery Societies that would bring women enough courage and power to challenge men in the public sphere.<sup>71</sup>

Because of women's rejection from the London Convention, Angelina Grimké (1805-1879) and her sister Sarah (1792-1873), whose family was a slave owner and who had seen enough of their parents' bad treatment towards their slaves, began to support women's willingness to attend male anti-slavery meetings. They also started to criticize publicly the cruel institution of slavery. Angelina thought that women should be accepted in that kind of meetings because, like men, they were people of this country.<sup>72</sup> She said:

These petitions relate to the great and solemn subject of slavery...and because it is a political subject, it has often tauntingly been said, that women had nothing to do with it. Are we aliens because we are women? Are we bereft of citizenship because we are mothers, wives and daughters of a mighty people? Have women no country? A woman should have a voice in all the laws and regulations by which she is to be governed, whether in Church or State, and the present arrangements of society, on these points are a violation of human rights, a rank usurpation of power, a violent seizure and confiscation of what is sacredly and inalienably hers.<sup>73</sup>

The Grimké sisters were so active in their support for the Abolitionist Movement that they made several speaking tours to inform the white population about the miserable living conditions of Black people in southern states. The Grimkés, really, overstepped the normative boundaries of feminine behaviour, and became the first women in America to speak out in public; an exclusive male activity.<sup>74</sup>

Abolitionism was not the only movement that offered nineteenth century American women the chance to build their self-confidence, and to break those traditional beliefs against

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<sup>71</sup> Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History*, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>72</sup> Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Rebels against Slavery*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967, p. 200.

<sup>73</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, op.cit., pp. 45-46.

<sup>74</sup> Gerda Lerner, op. cit., p. 200.

women's emancipation. The Temperance Movement, too, helped American women to prove their ability to bring some social reforms in their society. That movement transformed the "hierarchical relations of gender" in the United States, and it was a means for uplifting the female sex thanks to the tremendous efforts made by women throughout their participation. The women, who took part in that movement, aimed at cleaning their society from certain social ills. Thus, they campaigned against the consumption of alcohol, which was considered as the principal cause of larger social problems.<sup>75</sup>

American women were convinced that the consumption of alcohol was at the origin of so many personal and societal problems in America. They argued that an exaggerated consumption of alcohol might lead to absenteeism in the workplace, unemployment, poverty, physical violence against wives and children, broken families and much more.<sup>76</sup> For this reason, women founded the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in 1874, Ohio, under the presidency of Annie Wittenmyer (1827-1900) with a program that "linked the religious and the secular through concerted and far-reaching reform strategies based on applied Christianity."<sup>77</sup>

The WCTU aimed at creating a "sober and pure world" by abstinence, purity, and evangelical Christianity.<sup>78</sup> The organization did its best to press the Ulysses S. Grant Administration (1869-1877) to enact new laws to reduce the availability of alcohol or even its prohibition because an excessive consumption of alcohol, women argued, could provoke poverty and domestic violence. In addition to asking for the abstinence of alcohol, the WCTU members agitated against tobacco and such other social issues as prostitution, public health, sanitation and international peace; they finally focused on suffrage. They argued that it was

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<sup>75</sup> Ian Tyrell, *Woman's World, Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective* (1880-1930), Chapel Hill and London, the University of North Carolina Press, 1991, p. 150.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.



necessary to allow women to vote in order to act as “citizen-mothers”. In short, they thought that women were morally the “superior sex” and would do their best to protect their homes and cure society’s ills by electing the right persons. Those demands were welcomed by businessmen who considered the banishment of alcohol as a model of self-discipline, and as a means to help them in their efforts to regiment factory work.<sup>79</sup>

The female members of the Temperance Movement played important roles, not only when they asked for the elimination of alcohol in the American society but also when they established homes of refuge for prostitutes and petitioned the government to enact laws that would criminalize adultery.<sup>80</sup> All that women had done, to support both the Anti-Slavery and the Temperance Movements, helped them enough and gave them the required force and energy to give birth to their own Women’s Rights Movement to ask for their independence. Then, the next section of the present chapter is devoted to provide the reader with more details about the Women’s Rights Movement that rose in parallel with Abolitionism.

#### **4. The Rise of the First American Women’s Rights Movement**

This section is devoted to shed light on the questions: How did the Women’s Rights Movement take place and how did it help women to get their rights? It also deals with the Civil War and American women’s involvement. Finally, it discusses how the Nineteenth Amendment was added to the American Constitution even though it had been opposed by anti-suffragists.

Due to what happened during the London World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 (see the previous section), and due to the way women were treated because of their “sex”, the following remark was heard: “It is about time some demand was made for new liberties for

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Rose Kenneth D, *American Women and the Repeal of Prohibition*, New York, New York University Press, 1997, p. 36.

women.”<sup>81</sup> As a result, both Elizabeth C. Stanton and Lucretia Mott discussed, for the first time, the idea of organizing a movement to improve the situation of women inside the American society, and to release them from their endless sufferings. As Stanton recalled: “the action of this Convention was the topic of discussion, in public and private, for a long time, and...gave rise to the movement for women’s equality...”<sup>82</sup>

One day, and during a social afternoon around a tea table, Elizabeth Stanton, Lucretia Mott and three of their neighbours – Jane Hunt, Martha Wright and Mary Ann Mc Clintock – were talking about the grievances, sufferings and humiliation American women faced day after day. They also remembered the way women were treated during the London World Anti-Slavery Convention because of their “sex”, and they all agreed that the time was ripe for women to break those strict social restrictions, and to change men’s views about women as well as women’s views about themselves.<sup>83</sup> This is why it is historically approved of that the first feminist wave had its roots in the Abolitionist Movement.

As a result, the five ladies decided to organize the first female meeting to stop that unbearable masculine tutelage. They wrote a document called the *Declaration of Sentiments* (see appendix II). The latter was a paraphrase of the American *Declaration of Independence* through which American men declared their wish to separate themselves from the mother country. The *Declaration of Sentiments* asserted that: “All men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”<sup>84</sup> By that document, women also asked for their right to equal education, to own property, to have a job, and above all the right to vote. In this

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<sup>81</sup> Linda K. Kerber & Jane Sherron De Hart, op. cit., p. 205.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ruth Warren, *A Pictorial History of Women in America*, New York, Crown Publishers Inc, 1975, p. 97.

<sup>84</sup> Jean V. Mathew, op. cit., p. 2.

respect, Elizabeth Stanton wrote: “A woman had never been permitted to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.”<sup>85</sup>

On July 19, 1848, the first women’s rights meeting took place at the Methodist Church in Seneca Falls, New York. It became known as the Seneca Falls Convention and it gave birth to the Women’s Rights Movement in the United States of America. The leaders started their meeting with the following speech

We shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and National legislatures and endeavour to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this convention will be followed by a series of conventions embracing every part of the country.<sup>86</sup>

Then, Mrs Stanton read, publicly, the different resolutions mentioned in the *Declaration of Sentiments* to convince the audience that women were no longer ready to accept to be deprived of their most sacred rights. About three hundred persons, among whom forty men, attended the Seneca Falls Convention. The majority of the people, who were present, came from Seneca Falls and from Waterloo, a neighbouring town. Very few people came from other places like Rochester, forty miles west of Seneca Falls, and Syracuse, forty miles east (see map 4 on the following page).

Frederick Douglass, Samuel Tillman, Ansel Bascom, E.W.Capron, and Thomas McClintock – all abolitionists and women’s supporters – attended the meeting to express their gratitude for American women who had done their best to support the anti-slavery crusade.

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<sup>85</sup> Elizabeth Frost Knappman, *Women’s Progress in America*, USA, The ABC-Clio Companion, 1984, p. 281.

<sup>86</sup> Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women’s Associations in American History*, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

The meeting ended with one hundred signatures (sixty-eight women and thirty-two men) in favour of the resolutions.<sup>87</sup>

**Map 4: Map View of Seneca Falls, New York**



**Source:** [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NPS\\_womens-rights-regional-map.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NPS_womens-rights-regional-map.jpg)

Although the press humiliation and men's reactions, that considered the idea of organizing a female meeting as being ridiculous, the Women's Rights Movement's leaders called for another convention two weeks later. It took place in Rochester (see map 4), and the same persons who attended the Seneca Fall Convention, in addition to others, came to express their wish to achieve "women's freedom". The Rochester meeting was very fruitful since two positive goals were achieved. First, married women became able to keep their properties, and

<sup>87</sup> <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/13430-f1c26008c1bf7f5/#:~:text=The%20declaration%20asserted%20%22all%20men,African%20American%20abolit ionist%20Frederick%20Douglass> (Accessed December 13, 2022)

not to give them to their husbands, thanks to the Married Women's Property Act. The latter declared:

The real and personal property of any female [now married and] who may hereafter marry, and which she shall own at the time of marriage, and the rent issues and profits thereof shall not be subject to the disposal of her husband, nor be liable for his debts, and shall continue her sole and separate property, as if she were a single female...<sup>88</sup>

Second, women were given equal access to primary education. In fact, years before, Dr Benjamin Rush, one of the signers of the *Declaration of Independence*, had already declared that educated women would produce intelligent boys who would become, in turn, good politicians in the future. In this respect, he said:

Female education should be accommodated to the state of society, manners and government of the country in which it is conducted. The equal share that every citizen has in the liberty, and the equal share he may have in the government of our country, make it necessary that our ladies should be qualified to a certain degree by a peculiar and suitable education, to concur in instructing their sons in the principles of liberty and government.<sup>89</sup>

Gradually, women started to gain self-confidence and began to ask for more rights throughout the organization of other female meetings. Unlike the Seneca Falls and the Rochester conventions, which were local, the newly established female meetings were national. They were the Worcester Convention, held in Massachusetts, 1850, and the Akron Convention, held in Ohio, 1851. In these two meetings, women activists asked for the right to have a job and to take part in the public sphere, the right to equal guardianship of children in case of divorce, the right to get higher education and the right to vote. With the passage of

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<sup>88</sup> Linda K. Kerber & Jane Sherron De Hart, op. cit., p. 570.

<sup>89</sup> Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*, USA, Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 17.

time, the number of people attending the new meetings started to increase, and the idea of getting women's rights and women's enfranchisement became an obsession for all American women. This success encouraged women's advocates to organize other successful national conventions that took place annually until 1861 when the American Civil War broke out. During one of those national conventions, Elizabeth C. Stanton declared:

Here, gentlemen, is our difficulty; when we plead our cause before the law-makers and savants of the republic, they cannot take in the idea that men and women are alike; ...we ask for all that you have asked for yourselves in the progress of your development, since the Mayflower cast anchor beside Plymouth rock; and simply on the ground that the rights of every human being are the same and identical.<sup>90</sup>

In addition to Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth C. Stanton, who helped the Women's Rights Movement gain its importance and reputation since its birth, Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), too, devoted fifty years of her life to the women's cause. She considered men's supremacy over women as the most disgusting oligarchy. She said about it:

An oligarchy of wealth, where the rich govern the poor; an oligarchy of learning, when the educated govern the ignorant; or even an oligarchy of race, where the Saxon rules the African, might be endured; but this oligarchy of sex which makes fathers, brothers, husbands, sons the oligarchs over the mother and sisters, the wife and daughters of every household; which ordains all men sovereigns, all women subjects – carries discord and rebellion into every home of the nation.<sup>91</sup>

Susan Anthony was very active. She used to collect signatures on petitions asking for an end to men's domination over both slaves and white women. She also used to read the fiery speeches written by Stanton during the annual conventions. Stanton described her new collaborator as an "indefatigable woman" on whom she could rely. In this sense, Mrs Stanton said: "she supplied legs and voice for my ideas...I forged the thunderbolts and she fired

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<sup>90</sup> Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, London, Yale University Press, 1987, p. 19.

<sup>91</sup> Angela Y. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

them.”<sup>92</sup> The two women formed an excellent team and worked so hard that, by 1860, they succeeded to press the Buchanan Administration (1857-1861) to give married women the right to equal guardianship of children in case of divorce. In addition to this, both married and single women were allowed to sue.<sup>93</sup>

Unfortunately, sometime after the achievement of a number of important rights, the American Civil War (1861-1865) broke out and the Women’s Rights Movement witnessed a short break during that period. Women activists devoted their time to the Civil War effort because they were convinced that other positive results might be achieved after the conflict. They, thus, encouraged all American women to support the war and they immediately started to cook and launder for the soldiers, to make bandages, to provide nursing care, and to collect money to help the army.

Some women were even ready to join the army camps in order to fight against the southerners, who wanted to keep slavery, but men refused because they still clung to the idea that women were less strong. However, they allowed them to organize their own associations to collect money, so that they could finance the war, and help the newly freed slaves. As a matter of fact, a number of Soldiers’ Aid Societies were set up in different parts of the country, and women were able to collect as much money as possible. For instance, women in Chicago collected \$80,000, and in Ohio they raised about \$100,000.<sup>94</sup> In addition to raising money, women rolled bandages, made cartridges and sewed uniforms for men to join the army. Catherine Edmonston (1823-1875), a diarist, was so proud of women’s contributions to the war that she wrote:

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<sup>92</sup> Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More: Reminiscences (1815-1897)*, New York, Schocken Books, 1971, p. 165.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies : Women’s Associations in American History*, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

One thing has struck me throughout the whole progress of the summer: the universality and the eagerness with which women entered the struggle. They worked as many of them had never worked before, steadily and faithfully, to supply the soldiers with clothing and the hospital with comforts of various kinds.<sup>95</sup>

The Civil War was an opportunity for women to enter the public sphere since the majority of men left their jobs to join the battle field. Consequently, women engaged in a variety of occupations to save their nation's economy. For example, they began to work in textile factories, in cotton mills, in garment shops, in the manufacture of silk goods, hosiery and knit wear. Some of them were also allowed to teach in schools and to work in government offices. Progressively, women began to destroy the traditional boundaries long imposed on them, and the idea that excluded them from the men's world was on its way to disappear.<sup>96</sup>

Unluckily, women worked for long hours and received very low wages even though they, sometimes, did the same work as men. Some of them accepted that horrible situation just to show that there was no difference between men and women when it came to work. Others were obliged to work under such conditions to support their families.<sup>97</sup> A woman, who suffered from that injustice regarding working women, addressed all American men saying:

You may tell us that our place is in the home. There are 8,000,000 of us in these United States who must go out of it to earn our daily bread and we come to tell you that while we are working in the mills, the mines, the factories and the mercantile houses we have not the protection that we should have. You have been making laws for us and the laws you have made have not been good for us.<sup>98</sup>

In addition to working in different kinds of factories, other opportunities arose for women during the Civil War; for instance, more educational institutions opened their doors to

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<sup>95</sup> Anne Firor Scott, *The American Woman: Who was She?* Op. cit., 69.

<sup>96</sup> André Michel, *Le Féminisme*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1979, p. 80.

<sup>97</sup> Angela Y. Davis, op. cit.

<sup>98</sup> Angela Y. Davis, op. cit., p. 143.



women to fill the empty space. The Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act was enacted in 1862 to found universities to educate both men and women and, by 1870, thirty percent of colleges had become co-educational. Women were, thus, permitted to enter universities and to receive the same lectures as men. Higher education was among the very important achievements women made because it might allow them to be interested in such new fields as journalism and medicine.<sup>99</sup>

As mentioned earlier, during the Civil War the Women's Rights Movement's leaders suspended their conventions, that used to take place annually, in order to focus on the issue of abolishing slavery. Mrs Stanton, Mrs Mott and Mrs Anthony were convinced that slaves' emancipation would probably encourage that of women since there was, according to them, a strong resemblance between the two issues. In other words, both Black people and women were marginalized by White men. Therefore, in addition to what women did to help the soldiers and finance the war, the three courageous ladies (Elizabeth, Lucretia and Susan) collected 400,000 signatures for a petition asking for a constitutional amendment to, definitely, prohibit slavery in the United States. They viewed that amendment as a means to provide "liberty to all; national protection for every citizen under our flag; universal suffrage, and universal amnesty."<sup>100</sup>

In 1865, the two Houses of Congress (the House of Representatives and the Senate) ratified the Thirteenth Amendment and brought the Civil War to its end with the victory of Northerners. The amendment stated: "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction."<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Julia T. Wood, *Gendered Lives*, Boston, Lyn UHL, 2009.

<sup>100</sup> Barbara Ryan, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>101</sup> Thomas James Norton, *The Constitution of the United States: Its Sources and its Application*, New York, Committee for Constitutional Government Inc, 1960, p. 232.

Both the Abolitionist Movement and the Civil War played an important role in women's lives and history. They both showed how women could often be as useful as men to do certain tasks. They both convinced men and the government that females were not inferior, passive and dependent individuals as it was conventionally thought. Slowly, a new image about mothers, wives, sisters and daughters started to take shape in the American society, and some men expressed their gratitude and thankfulness to women for what they had done during the period of Abolitionism and the Civil War. In this sense, Alfred Bloor – a woman's supporter – addressed a letter to Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts to praise women saying: “the chief work...that of providing the means from ministering to the physical needs of the soldiers was exceedingly well done by women and comparatively ill done by men.”<sup>102</sup>

By the end of the Civil War, and after obtaining a series of rights since the beginning of their struggle (the right to keep their own properties after marriage, the right to equal guardianship of children in case of divorce, the right to get education), White American women were still denied one important right: it was the right to vote. For them, the ballot was the key of women's emancipation because they might use it to elect liberal persons who would bring new laws in favour of women, and who would protect them from gender discrimination.

As a matter of fact, the next fifty years were devoted to the cause of women's enfranchisement. Elizabeth Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Susan Anthony in addition to Lucy Stone (1818-1893), a new member who joined the movement, decided to work once again with former male abolitionists. Their objective was to bring a new amendment to the American Constitution to enfranchise all African Americans as well as White women. They all worked hard through the establishment of the American Equal Rights Association (AERA) with Mrs Mott as president. Their efforts had been fruitful and the Fourteenth Amendment

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<sup>102</sup> Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History*, op. cit., p. 68.

was introduced into Congress. It declared: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States wherein they reside."<sup>103</sup>

Unfortunately, the amendment was destined for Black men only and never referred to women. The latter were really deceived because, on the one hand, the Johnson Administration (1865-1869) still believed in "sex" discrimination in the political field and, on the other hand, F. Douglass told his female colleagues to wait for another time in order not to jeopardize the chances of Black men. He explained that it was "the negro's hour" and that "women's cause was not as important as that of the Black."<sup>104</sup> Stanton was furious at that attitude and she aggressively replied: "...I do not believe in allowing ignorant Negroes to make laws for me to obey."<sup>105</sup> The only Black man, among the AERA members, who refused to delay women's enfranchisement to another time was Charles Remond when he said: "...All I ask for myself I claim for my wife and sister."<sup>106</sup>

Even the former female slave Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) was against Black men abolitionists who wanted, definitely, to guarantee all their rights and neglected those of their female fellows. She, therefore, said:

There is a great stir about coloured men getting their rights, but not a word about the coloured women; and if coloured men get their rights, and not coloured women theirs; you see the coloured men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Thomas James Norton, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>104</sup> Mary Beth Norton & Ruth Alexander, *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Massachusetts, D. C. Heath & Company, 1996, p. 187.

<sup>105</sup> Carl N. Degler, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>106</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, p. 83.

Regrettably, nothing and no one could stop the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, and the latter was ratified and added to the United States Constitution, in 1868, to enfranchise Black men only.

Soon after, the Fifteenth Amendment was proposed by Congress. It aimed at complementing the Fourteenth Amendment and securing Black men's enfranchisement. It stated: "The right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, colour, or previous condition of servitude."<sup>108</sup> Once again, women's advocates solicited Black male abolitionists for their help to make pressure on the American Congress in order to include the word "sex" in the new amendment, and to extend the right to vote to women as well. However, Frederick Douglass and his colleagues still clung to the idea that the women's cause might wait for another opportunity. This attitude pushed Elizabeth Stanton, Susan Anthony and their disciples to resign from the AERA in 1869, and to work on their own.<sup>109</sup>

Women activists formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and concentrated on the issue of voting for women. They were convinced that suffrage was the key of women's emancipation, and that it would guarantee their future. By contrast, other women believed that after Black men's enfranchisement, the Ulysses Grant Administration (1869-1877) would probably enfranchise women through a new amendment. Those were Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe and Abby Kelley Foster. They formed the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) to support the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment.<sup>110</sup>

In fact, the members of the NWSA had acquired enough experience through their previous work with the Abolitionist Movement. It provided them with suitable methods to

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<sup>108</sup> Kenneth Prewitt & Sidney Verba, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

<sup>109</sup> Stacy M. Brown, "The Dissolution of the AERA and its Effect on the Suffrage Movement", <https://www.washingtoninformer.com/the-dissolution-of-the-aera-and-its-effect-on-the-suffrage-movement/>

<sup>110</sup> "Suffragists Organize: National Woman Suffrage Association", *National Women's History Museum*, <http://www.crusadeforthevote.org/nwsa-organize> (Accessed on December 13, 2022)

organize their own movement, later on. It taught them how to prepare petitions, and how to call meetings. Women activists also developed fund-raising skills, and became strong public speakers. For all these reasons, the Abolitionist Movement is very often viewed as the forerunner of the Women's Rights Movement which adopted, since the schism that took place within the ERA, the name of the Women's Suffrage Movement.<sup>111</sup>

After their withdrawal from the AERA, Elizabeth Stanton and her supporters worked hard to prevent the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment. In addition to meetings and petitions, they published their own newspaper *The Revolution* whose motto was: "Men their rights and nothing more; women their rights and nothing less."<sup>112</sup> Unfortunately, all their efforts were in vain and the Fifteenth Amendment was adopted in 1870 to enfranchise Black men only. Susan Anthony did not admit the idea that Black men were allowed to vote, but not White educated women. Two years later, she went to the polls in Rochester, New York, and attempted to vote for Ulysses S. Grant's second term presidential elections. She was arrested and fined \$100, but she refused to pay. Though the issue was brought before the Supreme Court, Susan Anthony did not pay the sum.<sup>113</sup>

Slowly, men started to accept that idea of women's enfranchisement and to, seriously, think about the political status of American women. As a result, in 1878, Senator A. Sargent of California proposed a woman suffrage amendment. Though it was rejected by Congress, it was a good initiative to encourage the other states to act similarly. Even the leaders of the NWSA and the AWSA began to think to merge their two associations into one and to work together as in the past. They thought it was absurd to oppose each other while their objective was the same.

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<sup>111</sup> Debra C. Minkloff, 'The Sequencing of Social Movements', in *American Sociological Review*, Vol 62, N°5, 1997, p. 783.

<sup>112</sup> Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "The Revolution". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2006, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Revolution>. (Accessed December 15, 2022)

<sup>113</sup> Jones Beverly, "Susan B. Anthony at the Voting Polls 1872", <https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/eyewitness/html.php?section=3> (Accessed December 15, 2022)

They, therefore, put aside their differences and formed the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), in 1890, to work for the advancement of women's suffrage. Elizabeth Stanton became the President of the new association, Susan Anthony Vice President and Lucy Stone Head of the Executive Committee. New members join the NAWSA and assumed, later on, its presidency. They were Anna Howards Shaw (1847-1919) and Carrie Chapman Catt (1859-1947). The NAWSA's president, Elizabeth Stanton, announced: "the object of this association shall be to secure protection in their right to vote to the women citizens of the United States by appropriate national and state legislation."<sup>114</sup>

The members of the NAWSA tried, first, to guarantee enough state suffrage amendments that would help them win a federal amendment in the future. The plan they adopted was so efficient that Wyoming granted its women citizens full enfranchisement in the same year the NAWSA was founded. Colorado did the same in 1893 when it assumed that women were supposed to purify politics.<sup>115</sup> Then, Utah and Idaho gave their women inhabitants the right to vote in 1896. These were the only states that enfranchised their female inhabitants prior to the twentieth century.<sup>116</sup>

By the beginning of the twentieth century, white women suffragists faced some problems because, on the one hand, they lost Susan B. Anthony in 1906, one of the most important leaders of the movement, and on the other hand, anti-suffragist sentiments increased day after day to discourage women. Luckily, and thanks to the young ambitious and perseverant Carrie Chapman Catt, Anna Howards Shaw and Alice Paul (1885-1977), new methods and techniques were adopted to achieve the movement's objective.

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<sup>114</sup> Anne Firor Scott, *The American Woman: Who was She?* Op. cit, p. 104.

<sup>115</sup> Mary Frances Berry, *Why AERA Failed: Politics, Women's Rights and the Amending Process of the Constitution*, USA, Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 36.

<sup>116</sup> "Women's Suffrage in the U.S. by State", <http://tag.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/suffrage-by-state.pdf> (Accessed December 15, 2021)

The new leaders of the Women's Suffrage Movement started to organize open-air meetings and parades. They also did their best to gain the support of those women who had been working in factories, since the Civil War, under horrible working conditions. The movement's leaders always tried to convince women workers that the ballot was a means to elect more sympathetic men who would bring new laws to improve their working conditions. They insisted more than ever on the suffrage issue because they were persuaded that it would permit women to vote for more liberal, and more pacifist politicians to protect women from men's ferocity. Women were also certain that their entrance into the political field would be an opportunity to purify the nation from corruption, exploitation, selfishness and many other social ills because women were always considered, by their fellow men, as kind, pure and innocent creatures.<sup>117</sup>

The young suffragist Alice Paul and her followers, Lucy Burns (1879-1966) and Crystal Eastman (1881-1928), soon became known for their central political strategies making suffrage a mainstream issue through public demonstrations. The latter consisted of stirring songs and pageantry, and large parades with women, dressed in white, carrying banners to ask for their right to vote. They also organized suffrage tours, from one state to another, in order to collect signatures for a petition to enfranchise women; they finally decided to picket the White House.

Therefore, for one complete year, well-dressed women stood before the gates of the White House to push the American President Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921) to support women. In this sense, Alice Paul said: "If a creditor stands before a man's house all day demanding payment of his bill, the man must either remove the creditor or pay the bill."<sup>118</sup> Despite the fact that a large number of pickets had been arrested and imprisoned in a horrible

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<sup>117</sup> Richard N. Current, *American History: A Survey since 1865*, Vol 2, 6<sup>th</sup> ed, New York, Alfred A. Knopf. Inc, 1979, p. 632.

<sup>118</sup> Sally Hunter Graham, 'Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul and the Woman Suffrage Movement', in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol 98, N°4, 1983, p. 667.

building unfit for human habitation, those who were not jailed continued to picket the White House for the sake of political liberty.<sup>119</sup>

Little by little, American men started to support the pickets and to assume that women should be given their right to vote. Men recognized the important role played by women since the establishment of the Thirteen Colonies and the great efforts made during the periods of Abolitionism and the Civil War. Even President Wilson did not appreciate the bad treatment the pickets received during their arrest. The poor women suffered a lot because they were put in dark, cold, overcrowded cells and were badly fed. The president and a lot of American men agreed that the pickets' acts were not harmful, and that women were asking for their right to vote in a peaceful way. Woodrow Wilson was so proud of what women did to ameliorate their political situation that he said: "I deem it one of the greatest honours of my life that this great event, so stoutly fought for, for so many years, occurred during the period of my administration."<sup>120</sup> Thus, by the end of 1917, the pickets were allowed to leave that awful building and, in the same year, a number of states granted their women residents the right to vote. These states were New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Indiana, Rhode Island, Nebraska and Arkansas.

On September 30, 1918 Woodrow Wilson delivered a speech to thank women for their role during World War I (1914-1918)<sup>121</sup> and to, directly, support the passage of a woman's suffrage bill:

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<sup>119</sup> *Picketing the White House: The Suffragist Movement during the Great War*, <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/picketing-the-white-house> (Accessed December 15, 2022)

<sup>120</sup> Christine A. Lunardini & Thomas J. Knock, 'Woodrow Wilson and Woman Suffrage: A New Look' in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol 95, N°4, 1981, p. 655.

<sup>121</sup> During World War I, the members of the NAWSA turned their efforts from suffrage to war work to gain the president's support. They, therefore, encouraged all American women to enlist as volunteers in the American military services, to drive ambulances and to serve in clerical roles. Carl J. Schneider & Dorothy Schneider, "American Women in World War I", *Social Education*, Vol 58, N°2, 1994, pp. 83-85.



The services of women during this supreme crisis of the world's history have been of the most signal usefulness and distinction. The war could not have been fought without them, nor its sacrifices endured. It is high time that some part of our debt of gratitude to them should be acknowledged and paid, and the only acknowledgement they ask is their admission to the suffrage. Can we justly refuse it?<sup>122</sup>

The president's speech encouraged other states, whose constitutions had not yet adopted woman suffrage, to enfranchise their female inhabitants in 1918.<sup>123</sup> They were South Dakota, Oklahoma and Michigan.

In addition to the President's support, the women's cause was endorsed by the Jewish community living in America. Most Jewish women were working in garment industries under very bad conditions. They viewed the ballot as a means to elect new persons who would eliminate those unfair laws which marginalized women workers and did not protect them. As a matter of fact, the Jewish women, living in New York City, united themselves and formed their own Women's Suffrage Party led by Rose Schneiderman (1882-1972), a garment worker. The members of that party organized thousands of open-air meetings in public places like ball games, beaches and amusement parks, where they delivered a number of speeches, in English and Yiddish, to convince the population of the United States that it was time to give all American women their right to vote.<sup>124</sup>

Such writers as Jane Addams, Mary Ritter Beard and Eleanor Roosevelt published some literary works to express their approval for the introduction of a federal amendment to the United States Constitution enfranchising women. Jane Addams explained in her book, *Why Women Should Vote*, that women might use the ballot to improve their social and

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<sup>122</sup> Christine A. Lunardini & Thomas J. Knock, op. cit., p. 667.

<sup>123</sup> *Women's Suffrage in the U.S. by State*, <http://tag.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/suffrage-by-state.pdf> (Accessed December 15, 2021)

<sup>124</sup> Yiddish is the international Jewish Language. It is a form of old German with words borrowed from Hebrew and several modern languages. Yiddish is used by Jews from east and Central Europe. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, Great Britain, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 1486.

economic situation that would, in turn, provide them with a certain amount of power to protect their homes and children. She wrote:

If a woman would fulfil her traditional responsibility to her own children; if she would educate and protect from danger factory children who must find their recreation on the street; if she would bring the cultural forces to bear upon our materialistic civilization; and if she would do it all with the dignity and directness fitting one who carries on her immemorial duties, then she must bring herself to the use of the ballot – that latest implement for self-government. May we not fairly say that American women need this implement in order to preserve the home?<sup>125</sup>

As far as Eleanor Roosevelt's support to the women's cause is concerned, she said: "The whole point in women's suffrage is that the government needs the point of view of all its citizens and the women have a point of view which is of value to the government..."<sup>126</sup>

While women's supporters were doing their best to urge the Wilson Administration (1913-1921) to find a solution to that discrimination long endured by women in the political field, anti-suffragists, among whom Congressmen and factory owners, attempted to prevent women from achieving their objective. For example, Senator Wadsworth of New York, Senator Weeks of Massachusetts and Senator George Higgings Mose of Hampshire, did their utmost to convince the public that women would never understand politics properly, and would never be able to make good political decisions. They also thought that women's participation in politics would transform them into unattractive monsters.<sup>127</sup> In fact, those anti-suffragists wanted to exclude women from the political field because they were sure that once enfranchised, American women might reject their policies and vote them out of office.<sup>128</sup> Factory owners, too, objected the idea of women suffrage because they were aware that

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<sup>125</sup> Barbara Ryan, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>126</sup> Linda K. Kerber & Jane Sherron De Hart, op. cit., pp. 367-368.

<sup>127</sup> Anne Firor Scott, *The American Woman: Who was She?* Op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

women's aim was to use the ballot to vote for new favourable laws to ameliorate such bad working conditions as long working hours and low wages.<sup>129</sup>

At last, women's enfranchisement was also opposed by some educated women like Josephine M. Dodge (1855-1928), the leader of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in New York State, the historian Ida Tarbell (1857-1944), the writer and economist Annie Nathan Meyer (1867-1951) and the art critic Mariana Van Rensselaer (1851-1934). They all refused to be equal to men as far as politics was concerned because they were convinced that politics would make women lose their femininity, their womanly qualities, their kindness and tenderness very often needed by their husbands and children.<sup>130</sup>

Josephine M. Dodge and her followers sent a petition to the senate with a thousand signatures against women suffrage. They attempted to slow down the acceptance of a suffrage amendment, and they asserted that women's entry in the political field might disturb the stability of the home and the children's welfare.<sup>131</sup> Annie Nathan Meyer, too, objected to the naïve claim of suffragists that "women's participation in political life would cure society of all its ills."<sup>132</sup> Finally, Mariana Van Rensselaer opposed woman's suffrage when she wrote in her popular pamphlet, *Should we ask for Suffrage?*, "No, women should concentrate on their families and on educational and intellectual matters, leaving business and public affairs to men."<sup>133</sup>

After a hot debate between pro and anti-suffragists, an amendment enfranchising women was ratified on August 18, 1920. Then, it was officially added to the American

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<sup>129</sup> Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense & a Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States (1900-1965)*, Chapel Hill & London, The University of North Carolina Press, 1995, p. 88.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Mary Frances Berry, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>132</sup> David B. Green, "This Day in Jewish History, 1867: Founder of Barnard College, and So Much More, Is Born", 2014, Available at <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/.premium-1867-barnard-founder-is-born-1.5323641> (Accessed on December 17, 2022)

<sup>133</sup> Phyllis Andersen, "Principles of Taste: Book Review", *Arnoldia*, Vol.57, N°4, 1997, pp. 30-32. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42955180> (Accessed December 17, 2022)

Constitution to grant twenty-six million American women – of all classes and races – the right to vote. The amendment, known as the Nineteenth Amendment stated: “the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”<sup>134</sup>.

As a conclusion to this chapter, one may say that from the day the First Lady, Abigail Adams, started her correspondence with her husband about women’s marginalization until the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, women had been doing their best to gain all their rights. Even though they expressed their sufferings differently – either by writing letters or by taking part in Abolitionism or by participating in Temperance Movements – they had one common objective: to stop that unlimited power attributed to men in order to control women’s lives. The next chapter of this research work will talk about the new situation of women after the end of the first feminist wave, and why a new wave of feminism took place by the middle of twentieth century.

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<sup>134</sup> Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, *One Woman, One Vote: Rediscovering the Woman Suffrage Movement*, USA, New Sage, 1995, p. 1.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **The Revival of the Women's Rights Movement (1920's-1970's)**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Nineteenth Amendment was a major step in American history and granted American women – of all classes and races – the right to vote in 1920. Yet, this universal suffrage did not stop sex discrimination, completely, in the United States. The “new woman” continued to face some restrictions, however, no new feminist movement did emerge between 1920 and 1960. Moreover, no writings or particular research were done by historians or prominent women's history students to talk about any feminist demands during that same period.<sup>135</sup> However, by the middle of the 1960's, the United States had witnessed the emergence of a new feminist wave. Unlike the first wave, which focused on education and enfranchisement, the second one aimed at encouraging women to free themselves from the burdens of marriage and motherhood, and to undertake professional careers. But before we talk about second wave feminism, it is necessary to speak about World War II – since women played a crucial role during that war. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the role of women during World War II (1939-1945), the renewal of domesticity after

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<sup>135</sup> Estelle B. Freedman, “The New Woman: Changing Views of Women in the 1920s”, *Journal of American History*, Vol 61, N°2, September 1974, pp. 372–393, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1903954> (Accessed on June 12, 2021)

World War II, the revival of a new feminist wave during the 1960's, and the new women's achievements.

## **1. World War II and Women's Involvement**

An important historical event took place about two decades after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment; it was World War II (1939-1945). The latter was the most destructive military conflict witnessed by humanity during the middle of the twentieth century. That war led to the death of about 75 million people<sup>136</sup>, and a terrible devastation across Europe, the Pacific, and parts of Asia.

When the United States of America entered World War II, after the bombing of Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, it became evident that women would be essential to the war effort. Countless technical, medical and administrative roles needed to be filled in order to replace American men serving abroad.<sup>137</sup> In other words, the war gave tremendous chances for American women to access occupations that had previously been closed to them; particularly in the defense industry. Therefore, more than seven million women joined the already fourteen million women in the workforce, and the female labour force increased by thirty-two percent from 1941 to 1945.<sup>138</sup> A variety of methods – including popular songs, posters, billboards, films, radio announcements and other print advertising – were adopted to urge women to join the workforce. Some factory owners, for example, vowed to look after the health and aesthetic requirements of their female employees by supplying them with cosmetics, soaps, and sanitary supplies to use in the workplace restrooms and lounges. Those employers were convinced that such comfort packages would attract female employees and

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<sup>136</sup> "Casualties of World War II: History of Western Civilization II", <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/casualties-of-world-war-ii/> (Accessed on November 12, 2022)

<sup>137</sup> Marie Rebecca Olsen, *Finding our Way: Freidan, Steinem and the Fight for the Women's Movement (1960-1980)*, Virginia, Front Royal, 2017, p. 16.

<sup>138</sup> Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940's*, Boston, Twayne, 1982, p. 159.

keep them happy during their working hours.<sup>139</sup> As a matter of fact, the entire population was mobilized and women's role in the workforce became inevitable.

The Roosevelt Administration (1933-1945), too, created a propaganda campaign to recruit women for factory jobs. It was centred on a figure known as *Rosie the Riveter*.<sup>140</sup> The latter was a tough woman factory labourer performing what was previously considered as man's work; yet she was feminine. The campaign aimed at encouraging women to undertake certain male jobs and, at the same time, to reassure both men and society that the demands of war would not transform women into unladylike creatures. Thanks to *Rosie the Riveter* campaign, riveting became one of the jobs that women learned and mastered during World War II. Geraldine Hoff Doyle, a metal presser at a Michigan factory, Rosalind Walter, a public television benefactress, and Naomi Parker Fraley, who worked for a navy machine shop in California, were among those women whose images became most closely associated with *Rosie the Riveter*.<sup>141</sup>

In 1942, the American War Manpower Commission (WMC)<sup>142</sup> organized a Women's Advisory Committee to announce a new campaign to recruit women workers after estimating that in 1943, some five million new employees would be women. Effectively, by 1943 the majority of workers had been women. Some of them began to drive trucks and others entered the metal, steel, shipbuilding and automobile industries. As far as banking was concerned, it witnessed the recruitment of more women. For instance, at the beginning of the war, some 65,000 thousand women worked in banking, but by the end of 1944, their number had

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<sup>139</sup>Melissa McEuen, "Women, Gender and World War II", <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.013.55> (Accessed on June 12, 2021)

<sup>140</sup>*Rosie the Riveter* became the subject and title of a song and a Hollywood movie during W.W. II. It is still used as a symbol of American feminism and women's economic power. Raymond Duncan & Barbara Jancar Webster, *World Politics in the Twenty First Century*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin College Div, 2008, p. 268.

<sup>141</sup>Fox Margalit, 'Naomi Parker Fraley: The Real Rosie the Riveter dies at 96', *The New York Times*, January 22, 2018.

<sup>142</sup>The War Manpower Commission was established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on April 18, 1942. It was a World War II institution tasked with balancing the labor requirements of agriculture, industry, and the armed forces. Paul V. McNutt, the head of the Federal Security Agency, served as its chairman. *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War\\_Manpower\\_Commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_Manpower_Commission) (Accessed on June 14, 2021)

increased to, approximately, 130,000 to constitute nearly one half of the total personnel.<sup>143</sup> Women were also recruited in plants where bombs, weaponry and aircraft were made, and they received better wages if compared to those given to women working in other industries.<sup>144</sup> The number of women in the aviation industry had reached more than 310,000 female employees by 1943, representing 65 percent of the industry's total workforce (compared to just 1 percent in the pre-war years).<sup>145</sup> For example, women were supposed to sew aircraft upholstery, and to transport heavy plane parts from one end to the other by means of cranes.<sup>146</sup>

In addition to the above mentioned activities, women were allowed to join the Armed Services serving at home and abroad. Thanks to the First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who succeeded in convincing General George Marshall to support the idea of introducing a women's service branch into the Army, the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps was instituted, by the American Congress in 1942, and about 350,000 women took part in.<sup>147</sup> The service was, later on, upgraded to the Women's Army Corps and its members were called the WACs. They worked in more than 200 non-combatant jobs. For instance, they worked as nurses, they repaired planes and performed clerical work.<sup>148</sup>

In the navy, women were needed to perform certain tasks because of men's departure to join the battle field. Consequently, a women's reserve was established in November 1942, and was called after the motto *Semper Paratus Always Ready (SPAR)*, with Dorothy Stratton

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<sup>143</sup>Melissa A. McEuen, *Making War, Making Women: Femininity and Duty on the American Home Front (1941-1945)*, Athens & London, University of Georgia Press, 2011, pp. 59-61.

<sup>144</sup>Melissa McEuen, "Women, Gender and World War II", op. cit

<sup>145</sup>History.com Editors, "American Women in World War II", <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/american-women-in-world-war-ii-1> (Accessed August 22, 2021)

<sup>146</sup>Doris Weatherford, *American Women During World War II*, New York, Routledge, 2010, p. 12.

<sup>147</sup>History.com Editors, op. cit

<sup>148</sup> The National WWII Museum, "History at a Glance: Women in World War II", <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/students-teachers/student-resources/research-starters/women-wwii> (Accessed August 22, 2021)



(1899-2006) as its director. The SPARs served as storekeepers, clerks, photographers, pharmacists' mates, cooks, mechanics, drivers and did many other jobs. By the end of the war, about 85 percent of the enlisted personnel had been women. Marjorie Bell Stewart became the first SPAR who received a Silver Lifesaving Medal.<sup>149</sup>

Because of short supply in male pilots during the war, the Women's Auxiliary Ferry Squadron (WAFS), led by Nancy Harkness Love (1914-1976), and the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD), led by Jacqueline Cochran (1906-1980), were formed in 1942 to help fly aircraft in the United States. The two groups merged in the following year to form the Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). Its members, who had already acquired their pilot's license, began flying cargo-carrying American military planes from manufacturers to bases. They assisted male pilots in training exercises, and they participated in a lot of target missions. Unfortunately, those who lost their lives during the war or were captured as prisoners of the war were not honoured by the Roosevelt Administration (1933-1945), and their families did not receive government support for their funerals because no official military status had been granted to the WASPs before 1977.<sup>150</sup>

Other women played important roles in the American Red Cross (ARC) and the United Service Organization (USO). The latter recruited female volunteers charged with providing friendly diversion for American troops.<sup>151</sup> The members of the USO did their best to help and support the very young soldiers by providing facilities for the wounded, serving doughnuts and talking with the troops. Such famous stars as Marleine Dietrich, Judy Garland, Betty Grable and Rita Hayworth travelled over a million miles in order to entertain those young

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<sup>149</sup>Pricing & History, "SPARS Women of World War II Gold Eagle Enamel Service Pin WWII USCG Coast Guard", <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/spars-women-world-war-gold-eagle-1810475895> (Accessed July 08, 2021)

<sup>150</sup>Ibid.

<sup>151</sup>Emily Yellin, *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II*, New York, Free Press, 2004, p. 28.

American soldiers living far away from their families.<sup>152</sup> They thought it was necessary for the soldiers to spend a moment of pleasure with such beautiful ladies. In this respect, the historian Julia Carson (1938-2007) wrote: “this nostalgic hour, designed to cheer and comfort soldiers, involved listening to music and looking at pretty girls, like no other pretty girls in the world – American girls.”<sup>153</sup>

In general, women proved to be very useful during the war period, and every task they undertook was well done and, sometimes, they did it better than their male counterparts. In this respect, the foreman of California Consolidated Aircraft once told the *Saturday Evening Post*: “Nothing gets by them unless it’s right”<sup>154</sup>, and the United States Department of Labour approved that when examining the number of holes drilled per day in the aircraft manufacturing industry, a man drilled 650 holes per day while a woman drilled 1,000.<sup>155</sup>

Even political and military leaders admitted that women were very effective, and that they played such a great role during the war that could not be neglected by history. For instance, Glenn Martin, a co-founder of Martin Marietta, described women as being able to do some jobs usually done by men. He said: “We have women helping design our planes in the Engineering Departments, building them on the production line, [and] operating almost every conceivable type of machinery, from rivet guns to giant stamp presses.”<sup>156</sup>

Even though women were crucial to the war effort, and even if their help was extremely needed and welcomed by their nation, female workers faced two great problems during World War II. First, they suffered from that discrimination against women, which continued to characterize the American society, in general, and the American men, in particular. For

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<sup>152</sup>Julia Carson, *Home Away from Home: The Story of the USO, USA*, Harper & Brothers, 1946, p. 35.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid.

<sup>154</sup>Doris Weatherford, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>155</sup>United States Department of Labour, “Equal Pay in Women’s War Industries”, *Bulletin of the Women’s Bureau*, N°196, 1942, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_women\\_in\\_World\\_War\\_II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_women_in_World_War_II)

<sup>156</sup>Bradley La Verne, “Women at Work”, *National Geographic*, August 1944. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_women\\_in\\_World\\_War\\_II#cite\\_note-14](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_women_in_World_War_II#cite_note-14) (Accessed July 08, 2021)

example, women workers' pay lagged far behind their male counterparts' even though they sometimes did the same work.<sup>157</sup> Therefore, by 1944, skilled female workers had earned an average weekly wage of \$31.21 while their male counterparts, in similar positions, had earned \$54.65 weekly.<sup>158</sup> Women rapidly realized that even if they were successful in crossing borders into masculinised professions, and experienced the same professional problems and risks, they would never be able to reap the same benefits as their male co-workers.<sup>159</sup>

The second challenge working women, especially mothers, faced during the war years was that of childcare. It was so hard for women to leave their young children in order to respond to their nation's call and join their workplace. Therefore, a lot of working mothers chose to work at night while their children were sleeping so that they could be with them during the day. Affected by the sufferings of working mothers, the First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt urged her husband, President Roosevelt, to approve the first American government childcare facilities under the Community Facilities Act of 1942. As a result, the American government allowed the building of seven centres to welcome approximately 105,000 children in order to free their mothers and permit them to join their workplace. Still, these efforts did not meet the full need for childcare for working mothers because of the latter's great number. Eleanor Roosevelt also encouraged industry leaders to build model childcare facilities for their workers. As a matter of fact, The Kaiser Shipbuilding Company provided its female employees, in Washington, Oregon, and California, with reliable well-staffed facilities. The Richmond shipyards in the San Francisco Bay area, too, oversaw a large number of children daily.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup>Mary M. Schweitzer, 'World War Two and Female Labour Force Participation Rates', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol 40, N°1, March 1980, pp. 89-95.

<sup>158</sup>Susan M. Hartmann, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>159</sup>Melissa McEuen, "Women, Gender and World War II", op. cit

<sup>160</sup>Ibid.

Gradually, and by the end of the war, the Roosevelt Administration (1933-1945) started to imply that women's activities, sacrifices and all the experiences they lived outside home, during the war years, would end as soon as victory was at hand. The main cause of such a reaction was to prevent the appearance of social ills and discomforts such as juvenile delinquency and prostitution that would, later on, affect society and family in a bad way because of absent mothers.<sup>161</sup> For instance, the majority of women who joined military camps were, very often, accused for having casual sexual relations with the soldiers. They were, therefore, blamed for having destroyed the traditional social norms, and for having caused a sense of uneasiness and unhappiness within the American society.<sup>162</sup>

Furthermore, American soldiers became afraid of losing their jobs forever on their return from military service. As a matter of fact, social commentators admonished women to either return to their "rightful place" in the home immediately after the end of the war and to assume full responsibility towards their families, or to resume their traditional low-status, poorly-paid, sex-segregated pre-war jobs. The latter were secretary, sales woman in retail trade, private household worker, elementary school teachers, bookkeepers, waitresses, professional nurses, sewers or stitchers in manufacturing, typists, and cashiers.<sup>163</sup>

In 1945, the end of the war was marked by the atomic blasts that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki (see map 5 on the following page), and the victory of the United States and its allies.

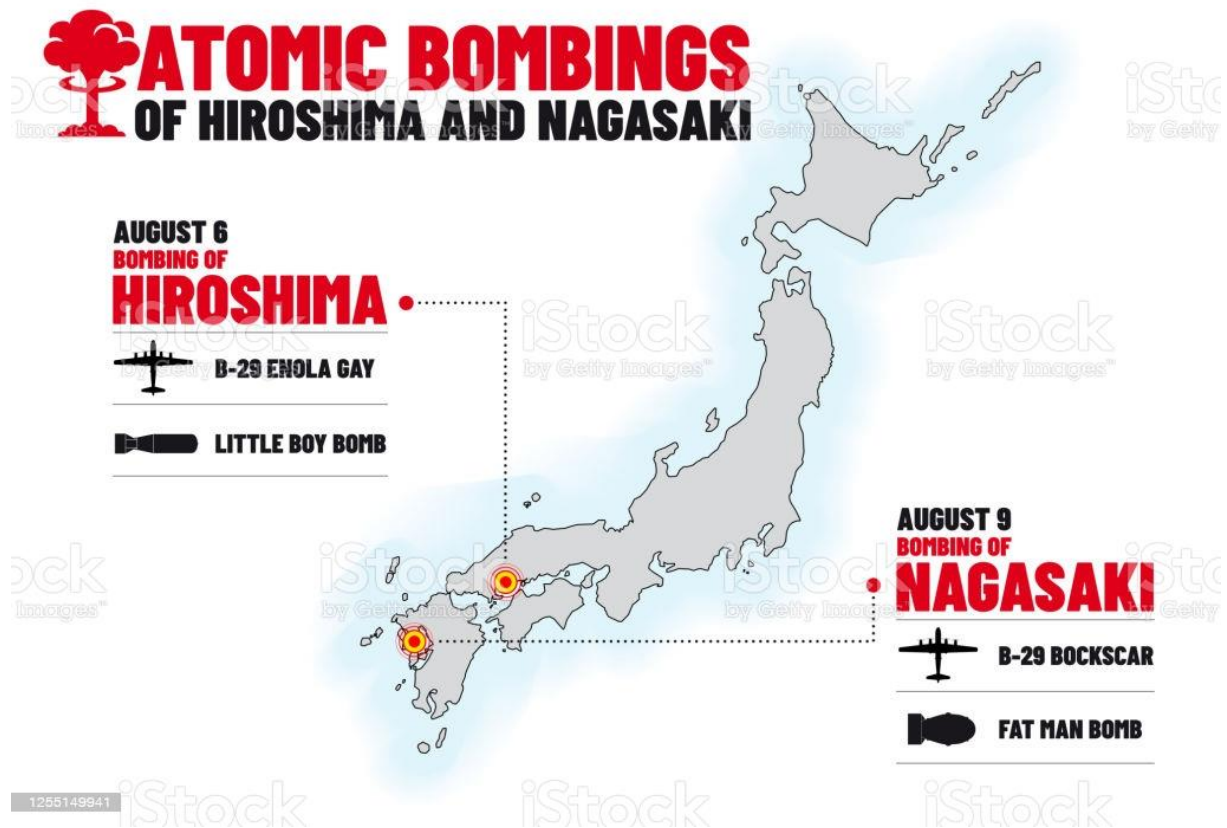
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<sup>161</sup>Ibid.

<sup>162</sup>Ibid.

<sup>163</sup>Gayle Graham Yates, *What Women Want: The Ideas of the Movement*, USA, Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 58.

Map 5: Atomic Bombings of Hirochima and Nagasaki 75th Anniversary  
Stock Illustration



**Source:** <https://www.istockphoto.com/vector/atomic-bombings-of-hiroshima-ans-nagasaki-75th-anniversary-gm1255149941-367100349>

Soon after, large numbers of women were forced to leave their war jobs. The government and factory owners did their best to convince them that their work was non-permanent. In this regard, the historian and feminist Leila J. Rupp indicated in her book, *Mobilizing Women for War*, that “the American government propaganda campaigns recruited women into the factories and other places of employment, and kept them there for the duration of the war.”<sup>164</sup> Another female scholar, Susan Hartmann, analysed the American society in the forties and explained in her *The Home Front and Beyond* that both social and political forces encouraged the maintenance of that traditional belief, based on homemaking

<sup>164</sup>Ibid

and motherhood for women, in post-war America.<sup>165</sup> Now, after describing the different roles played by women during World War II, it seems necessary to describe life in post-war America and women's reaction after being obliged to give up their war jobs and retire from the public sphere.

## **2. Post World War II America and the renewal of domesticity**

During the years that followed World War II, the American society witnessed a remarkable economic growth, an increase in manufacturing, and social prosperity with new modern houses constructed in the suburbs. During that period, too, unemployment was low and jobs were found easily; the fact that brought stability to the American society and made life better and more comfortable. As a result, the American people started to adopt the idea that home and family were the best means to preserve that peace because, for them, a house filled with children would create a feeling of warmth and security against the cold forces of disruption and alienation.<sup>166</sup>

Consequently, a remarkable increase in marriage and birth rates took place in post-World War America. Marriage was seen as an indicator of stability and safety that the country was looking for after the uncertainty of the war. From the 1940's to the 1960's, Americans of all racial and religious groups, of all socio-economic classes and educational levels became eager to get married and found families.<sup>167</sup> In this sense, one observer said about young marriages

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

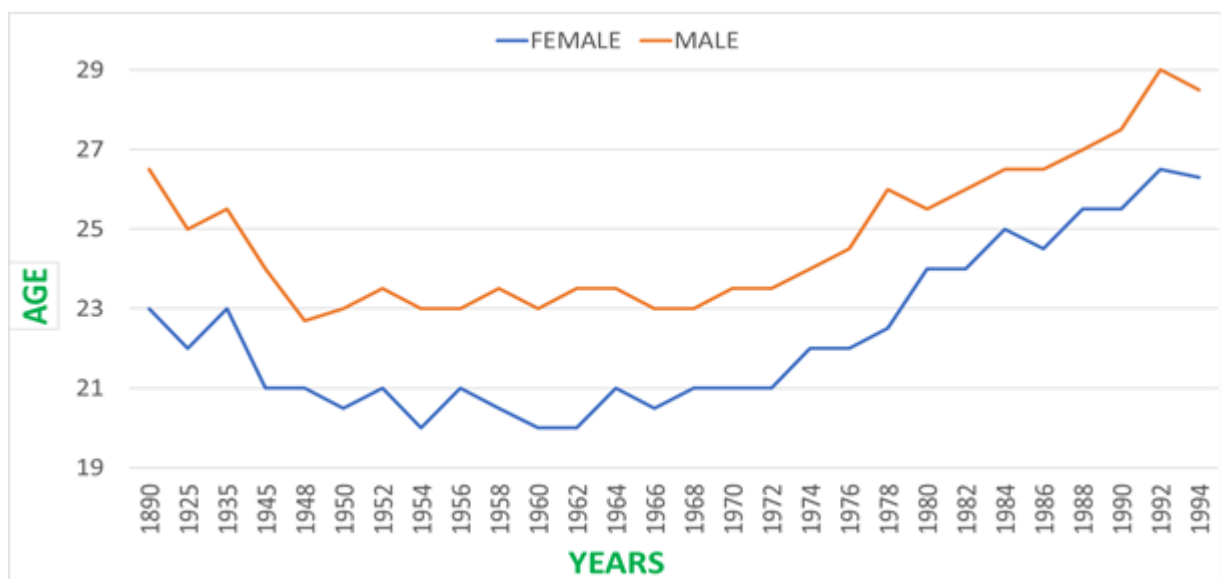
<sup>166</sup> Elaine Tyler. M, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, New York, Basic Book Inc, 1988, p. 17.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

Youngsters want to grasp what little security they can in a world gone frighteningly insecure. The youngsters feel they will cultivate the one security that's possible – their own gardens, their own...home and families.<sup>168</sup>

For the sake of illustration, the following figure will show how the Americans (Black and White, rich and poor) lowered the age of marriage for both men and women during the Cold War period.

**Figure 1: Median Age at First Marriage, Male and Female (1890-1994)**



**Source:** Elaine Tyler May, op. cit., p. xii.

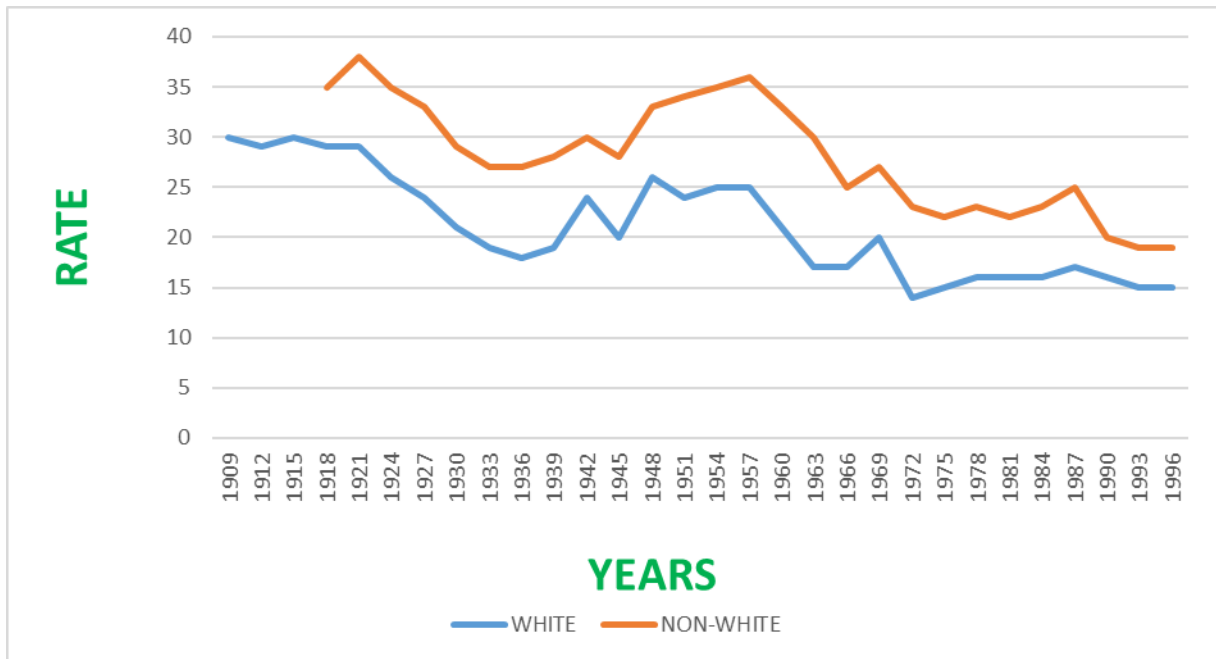
From the above figure, we notice that between 1954 and 1962 both white and non-white women were marrying under the age of 21 (blue line). As far as men were concerned, they also got married at a very young age – 23 years old – between 1948 and 1960 (red line). However, after the 1970's, the normal age of marriage started to rise until it reached 29 for men and almost 27 for women during the 1990's. As a result, post-World War II America raised the marriage rate and brought the divorce rate down.<sup>169</sup> In addition, Americans

<sup>168</sup>Mildred Gilman, "Why They Can't Wait to Wed?", *Parents Magazine*, November 1958, p. 46.

<sup>169</sup>Elaine Tyler May, op. cit., p. viii.

contributed to the baby boom by bringing the birth rate up. For more illustration, see the following figure:

**Figure 2: Birth Rate, White and Non-White (1909-1996)**



**Source:** Elaine Tyler May, op. cit., p. xiv

Figure 2, shows that after the birth rate – for white Americans – had diminished during the years of World War II it, once again, rose in the post-war period. Similarly, the birth rate for the non-whites rose after World War II mainly, in 1957.

Soon, the idea of housewifery and motherhood was renewed and people became sure that the woman was the one who would take care of her children, and would protect her family. In this regard, the historian Elaine Tyler May, who analysed the social constructs of Cold War Era family, wrote:

...in the early years of the Cold War, amid a world of uncertainties brought about by World War II and its aftermath, the home seemed to offer a secure private nest removed from the dangers of the outside world.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>170</sup>Ibid, p. 3.



White middle-class Americans, more highly educated than the average, were among the first to take advantage of the post war prosperity, and among the first who were keen on establishing emancipated nuclear families in the suburbs. Therefore, young adults were looking toward a radically new lifestyle where both the husband and wife, along with their children, could live in a large comfortable single-family house of their own far from the old ethnic ties, and free from kinship obligations. Consequently, those young adults “made the transition from loyalty to the community of ethnic kinship to the suburban ideal of the modern nuclear family.”<sup>171</sup> Even those who lived in the countryside started to move from farms to cities and they, gradually, lost their traditional way of life that was rooted in the land.<sup>172</sup>

All these factors changed the American living conditions during the Cold War years. The preservation of a newly established nuclear family from external influence, and the maintenance of its stability depended heavily on the strong commitment of its members – mainly the parents. The latter were obliged to stay linked to each other, to take care of their family, and to define the duties of each one of them because “neither the world nor the newly formed suburban communities could be relied on to offer aid, support, or security.”<sup>173</sup>

This new American lifestyle encouraged a lot of American women who undertook a job during World War II, in order to replace departing soldiers, to resume their former role of housewives and mothers. In other words, the Cold War era brought the ideology of domesticity to life again. Marriage and family became so important to Americans’ eyes after the end of World War II that both men and women, when asked about what marriage had brought to them, answered: “a family, children, love, companionship, a sense of success and security.”<sup>174</sup> They claimed that these elements of life could not be achieved without marriage.

A woman said: “marriage gave me a sense of responsibility I wouldn’t have had if I had

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<sup>171</sup>Ibid, p. viii.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid, pp, 20-22.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid, p. 20.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid, p. 23.

remained single, or a feeling of usefulness...for others dear to me.”<sup>175</sup> Another one remarked: “I’m not the ‘career girl’ type. I like being home and having a family ... working with my husband for our home and family brings a satisfaction that working alone could not.”<sup>176</sup> One husband said:

marriage increased my horizons, defined my goals and purposes in life, strengthened my convictions, raised my intellectual standards and stimulated my incentive to provide moral, spiritual, and material support; It has rewarded me with a realistic sense of family and security I never experienced during the first 24 years of my life.<sup>177</sup>

Those young couples really expressed a strong commitment to a new expanded vision of family life.

Even minorities living in the United States welcomed the idea of domesticity. Black women, for instance, who had worked for white families since their arrival, as slaves, to America and who worked outside home during World War II, wished to stay home and take care of their own families. Thanks to that post-war abundance, a few Black people were able to found a family where the earnings of men would be sufficient to meet their wives and children’s needs.<sup>178</sup> In this respect, *Ebony Magazine* proclaimed, in 1947, “Goodbye Mammy, Hello Mom” to celebrate the possibility of Black people, who longed for a “good life” just like everyone else, to found a decent Black family with dignity, pride and comfort:

World War Two took Negro mothers out of white kitchens, put them in factories and shipyards. When it was all over, they went back to kitchens – but this time their own ... And so today in thousands of Negro homes, the Negro mother has come home, come home perhaps for the first time since

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<sup>175</sup>Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid.

<sup>178</sup>Ibid, p. 18.

1619 when the first Negro families landed at Jamestown, Virginia. For black women, domesticity meant 'freedom and independence' in her own home.<sup>179</sup>

Asian-Americans, too, were eager to celebrate home and family life. After World War II, the exclusion of Chinese immigrants was over and Asian-Americans started to enter the country. They quickly transformed small societies of bachelors like New York's Chinatown into prosperous and growing family oriented communities. Even the children of European immigrants wished to seize that opportunity of post-war prosperity, to escape the crowded ethnic neighbourhoods of the cities, and blend into white America in spacious single-family homes in the suburbs.<sup>180</sup>

To express its wish to preserve the social and economic prosperity of its nation, the American government encouraged women to stay at home and be full-time female homemakers, while the husbands went out to make money.<sup>181</sup> Therefore, spacious houses with comfortable kitchens, equipped with modern household appliances, were built in order to encourage women to leave their war-time jobs and take care of their husbands and children. The Eisenhower Administration (1953-1961) tried to render life easier with devoted mothers working effortlessly in order to protect both the family and the American society as a whole. When the Vice President Richard M. Nixon travelled to the Soviet Union, in 1959, to attend the American National Exhibition in Moscow, he had a long debate with the Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev (1958-1964) on the 'kitchen of the future'. Nixon proclaimed that the 'model' home with a male breadwinner and a full-time female homemaker, adorned with a wide array of consumer goods represented the essence of American freedom.<sup>182</sup> Nixon insisted

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<sup>179</sup> Quoted in Elaine Tyler May, op.cit., p. 18.

<sup>180</sup>Xiaolan Bao, "When Women Arrived: The Transformation of New York's Chinatown" in Joanne Meyerowitz, *Women and Gender in Post War America (1945-1960)*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1994, pp. 19-36.

<sup>181</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>182</sup>Elaine Tyler May, op. cit., p. 11.

that American superiority in the Cold War was based on the secure, abundant family life of modern suburban homes. He said:

To us, diversity, the right to choose, ... is the most important thing. We don't have one decision made at the top by one government official. ... We have many different manufacturers and many different kinds of washing machines so that the housewives have a choice. ... Would it not be better to compete in the relative merits of washing machines than in the strength of rockets?<sup>183</sup>

Then, he added: "In America, these [washing machines] are designed to make things easier for our women. ... What we want is to make easier the life of our housewives."<sup>184</sup> The two million citizens<sup>185</sup> who attended the exhibition expressed amazement when they saw the kind of houses and kitchens the United States offered to its white middle-class families. As a conclusion to what had been said, after a brief emergence of the "new woman", with the opportunity of being accepted in male-dominated jobs during World War II, and the possibility for a career outside the home, a lot of women were forced to return home after the end of the war and the idea of domesticity was, once again, encouraged mainly during the Cold War period. It was thought by the majority of American people that women would prevent the beginning of a nuclear war, and that they would protect the peaceful life they were enjoying.

Gradually, the idea of domesticity was also disseminated through new and popular forms of entertainment such as women's magazines and television programmes. For example, *Leave it to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*, two popular American series broadcast from the late fifties until the early sixties, were fascinating portraits of the daily life of the ideal suburban family during the mid-twentieth century.<sup>186</sup> They both described the primary roles of women as wives and mothers in order to value domesticity. *I Love Lucy* was another series

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<sup>183</sup>Ibid.

<sup>184</sup>Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>185</sup>Ibid.

<sup>186</sup>Kate Bornstein, *My New Gender Workbook*, USA, Routledge, 2013, p. 63.

which portrayed the life of a woman who met with disaster every time she tried to leave the household for a job opportunity. On the one hand, the show aimed at proving that the rightful place of a woman was home, and that her principal role was to take care of her family. On the other hand, the series indicated women's discontent with remaining at home since every episode was about Lucy's attempts to find a job outside home.<sup>187</sup>

Although a lot of American women accepted the renewal of domesticity, during the 1950's, and enjoyed their new life style in such beautiful and modern houses, some of them refused to leave their war-time jobs. They wanted to remain in the work force because they feared to lose their social and economic independence. They also aimed at convincing themselves as well as their society that both their individual and collective experiences from 1941 to 1945 would not allow them to go back into a pre-war life.<sup>188</sup> Unfortunately, it was a nightmare because they suffered a lot and began to witness endless discrimination against them. For example, women were constantly blocked from being promoted within their firms and institutions because the American society continued to favour men and to give them the most prestigious jobs. Even if a woman did the same job as a man, her income was always lower than his.<sup>189</sup> For more illustration, the following table will show the different incomes white men, non-white men, white women and non-white women received.

**Table 1: The Median Income for Year-round, Full-time Workers**

| <b>GENDER</b> | <b>INCOME</b> |
|---------------|---------------|
| White men     | \$ 7,164      |
| Non-white men | \$ 4,528      |
| White women   | \$ 4,152      |

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Melissa A. McEuen, "Women, Gender, and World War II", op. cit.

<sup>189</sup> Gayle Graham Yates, op. cit., p. 58.

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Non-white women | \$ 2,949 |
|-----------------|----------|

**Source:** Gayle Graham Yates, op. cit., p. 58.

As shown in the tabulated data above, the average white and non-white women workers earned, respectively, little more than half the income of the average white and non-white male workers. One can also notice that white women workers' income was a little bit lower than that of non-white male workers even though the latter were suffering racial discrimination.

Even advanced education was of small benefit to the earning power of women as illustrated in the following table.

**Table 2: Male and Female Median Income Indicated by Educational Attainment**

| GENDER | EDUCATION                  | INCOME    |
|--------|----------------------------|-----------|
| MEN    | 8 years                    | \$ 4,518  |
|        | 4 years of high school     | \$ 6,924  |
|        | 4 years of college         | \$ 9,728  |
|        | 5 or more years of college | \$ 10,041 |
| WOMEN  | 8 years                    | \$ 1,104  |
|        | 4 years of high school     | \$ 2,673  |
|        | 4 years of college         | \$ 4,164  |
|        | 5 or more years of college | \$ 6,114  |

**Source:** Gayle Graham Yates, op. cit., p. 58.

From the data contained in table 2, one may say that the highest income for women was \$6,114, and it was received by women with five years or more of college whereas men with the same degree of education gained \$ 10,041. It is also noticed that the same category of women received less income than men with only four years of high school education. The latter, for instance, received \$6,924.

In addition, a report on gender inequality entitled: *American Women*, was released on October 11, 1963 by the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. (the commission had been chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt and after her death in 1962, the executive vice chairman Esther Peterson emerged as a leader in the commission). The report, explicitly, proved that the women who continued to work after World War II suffered sex discrimination. Thus, the commission suggested the introduction of some new rules to reduce gender inequality, and to help women workers. Through that report, the members of the commission advised Kennedy's Administration (1961-1963) to give paid maternity leave, to help with childcare, and to grant women a greater access to education.<sup>190</sup> This unbearable discrimination against women in the workforce altered women's behaviour and beliefs about their proper place in the public sphere, and laid the foundation for the second feminist wave that characterized 1960's America.

### **3. The Emergence of Second Wave Feminism in the United States**

The following section is devoted to talk about the second feminist wave; mainly led by Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem who, both, encouraged women to undertake a professional career for they viewed marriage and motherhood as a major obstacle for women's progress. In this sense Steinem said: "you become a semi-nonperson when you get married."<sup>191</sup> The section will also show how female artists contributed to the 1960's struggle, against sex discrimination, thanks to music.

Unlike the mid-forties, when life in America seemed perfect and people enjoyed the living conditions of the time, the 1960's America is known for its hard times, its social unrest and massive change. The nation witnessed the emergence of new thoughts and the appearance

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<sup>190</sup>Michael Hunt, *The World Transformed: 1945 to the Present*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 220-221.

<sup>191</sup> Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, *The Flipside of Feminism: What Conservative Women know and Men Can't Say*, Washington, WND Books, 2011, p. 71.

of new events which started, altogether, to disturb the serenity of the American people<sup>192</sup>. Among these events were the rise of the Black Civil Rights Movement, the riots and bombings in places like Birmingham and Alabama where the racist governor George Wallace (1919-1998) openly ran on a platform of *segregation forever*, the deliverance of Martin Luther King's famous speech *I Have a Dream*, and the March on Washington.<sup>193</sup>

In the same period, more particularly in 1963, Betty Freidan (1921-2006) published her famous book *The Feminine Mystique* which played, later on, an important role in the emergence of a second feminist wave.<sup>194</sup> When the book was published in 1963, there were only three thousand copies in circulation. Step by step, the demand grew and more copies were sold. Before writing *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan, a journalist, had written a series of articles to expose the difficulties faced by unions fighting for workers' rights, and she, soon, became an outspoken advocate of labour unions. Unfortunately, in 1952, and because women did not have the right to maternity leave, Friedan felt obliged to give up her job due to her pregnancy so that she could take care of her baby. "This was", Friedan later said, "the first personal stirring of my own feminism, I guess."<sup>195</sup>

After spending a long time staying at home to fulfil her role of a wife and mother, Friedan started to realize that her life changed drastically. She noticed that her stay at home prevented her from improving her intellectual capacities, and that she spent a great deal of her time looking after her children and keeping up with her housework, while her husband was off at work. This heavy dissatisfaction with these role genders pushed her to publish, in 1963, her popular book the *Feminine Mystique* that was viewed, by many historians, as the

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<sup>192</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>193</sup>The march on Washington was held on August 28, 1963, to demand civil and economic rights for African Americans. Around 250.000 people attended the event, during which Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous speech, *I Have a Dream*, to call for the abolition of racism. *Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March\\_on\\_Washington\\_for\\_Jobs\\_and\\_Freedom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_on_Washington_for_Jobs_and_Freedom)

<sup>194</sup>Corrine Sweet, *Betty Friedan*, London, The Independent, 2006.

<sup>195</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., p. 31.



beginning of the second wave of feminism.<sup>196</sup> According to historian Daniel Horowitz, who wrote a biography of Betty Friedan, that reaction on the part of a woman in sixties America was born, not out of boredom as a housewife, but rather from her skills as a journalist combined with her old desire to speak about workers' problems and inequalities in the labour force through the publication of various articles.<sup>197</sup>

In addition to her former experience as a journalist and supporter of labour unions, Friedan was highly influenced by the French writer Simone De Beauvoir (1908-1986) who explained, in her 1949 *Second Sex*, the status of women in the patriarchal society. Simone had examined and analysed the situation of women in that kind of society during the 1940's, and concluded that men used to consider women as "other". Simone De Beauvoir was convinced that even though women were capable of getting pregnant, lactating and menstruating, there was no reason to consider them as the "second sex" and to accept that male-centred ideology as a norm.<sup>198</sup>

In 1953, Simone De Beauvoir's work was translated into English, then published in the United States. Soon afterwards, Betty Friedan decided to make her own analysis about the status of American women and their feelings during post World War II era. Thus, she conducted a very important survey based on the answers provided by her former classmates from Smith College. She made a comparison between a group of women who continued to work during the Cold War period and a group of housewives. She concluded, from her study, that the former were psychologically more satisfied and happier than the latter.<sup>199</sup> In fact, those who remained in the workplace thought that working outside home would help women improve their knowledge and mental capacities. Moreover, they noticed that the new

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<sup>196</sup>Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>197</sup>Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of "the Feminine Mystique": The American Left, The Cold War, and Modern Feminism*, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1998, p. 94.

<sup>198</sup> Judith Butler, "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*", *Yale French Studies*, N72, 1986, pp. 35-49.

<sup>199</sup>Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, New York, W.W. Norton, 1997.

technologies of the Cold War period and the well-equipped modern kitchens, the majority of American women were having, made household work less difficult. In this respect, one may say that women's work at home became less meaningful and valuable than before.

On the other hand, some of the women who accepted to go back to their pre-war role of wives and mothers, gradually, started to express a feeling of sadness and under-estimation. Friedan discovered that these unhappy housewives were, very often, suffering from agitation and amorphous discontent because they thought of themselves as incapable of having any role outside the home. This is what Friedan called "the problem that has no name". As a matter of fact, she revealed, later on, in the *Feminine Mystique* that the fact of excluding women from the work place would destroy their ambitions, and she bitterly criticized the ancient belief based on women's inferiority and men's superiority.<sup>200</sup>

Friedan's work strongly rejected the idea that women's principal role was mainly based on bearing and nurturing children.<sup>201</sup> She tried, throughout her writing, to convince women that it was time to make life plans of their own, and to break that social belief which was constantly suggesting to girls that their destiny was in housewifery and motherhood. Friedan's objective was to explain to the whole society that the highest value and the only commitment for women was the fulfilment of their own femininity.<sup>202</sup> The latter may be achieved only when giving women the opportunity to do the work that had most meaning to them and through which they could make a public contribution.<sup>203</sup>

Moreover, women should be allowed, according to Friedan, to take part in the workforce in order to prove how they may, sometimes, be as beneficial as their men counterparts. Friedan was sure that having a job outside the home, was the central means by

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<sup>200</sup>Michael Hunt, op. cit., pp. 220-221.

<sup>201</sup>Gayle Graham Yates, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>202</sup>Ibid.

<sup>203</sup>Ibid, p. 35.

which women might test and evaluate who they were, and might find a full new identity by thinking of themselves as being equal to men rather than inferior to them. In this context, Friedan asked:

Who knows what women can be when they are finally free to become themselves? Who knows what women's intelligence will contribute when it can be nourished without denying love? Who knows of the possibilities of love when men and women share not only children, home, and garden, not only the fulfilment of their biological roles, but the responsibilities and passions of the work that creates the human future and the full human knowledge of who they are?<sup>204</sup>

It had been claimed that the book was not intended to be a call to action. However, throughout all the details regarding the still-existing ideology that favoured males over women, it enhanced women's awareness of sexism and patriarchy.<sup>205</sup> Friedan's sympathetic and incisive appraisal of post-war American women's living conditions led to a considerable feminist reflection and activity because she continued to loathe the definition of women wholly as sex objects and as mothers. She believed that women "were being suffocated by the revived 'stay-at-home-mom' position. In this sense, Friedan wrote:

It is my thesis that the core of the problem for women today is not sexual but a problem of identity – a stunting or evasion of growth that is perpetuated by the feminine mystique. It is my thesis that as the Victorian culture did not permit women to accept or gratify their basic sexual needs, our culture does not permit women to accept or gratify their basic need to grow and fulfil their potentialities as human beings, a need which is not solely defined by their sexual role.<sup>206</sup>

Hence, contrary to what had been claimed, some historians supposed that Friedan's work was widely credited for having begun the second wave of feminism in the United States of

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<sup>204</sup>Ibid, p. 39.

<sup>205</sup>Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*, New York, The Penguin Group, 2000, p. 8.

<sup>206</sup>Betty Friedan, op. cit., p. 77.

America during the 1960's in order to seek more power and more opportunities for women, and to call for a new social order that would "shift public leadership and occupational dominance from men primarily to women and men equally."<sup>207</sup>

Unfortunately, if more attention is paid to Friedan's life, one may guess that this famous feminist, who was thought to be defending women and to make American mothers aware of their nation's injustice towards them, was herself an unbalanced person suffering from psychological disorder. She grew up in an unstable environment where she had a very bad relation with her own mother, who was constantly criticizing her. In her autobiography, *Life So Far*, Friedan wrote: "all mothers should be drowned at birth."<sup>208</sup> Then, she married Carl Friedan and had children with him, but their marriage was a failure. Consequently, she started to believe that marriage, motherhood, and society were responsible for the suffering of the American housewife who lived in "a comfortable concentration camp."<sup>209</sup> She, therefore, tried to transform her personal problems into societal problems. Friedan's attack against marriage and motherhood led, later on, to some social disorder within the American society. This will be discussed in the last chapter of this work.

Friedan's emphasis on the importance of work in helping women achieve identity and independence was also supported by the American feminist author Caroline Bird Mahoney (1915-2011) throughout her prominent book *Born Female* published in 1968. Like Betty, Bird believed that work was the symbol of women's satisfaction. She made it clear in her work that she was definitely against that "sexist" attitude of relegating women to a rigid pre-determined sex role. She strongly rejected that principle based on women's obligation to serve men, and to respond positively to their desires. Caroline Bird criticized the American society, which always allowed men to hold the superior positions and jobs carrying prestige. She described

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<sup>207</sup>Gayle Graham Yates, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>208</sup> Quoted in Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

people holding that ideology as the “new masculinists” and explained that if women were allowed to choose the job they wanted to do, if their men counterparts treated them equally, and if they gave them the required opportunities to improve their professional capacities, this “masculinist” concept of feminine subservience would be broken, and men and women would live in harmony.<sup>210</sup>

In addition to Betty Friedan, who gave birth to the second wave of feminism in the United States of America, thanks to her well-known book *The Feminine Mystique*, Gloria Steinem (1934-) was another woman who joined the movement to challenge that male dominated society. Steinem, too, suffered a lot as a child because her parents divorced when she was only ten years old, and she lived with her invalid mother. Later on, when asked about her feelings regarding marriage and motherhood, Steinem replied: “I’d already been the very small parent of a very big child – my mother. I didn’t want to end up taking care of someone else.”<sup>211</sup>

That ambitious journalist, of the 1960’s, gained widespread popularity among feminists after she had released an “exposé” describing how the Playboy Bunnies<sup>212</sup>, working as waitresses in Playboy Clubs, were treated by men. The Bunnies, were expected to charm the customers who used to frequent those clubs by using a variety of pleasing ways; the fact that transformed women into “sexual object” to please men.<sup>213</sup>

Before joining the women’s movement, Steinem had worked as a journalist for a lot of major publications including *Help*, *Glamour*, *New York Times magazine*, *Esquire*, *Show and Ladies Home Journal*. She, later, realized that working for men would not help her advance in

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<sup>210</sup>Ruth Rosen, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

<sup>211</sup>Ibid, p. 37.

<sup>212</sup> Playboy Bunnies were waitresses at Playboy Clubs. They were called so because they wore a “bunny suit” costume composed of a strapless corset, bunny ears, black sheer-to-waist pantyhose, a bow tie, and a fluffy cotton tail, *Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playboy\\_Bunny](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playboy_Bunny)

<sup>213</sup>David Faber, *The Sixties Chronicle*, USA, Legacy Publishing, p. 150.

her professional career due to experiences of sexism and misogyny she had. As a result, Steinem decided to enter the field of feminist journalism, and issued a woman run magazine in 1972; known as *Ms Magazine*. The latter helped her find a new voice and identity among feminists. She convinced the American society that it was possible for a woman to run a successful and autonomous publication. She, then, gave her readers, throughout the magazine's articles and advertising, a new image about women during the 1970's that was completely different from that of the 1950's. Since Steinem did not support marriage and motherhood, her magazine had been criticized by those who preferred motherhood to careers. Therefore, a letter came into *Ms Magazine* to highlight this disagreement:

The reader pointed out that many women felt estranged from the movement, and from Ms. In particular, because they felt left out; and, more specifically, they felt their own decisions to take care of their own children were unfairly criticized by women who either hated their husbands or had selfishly chosen "careers"...<sup>214</sup>

Friedan and Steinem's dislike of motherhood influenced white middle-class American women who started to reject the renewed idea of domesticity, which was restored immediately after World War II. They wanted to join, once again, the public sphere, to have the same opportunities as men, and to build their own careers. For this reason, it is historically admitted that both World War II and the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* laid solid foundations for a new feminist movement that swept the United States in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>215</sup> In this sense, the historian William Chafe thought that the war was a watershed in women's history because, for him, the movement of women into the labour force, that the war initiated, created the essential foundation for the re-emergence of the Women's Movement in the 1960's. Susan B. Anthony II, great-niece of the women's suffrage

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<sup>214</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

<sup>215</sup>Melissa McEuen, "Women, Gender and World War II", op. cit.

fighter, too, was convinced that “the war marked a turning point in women’s road to full equality.”<sup>216</sup>

Effectively, a second feminist wave emerged during the 1960’s and was led by a new generation that abandoned the idea of domesticity, and rejected the rigid institutional boundaries of their elders. Most of the leaders disagreed with the belief that the home and family represented the security and stability of the American population. The second feminist movement was a powerful and ever-changing force in American life; generating new ideas and new organizations asking for new issues.<sup>217</sup> Its leaders were eager to change the American public perception of gender roles as well as expanding the definition of democracy by repositioning these roles within the home. Gradually, women started to establish several powerful feminist organizations to ask for a women-equal-to-men American society. In spite of casual tensions between Friedan and Steinem, they both did their best and worked diligently, along with other feminists, to lead the second wave of feminism in the United States from the 1960’s until the 1980’s.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) has been very active since its founding in 1966 (the NOW still exists). Its members, among whom Betty Friedan, Ada Allness, Mary Evelyn Benbow, Gene Boyer, Shirley Chisholm, and Analoyce Clapp did their best at the local and national level to achieve “equal and full participation of women in the mainstream of American society.”<sup>218</sup> At the beginning of its foundation, the organization described an ideal family structure as the one in which both parents would share child care and domestic chores. It indicated clearly in its statement of purpose, during one of its conferences, how women were discriminated in education, industry, politics, government and the professions during the 1960’s. (see appendix III)

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<sup>216</sup>Ibid.

<sup>217</sup>Sara Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century's End*, New York, Free Press, 2003, p. 8.

<sup>218</sup>Gayle Graham Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

The NOW worked for equal employment for women by asking for the elimination of sex discriminatory laws, and the right of women workers to report their bosses and co-workers for acts of sexual assault. In 1968, and thanks to the great effort of Betty Friedan, the NOW successfully lobbied the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to pass an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prevent discrimination based on sex as well as race, religion and national origin in the work place.<sup>219</sup> In addition, the organization demanded maternity rights for women workers, encouraged child care facilities to free working mothers during their working hours, and called for the withdrawal of all antiabortion laws. The NOW's members believed that any woman had the right to control her own body.<sup>220</sup> They finally tried to protect women who suffered from physical violence at home by encouraging the building of shelters for battered wives since it was supposed that domestic violence, such as battery and rape, was rampant in post-war America.<sup>221</sup>

In 1970, 1971, and 1972, the NOW organized a series of "Women's March for Equity" in order to celebrate August 26, 1920, which represented the anniversary of American women gaining the right to vote thanks to the Nineteenth Amendment. On account of its ideological stance, which declared that what was open to men in society should also be open to women, and due to the positive gains it achieved, the NOW earned a solid and respectable attention. This very important organization brought the second American Women's Movement its credibility by focusing on crucial issues that have changed the American society and the destiny of all American women in a significant way. Inspired by all these victories, the NOW's members worked hard to guarantee the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and to make it part of the United States Constitution, but they did not succeed.<sup>222</sup> In

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<sup>219</sup>James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States 1945-1974*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 646.

<sup>220</sup>Gayle Graham Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>221</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup>*Ibid.*



this context, it seems to be essential to give further details about the ERA, which became the most important objective of the NOW leaders during the 1960's.

The ERA was first proposed to Congress in 1923 by Alice Paul (1885-1977), the founder of the National Woman's Political party during the first wave of feminism. The central underlying principle of the proposed amendment was the eradication of all legal distinctions between women and men. In other words, "sex" should not determine the legal rights of men or women. Paul's crusade in the 1920's was unsuccessful and the ERA was immediately rejected. With the revival of feminism, the ERA was reintroduced into Congress, in 1971, by Representative Martha Wright Griffiths (1912-2003), and it passed the House of Representatives on October 12, 1971 and the Senate on March 22, 1972. Only one senator out of a hundred was willing to speak out against ERA – senator Sam Ervin – and a mere three House members out of 435: Henry Hyde, George Hansen, and Bob Dornan.<sup>223</sup> The proposed amendment was, then, sent to the states for ratification with a seven-year deadline. In the first year, it was ratified by 21 states but, as opponents began to organize, ratification was slowed down – nine states in 1973, four states in 1974, none between 1975 and 1976, and one in 1977; a total of 35 state ratifications. (see map 6 on the following page)

Phyllis Schlafly (1924-2016) was at the head of this anti-feminist movement, for she thought that "the women's movement would be the downfall of the country."<sup>224</sup> This conservative, pro-family, and anti-feminism woman was convinced that women were meant to be mothers, and expected to raise children who would be good citizens in the future, and who would serve the world in a good way. Many women in America shared Schlafly's opinion, and believed that women needed protection under the law.<sup>225</sup> As a result, in 1972, Schlafly officially formed the STOP (Stop Taking Our Privileges) ERA campaign to block

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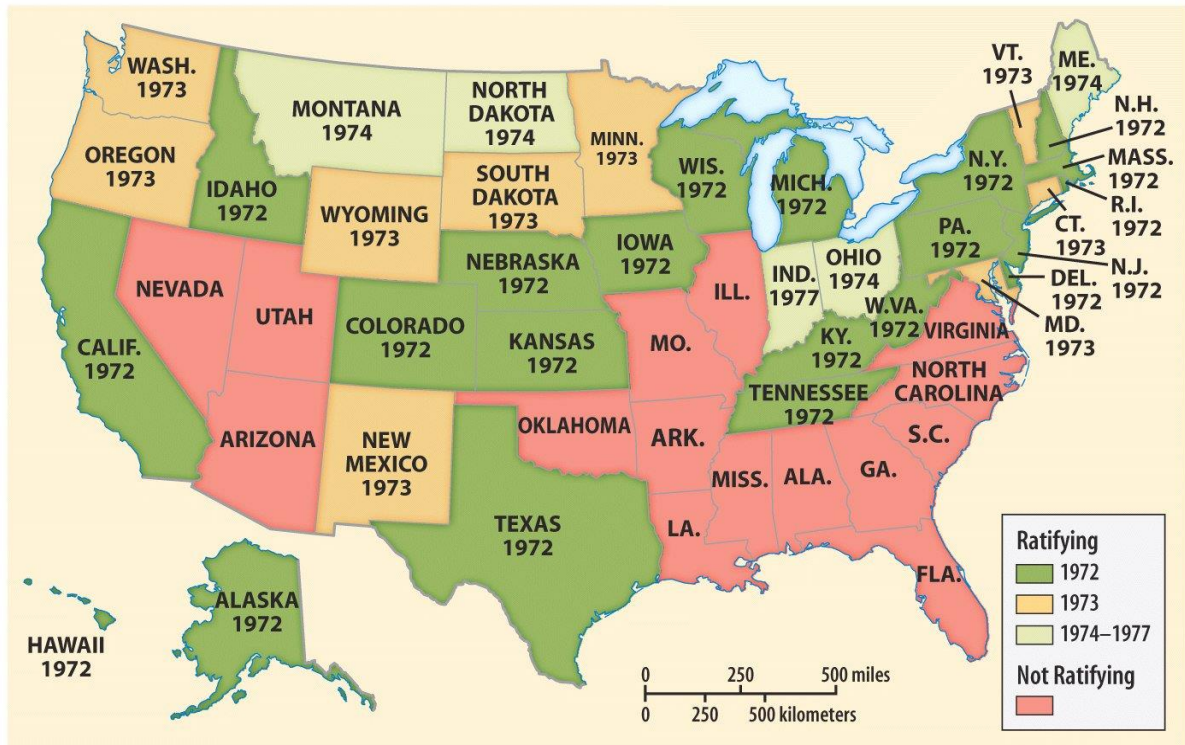
<sup>223</sup>Suzan Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>224</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>225</sup>James T. Patterson, op. cit., p. 36.

ratification by arguing that the passage of the ERA would be a monumental mistake because it would encourage men to abandon their families, and it would lead to the appearance of unisex toilets and gay marriages.<sup>226</sup>

**Map 6: States Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment**



**Source :** <https://twitter.com/jimmystreich/status/1002018582287568896>

“Stop ERAers” had no Internet, no e-mail, and no fax machines to rally support for their cause. They were not even sure whether or not their campaign would be successful. The only thing they relied on to make their voice heard was the *Phyllis Schlafly Report*. It was an anti-feminist manifesto, entitled *What's Wrong With 'Equal Rights' for Women?* in which she justified her disbelief in fighting for women's liberation, and her refusal to support the passage of the ERA.

During ten years, Phyllis continued to publish a hundred issues of her four-page monthly newsletter and flyers about ERA. Throughout her reports, she tried to convince the

<sup>226</sup> Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, op. cit., p. 39.

American people, mainly politicians, that ERA ratification would eliminate some legal rights women already possessed such as the right of an 18-year-old girl not to be drafted and sent into military combat, and the right of a wife to be supported by her husband. “Stop ERAers” also argued that ERA “would give a blank check to the federal courts to define the words *sex* and *equality of rights*.”<sup>227</sup> Finally, they explained clearly that, in case of ratification, Section 2 of ERA would transfer to the federal government power over all laws that traditionally allowed differences of treatment on account of sex. Those laws included issues like marriage, property, divorce, alimony, child custody, adoptions, sex crimes, homosexual laws, private and public schools, prison regulations, and insurance.<sup>228</sup>

“Pro-ERAers”, on their side, did their best to stop that opposition, and to persuade the three remaining states to ratify the amendment. For instance, they claimed that ERA would be a means to afford women better jobs, to improve their wages, and to “put the word *women* in the Constitution”. However, their opponents viewed these arguments as a fraud, and they explained that a great deal of employment laws had already been made sex-neutral before ERA was voted out of Congress. “Pro-ERAers” opponents also explained that the American Constitution had always used gender-neutral words like: *person, citizen, resident, member* when referring to its people.<sup>229</sup>

Step by step, the struggle between “Pro-ERAers” and “Stop ERAers” became intense; the fact that pushed both of them to use more direct actions. Therefore, in 1976 and 1977, Stop ERA ladies picketed the White House to protest, respectively, against Betty Ford’s and Rosalyn Carter’s lobbying for ERA. Thousands of citizens who opposed the amendment gathered in Springfield, Illinois, and all expressed their determination to protect the family and the American Constitution against feminists. Those anti-ERA activists took such

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

homemade foods as bread, jams, and apple pies to the state legislators with the slogans: "Preserve us from a congressional jam; Vote against the ERA sham" and "I am for Mom and apple pie."<sup>230</sup>

Hopes for victory continued to diminish as the 1970's came to a close, and the political climate turned more conservative. Under such circumstances, supporters of the ERA lobbied, marched, rallied, petitioned, picketed, and committed acts of civil disobedience. Some of them, even, chained themselves to the door of the senate chamber, and others went on a hunger strike. Fortunately, and thanks to the efforts made by the NOW's members, a successful march of 100,000 supporters took place in Washington, D.C to urge Congress to grant an extension to the original 1979 deadline. Effectively, the latter was extended until June 30, 1982. In this respect, President Jimmy Carter telephoned Democratic legislators and promised them housing projects in their districts in case they would vote "yes" on ERA. Governor James Thompson, of Illinois, called Republican legislators and promised dams, roads and bridges in their districts for a "yes" vote. Mayor Jane Byrne threatened Chicago legislators to fire them from their jobs if they voted "no".<sup>231</sup> In spite of all these efforts, the States of Illinois, North Carolina, and Florida voted against the ERA, and the latter failed in getting the three needed state ratifications to write it into the American Constitution. The proposed ERA would have become the 27<sup>th</sup> Amendment if Phyllis Schlafly had not been at the origin of that effective effort to organize potential opponents.<sup>232</sup>

In addition to her Stop ERA campaign, Phyllis Schlafly directly attacked Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*, and Gloria Steinem's *Ms. Magazine* by explaining that it was a woman's duty to have a family and raise her children.<sup>233</sup> She viewed *Ms.*

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<sup>230</sup>Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century*, Hill and Wang, 2008, p. 225.

<sup>231</sup>Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>232</sup>Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why we lost the ERA*, University of Chicago Press, 1986, p. 110.

<sup>233</sup>Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 217.

*Magazine* as a catalyst for corrupting and misrepresenting American women and society.<sup>234</sup> In this respect, Schlafly wrote:

The women's libbers are radicals who are waging a total assault on the family, on marriage, and on children. Don't take my work for it – read their own literature and prove to yourself what these characters are trying to do. The most pretentious of the women's liberation magazines is called *Ms.*, and subtitled 'The New Magazine for Women', with Gloria Steinem listed as president and secretary...It is anti-family, anti-children, pro-abortion. It is a series of sharp-tongued, high-pitched whining complaints by unmarried women...The women's libbers don't understand that most women want to be a wife, mother, and homemaker – we are happy in that role.<sup>235</sup>

After discussing the work done by the NOW members and their attempts to gain the ERA ratification, it seems necessary to talk about other female organizations that were established to lead the second feminist wave. The Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) founded in Ohio, 1968, by Elizabeth Boyer, was a very important feminist organization which aimed to break discrimination against women, and to protect female workers. The WEAL was composed of highly competent and respected professional American women such as lawyers, judges, professors, counsellors and legislators who withdrew from the NOW when the latter included, in its statement of purpose, "the right of women to control their reproductive lives." The WEAL's members were, in fact, more conservative women and did not want to tackle issues like abortion and sexuality.<sup>236</sup>

The WEAL focused attention on three areas of sex discrimination: employment, education and economics.<sup>237</sup> It worked hard to encourage the enforcement of anti-discriminatory laws in order not to be ignored by the different American institutions. For

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<sup>234</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>235</sup> The Phyllis Schlafly Report "What's Wrong with Equal Rights for Women?", 1972, p. 3. <http://eagleforum.org/publications/psr/feb1972.html> (Accessed August 23, 2019)

<sup>236</sup> Candis Steenbergen, "Women's Equity Action League: American Organization", <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Womens-Equity-Action-League> (Accessed August 28, 2019)

<sup>237</sup>Ginette Castro & Elizabeth Loverde Bagwell, *American Feminism: A Contemporary History*, New York, New York University Press, 1990, p. 62.

instance, the WEAL did its best to stop sex discrimination witnessed by female students in some institutions of higher education that used to prevent them from hiring and promotion. The fact that resulted in cutting off federal funds for some projects at the universities of Michigan and Harvard until a positive action had been taken to secure sex equality within the universities. Moreover, the WEAL combated discrimination in medical education and medical practice. For instance, in October 1970, it distributed three thousand posters to colleges and universities to advise pre-medical women students how to react in case they were refused admission on the basis of sex. By 1972, the organization had established a Legal Defence and Education Fund to assist an important number of women financially. However, by the end of 1980, it had become more difficult for the WEAL to secure funding because its agenda included women in the military, social security, violence and health. As a result, the organization was dissolved in 1989.<sup>238</sup>

Another female organization known as the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) appeared during the same period of time and devoted its efforts to the woman cause. It, first, started as a political organization in 1971 to support women for public office, and to ask for more participation of women in the political field. As a result, it was able to raise the percentage of women delegates to the Democratic and Republican National Conventions from their 1968 levels of 13 and 17 percent to 39 and 30 percent, respectively, in 1972.<sup>239</sup>

Step by step, the NWPC began to shift its priorities to civil rights, human rights and economic rights. It, therefore, organized an important conference on July 10-11, 1971, that witnessed the attendance of about three hundred women from different backgrounds.<sup>240</sup> The conference explanatory statement read:

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<sup>238</sup> Candis Steenberg, *op. cit.*

<sup>239</sup> Gayle Graham Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid*, p. 48.

We believe that women have a deeper and more tenacious interest in certain kinds of programs that have vital national significance: child care, non-violence and peace preservation, and measures to protect the specific rights of women such as repeal of abortion laws, dissemination of birth control information, guaranteed annual income (\$6500), and equal employment and education opportunities.<sup>241</sup>

Moreover, the NWPC supported the passage of the ERA, the improvement of child care legislation, health care legislation including maternity, abortion and birth control benefits for any woman, and the elimination of discrimination against families headed by women. It asked for the withdrawal of all laws that interfered with a woman's choice to decide about her own reproductive and sexual life. Furthermore, it fostered the nullification of tax inequities against women, amendment of the Social Security Act<sup>242</sup> to provide equal retirement benefits to working women, widows and their children, extension of disability benefits to temporary disabilities related to childbearing and abortion, and extension of the minimum wage. It also made a call for the appointment of women to all positions of national responsibility such as Cabinet posts, agency heads, and Supreme Court justices on an equal basis with men and the inclusion of women in all government studies and commissions.<sup>243</sup>

Unfortunately, as the Women's Rights Movement went on, it witnessed some hard moments because its main leaders, Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, started to disagree with each other on how to achieve their goal. They occasionally criticized each other's ideas, beliefs and methods when demanding women's rights. Friedan, a former journalist who gave up her job to take care of her family, fought for the rights of white middle-class women; both working wom and housewives.<sup>244</sup> Although she encouraged women to give more importance

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<sup>241</sup>Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> The Social Security Act was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935. The main stipulation of the original Social Security Act was to pay financial benefits to retirees over age 65 based on lifetime payroll tax contributions. <https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/social-security-act> (Accessed December 20, 2022)

<sup>243</sup>Gayle Graham Yates, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>244</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., p. 55.

to their careers, she respected those who preferred to stay at home, and she believed that they should not feel guilty because of their choice.<sup>245</sup>

Gloria Steinem, on the other hand, was a single professional woman who tried to build her career in the male-dominated world of journalism. She was the voice of more progressive, radical next generation of women coming into the movement.<sup>246</sup> She did not support those housewives who remained out of the movement. She, even, involved agents from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the movement, and she supported lesbian women. She once said: “We are all lesbians; feminism is lesbianism.”<sup>247</sup>

As a response to Steinem's support of lesbians, Betty Friedan published her *Up from the Kitchen Floor* article in which she declared that Steinem was creating fractures in the movement by doing so. She, therefore, wrote:

The disrupters who are viciously promulgating, or manipulating, this man-hate may be very few. (Others, like Kate Millett, Shulamith Firestone, Robin Morgan, Ti-Grace, Flo Kennedy and – somewhat more subtly – Gloria Steinem, seem to be honestly articulating the legitimate and too-long-buried rage of women into a rhetoric of sex/class warfare, which I consider to be based on a false analogy with obsolete or irrelevant ideologies of class warfare or race separatism.<sup>248</sup>

Soon after, some members of the Women's Movement, mainly the young generation, expressed their frustrations and anger with Friedan at a press conference in the Time-Life Building. Though the speakers recognized their respect for Friedan and her great effort to have begun that female revolution thanks to her book, *The Feminine Mystique*, they viewed

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<sup>245</sup>Ibid.

<sup>246</sup>Ibid, pp. 55-56.

<sup>247</sup>Betty Friedan, *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Woman's Movement*, New York, Random House, 1976, p. 159.

<sup>248</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., pp. 56-57.



her as obsolete and “outgrown by the daughters of the movement.”<sup>249</sup> These radical feminists made such a judgement because on one occasion, Friedan was asked to wear a “lavender lesbian armband” to show her solidarity with lesbians, but she refused. She explained that she was more conservative and unwilling to take part in such radical aspects of the movement. Friedan refused to support lesbians because “sexual orientation” was not included in her movement agenda.<sup>250</sup>

Another group of women called the Redstockings, also known as the Redstockings of the Women's Liberation Movement, criticized Steinem and abhorred the fact that she had infiltrated agents from the CIA and the FBI. The Redstockings was a radical feminist group founded in 1969 in New York City by Ellen Willis and Shulamith Firestone “To Defend and Advance the Women's Liberation Agenda.”<sup>251</sup>

The Redstockings members accused Steinem for having worked for the CIA from 1959 until 1969, and they attacked *Ms. Magazine* by asserting that the latter was a “parallel” organization of the CIA, and that it aimed at ruining the women's movement.<sup>252</sup> To support their accusations, they presented a sixteen-page document during a press conference on May 9, 1975, where the magazine was ridiculed for becoming “obsolete and too mainstream over time.”<sup>253</sup> The document claimed “*Ms. Magazine* is not an authentic part of the liberal feminist movement, but is hurting the movement...they say the media installed Gloria Steinem as a ‘leader’ of the women's movement and covered her past activities.”<sup>254</sup> As a result, the magazine's success and popularity were replaced by growing sentiments of deception and it

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<sup>249</sup>Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>250</sup>Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>251</sup> Miriam Schneir, *Feminism in Our Time: The Essential Writings, World War II to the Present*, New York, Vintage Books, 1994, pp. 125-6.

<sup>252</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>253</sup>Amy Erdman Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood: Ms. Magazine and Promise of Popular Feminism*, North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1998, pp. 104-5.

<sup>254</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., p. 48.

was, soon, believed that *Ms* failed to deliver what it had promised. This declaration from the part of the Redstockings caused the decline of *Ms. Magazine* whose last issue was in 1989.

Another issue created more tension inside the movement; it was the issue of race. When Friedan analysed the position of women in the American society, she interviewed her former classmates from college whose answers helped her a lot to write *The Feminine Mystique*. However, all those women were white, educated and middle class. The fact that pushed the American historian and feminist author Gerda Lerner (1920-2013) to note that: "Friedan's exclusion of black, poor and working women would not be received well."<sup>255</sup>

Unlike Friedan, Steinem encouraged the involvement of non-white women in the movement. She even toured the country and spoke with some Black women activists about "sex" discrimination to show them that the movement was defending all American women.<sup>256</sup> On one occasion, Margaret Sloan-Hunter (1947-2004), a Black feminist and one of the early editors of *Ms. Magazine*, praised Gloria Steinem in a letter published in the New York Times, in December 1971. She wrote:

Gloria Steinem happens to be one woman involved in the Women's Movement and the broader struggle for the liberation of all people. She fights her oppression where she feels it, not as a white – liberally saving black people, but working for all women. She talks about sexism and racism whenever she speaks. She almost always speaks with Dorothy Pittman Hughes, Flo Kennedy, or myself because we are black women who have lived that dual oppression all our lives, and the parallel that is 'the deepest truth in American life.'<sup>257</sup>

Because of all these contradictory ideologies and differences between Steinem and Friedan, the latter, gradually, started to lose her influence in the women's movement, and it became difficult for her to control everything. Her popularity dwindled and she became aware

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<sup>255</sup>Ruth Rosen, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

<sup>256</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>257</sup>Ibid, p. 60.

that her personal beliefs would no longer allow her to be a direct leader of the movement. She, thus, decided to withdraw and she remained, as stated by her biographer Daniel Horowitz, “an outsider to the movement.”<sup>258</sup> Her involvement was throughout lecturing, writing and teaching about women’s rights, whereas, Steinem’s direction in the movement seemed to be more dynamic. Gloria Steinem spent her time in convincing women “to believe in the same things like her, and tried to make herself surrounded and supported by the young generation who could help the movement’s progress.”<sup>259</sup>

In addition to the previously mentioned female organizations, asking for women’s rights, other feminists tried to be original in their way of defending the woman cause. They simply chose music as a means to express women’s grievances and hatred vis-à-vis those who continued to support domesticity. The American singer Helen Reddy, who was so eager to change social attitudes towards gender roles, released a single in 1972, *I am Woman*, to convince the American society that being a woman was not a shame. She told interviewers that the song was a “song of pride about being a woman.”<sup>260</sup> *I am Woman* became a popular protest song that seventies American women used to sing when they organized feminist meetings to ask for equal rights. (for the lyrics, see appendix IV)

In 1973, a group of female artists, among whom Cris Williamson, Meg Christian, and Judy Dlugacz, founded the first women’s owned-and-operated record label known as *Olivia Records*. The latter made it possible for female singers to sell their albums through which they expressed women’s discontent and women’s eagerness to repeal oppressive laws based on “sex”. Gradually, women’s music became popular all over the United States and a number of women’s music festivals were held in order to stop the terrible injustice American women were suffering from during that period. For instance, in 1974, the first women’s music festival

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<sup>258</sup>Daniel Horowitz, op. cit., p. 232.

<sup>259</sup>Marie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

<sup>260</sup>Quoted in Gillian G. Gaar, *She's a Rebel: The History of Women in Rock and Roll*, Seattle, Seal Press, 1992, p. 98.

took place at the University of Illinois, then it was followed by the Michigan festival, in 1979, where about 10,000 American women were present.<sup>261</sup>

Those festivals played a great role in the American Women's Movement because they gave, already famous, female singers the chance to combine music with politics. Therefore, more pressure was made on both the government and society to take the woman's cause into consideration, and to give them more opportunities to develop their potential.<sup>262</sup> In addition to this, some female singers started to take interest in a traditionally male-dominated kind of music – hard rock music – to impose themselves in their society, and to show that both men and women might be equal to each other.<sup>263</sup> In this sense, the sisters Ann and Nancy Wilson became the most successful examples of female singers performing that genre of music throughout their famous hard rock band “*Heart*” founded in 1974.<sup>264</sup> After this long discussion about the second feminist wave, it seems important to cite, in the following section, the main positive achievements that women made thanks to those courageous feminist leaders and their fight against sex discrimination.

#### **4. The Second Women's Movement Achievements**

Despite the different means women relied on to defend their cause, the objective was the same: gaining more freedom and more power. Fortunately, and thanks to the enormous efforts made by the various feminist leaders and organizations, a lot of goals were met. It had been assumed that “Generations of women will owe Friedan and Steinem and the countless other women who led the charge against oppression during the second wave of feminism.”<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>261</sup>“Michigan Womyn's Music Festival”, Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michigan\\_Womyn%27s\\_Music\\_festival#History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michigan_Womyn%27s_Music_festival#History) (Accessed September 10, 2019)

<sup>262</sup> “Women's Music”, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s\\_music](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_music) (Accessed September 10, 2019)

<sup>263</sup>Michael Hunt, op. cit., pp. 220-1.

<sup>264</sup>Ibid.

<sup>265</sup>Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., p. 69.

As stated before, Friedan and Steinem sought to raise consciousness about sexism and patriarchy, legalizing abortion and birth control, having more opportunities and equal rights in the workplace and education. As a matter of fact, more women were accepted in positions of leadership in higher education, business, politics, religion and sports. Here is a list of the names of some American successful women during the sixties and seventies. Shirley Hufstedler was the first woman to serve as Secretary of Education in 1979<sup>266</sup>, and Leah Lowenstein was the first woman dean of a co-educational medical school in the United States, 1981.<sup>267</sup> As far as business is concerned, Juanita M. Kreps was the first woman to serve as Secretary of Commerce in 1977.<sup>268</sup> In politics, Ella Tambussi Grasso was the first woman to be elected Governor of a U.S State, Connecticut, without having been the spouse or widow of a former governor. She resigned as Governor due to her battle with ovarian cancer.<sup>269</sup> In the field of religion, Rachel Henderlite, a female religious leader, became the first woman to be ordained Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.<sup>270</sup>

Women could also join “boys’ clubs” such as the United States armed forces, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). For instance, Alice K. Kurashige was the first Japanese-American woman to be commissioned in the U.S Marine Corps, reaching the rank of captain; she served between 1965 and 1970. Penny Harrington was appointed as Chief of Police in Portland, Oregon, making her the first woman to lead a major-city police department and Sally Ride became the first American woman in space.<sup>271</sup> In addition to the above mentioned achievements, a range of businesses, run by women,

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<sup>266</sup><https://www.edweek.org/shirley-hufstedler> (Accessed December 20, 2022)

<sup>267</sup>Michael Angelo and Matt Varrato, “Leah Lowenstein, MD Nation’s first female Dean of a co-ed medical school (1981)”, 2011, [https://jdc.jefferson.edu/jmc\\_women/4](https://jdc.jefferson.edu/jmc_women/4) (Accessed December 20, 2022)

<sup>268</sup>Robert D. McFadder, “Juanita M. Kreps, Commerce Secretary, Dies at 89”, 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/08/us/08kreps.html> (Accessed December 20, 2022)

<sup>269</sup><https://www.cwhf.org/inductees/ella-tambussi-grasso> (Accessed December 20, 2022)

<sup>270</sup>Estelle Rountree McCarthy, “Rachel Henderlite”, <https://www.biola.edu/talbot/ce20/database/rachel-henderlite> (Accessed December 20, 2022)

<sup>271</sup>Kim Ann Zimmermann, “Sally Ride Biography: First American Woman in Space”, <https://www.space.com/16756-sally-ride-biography.html> (Accessed December 20, 2022)

flourished including women's bookstores, feminist credit unions, feminist presses, feminist mail-order catalogs, and feminist restaurants.

As far as writing and education were concerned more books were published, by and about women and feminism, in the years that followed the second feminist wave ( for the sake of illustration, here are a few titles since the list is long: *Problems of Women's Liberation*, *Woman's Evolution: From Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family*, *Is Biology Woman's Destiny?* by Evelyn Reed, *Sisterhood is Powerful* by Robin Morgan, *Woman Hating: A Radical Look at Sexuality* by Andrea Dworkin); the fact that marked the emergence of women's studies as a legitimate field of study. San Diego State University became the first university in the United States to offer a selection of women's studies courses.<sup>272</sup> Later on, Title IX<sup>273</sup> of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 was signed into law by the American President Nixon to prohibit discrimination against women in the field of education. It required high schools and colleges to provide equal opportunities for female athletes and to, greatly, increase the participation of young women in sports. Title IX states:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic, extracurricular, research, occupational training, or other education program or activity operated by a recipient which receive Federal financial assistance.<sup>274</sup>

As a result, Patricia Palinkas is credited as “the first woman to have played American football professionally in a league made predominantly of men.”

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<sup>272</sup>Susan M. Shaw, *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed, New York, Lee Janet, 1960.

<sup>273</sup>Title IX protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. It applies to schools, local and state educational agencies, and other institutions. These recipients include approximately 17,600 local school districts, over 5,000 postsecondary institutions, and charter schools, for-profit schools, libraries, and museums. Also included are vocational rehabilitation agencies and education agencies of 50 states, the District of Columbia, and territories of the United States. U.S Department of Education, “Title IX and Sex Discrimination”, [https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix\\_dis.html](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html) (Accessed December 20, 2022)

<sup>274</sup>Ibid.

Such issues as child care, violence against women, and reproductive rights were placed on the public agenda as legitimate issues. Therefore, the Food and Drug Administration approved the combined oral contraceptive pill, which was made available in 1961 and, later on, *Roe v. Wade* decision was passed by the United States Supreme Court on January 22, 1973 to allow pregnant women, in all fifty American states, to decide for themselves whether to have abortion or not. Women were, finally, able to control their own bodies and devote their time to their professional careers, without being obliged to leave due to unexpected pregnancy.

After almost a two- decade revolution, the movement, finally, succeeded in changing the lives of huge numbers of women. The writer Rosen Ruth, who was proud of the hard work and perseverance of women's advocates and all the accomplishments of the movement, said: "...the changes in women's lives had been so deep, so wide-ranging, so transformative. I realized that the women's movement could not be erased, that it had brought about changes that these young people now took for granted."<sup>275</sup>

To conclude, this chapter has discussed the renewal of domesticity after the end of World War II, and how it led to the rise of a new Women's Movement, during the 1960's and 1970's, to ask for more equality between the sexes. Unfortunately, the second wave was different from the first one in the sense that its leaders were not family-oriented women, and they encouraged the new generation to focus more on their professional careers. Moreover, there was a wide gap between the movement's claim to speak for all women and the reality. Those educated middle-class White women who led the movement were, frequently, unaware that they could not speak for all women.<sup>276</sup> Though they pretended to fight for the rights of all American women, they still clung to certain racist reactions vis-à-vis women of colour. As a

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<sup>275</sup>Ruth Rosen, op. cit., p. xiii

<sup>276</sup> Barbara Epstein, "The Successes and Failures of Feminism", *Journal of Women's History*, Vol 14, N°2, Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 119.

matter of fact, the latter began to articulate their own versions of feminism since they found no comfortable place for themselves in the Women's Movement. For this reason, Black women formed their own organizations, in the 1970's and into the 1980's, to protect themselves against race and sex discrimination. This is what will be discussed in the next chapter of this research work.



## CHAPTER THREE

### **Black Women's Sufferings and the Appearance of their Feminist Movement (1970's-1980's)**

Since their arrival on the American soil, Black women had suffered a lot; especially during the period of slavery. As explained by the historian Deborah Gray White: "Black in a white society, slave in a free society, woman in a society ruled by men, female slaves had the least formal power and were perhaps the most vulnerable group of Americans."<sup>277</sup> Their sufferings encouraged them to play important roles in the Abolitionist Movement and the Civil War to free the Black population from white male supremacy. Later on, when the United States took part in World War II, Black women were relied on to replace departing soldiers, and finally as the Civil Rights Movement emerged to guarantee African American rights, Black women were involved too. However, in spite of all their sacrifices, they continued to suffer sex and race discrimination. The fact that pushed them to found their own feminist movement, during the 1960's and early 1970's, to destroy the sexist and racist barriers imposed on them. The present chapter will shed light on Black women's lives before being captured and taken to America, on their role to abolish slavery, their involvement in World War II and, finally, it will discuss how Black women gave birth to their own feminist movement.

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<sup>277</sup> Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South*, New York, W. W. Norton, 1999.

## **1. Early African Women's Lives**

Before being captured by European slave traders, and taken by force into the New World, African men and women enjoyed their lives on their native African lands. Black people had an extremely diverse range of cultural backgrounds; they had their own cultures and traditions, their own religious beliefs and rituals, their own musical styles and their own political systems.<sup>278</sup>

Unlike Europe, where women were underestimated and marginalized because of that patriarchal system which characterized their societies, Africa was an area where women had been respected, and had participated in shaping the history of their continent. In this respect, Black women had been shown to be essential historical, economic and social actors in practically every region of Africa for centuries. (see map 7 on following page). Economically speaking, women were the primary farmers since Africa is well-known for being a predominantly agricultural continent. Therefore, between 65 and 80 percent of African women were engaged in cultivating food for their families.<sup>279</sup> Those women were physically capable of doing the same work in the fields as their male counterparts.<sup>280</sup> Women were also allowed to engage in such activities as making and selling different kinds of goods like textile and pottery.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Rose La France Rodgers, *The Black Woman*, London, Sage Publications, 1980, p. 16.

<sup>279</sup> Kathleen Sheldon, "Women and African History", <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199846733> (Accessed November 18, 2020)

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Lamia Bouabdallah, *Black American Women's Struggle for Civil and Political Rights*, Magister Thesis in American Civilization, University of Oran Es-Senia, 2012, p. 8.

Map 7: Africa Map and Satellite Image



**Source:** <https://geology.com/world/africa-satellite-image.shtml>

From a political point of view, Africa was a society where women's communities were strong, and where female authority "ruled on a wide variety of issues of importance to women in particular, and the community as a whole."<sup>282</sup> For example in the pre-colonial period, women held chieftaincies in their own right, and used a variety of methods (through women's organizations, as spiritual leaders, and sometimes as queen mothers) to exercise authority, to advise male rulers and to serve as co-rulers or regents.<sup>283</sup> Some tribes even had traditions to

<sup>282</sup> Martha Saxon, *Being Good: Women's Moral Values*, New York, Hill and Wang, 2003, p. 122.

<sup>283</sup> Kathleen Sheldon, op. cit

pass dynasty rights to exclusively male titles to royal descendants through the matrilineal line. That system placed a woman and her female relations at the center of kinship and family.<sup>284</sup>

To illustrate this phenomenon of African women's important status within their tribes and the crucial role they played, a variety of examples are cited below. In Sierra Leone, *Mende* and *Sherbro* women held high offices in traditional politics. They, therefore, attained the highest political position in a chiefdom: that of the paramount chief.<sup>285</sup> For instance, Queen Yamacouba, a Sherbro woman, signed a treaty in 1787 to cede the Sierra Leone territory to the British Crown to establish the Sierra Leone Colony for returned slaves.<sup>286</sup>

Other names may be added like Walatta Petros (1592-1642), Labotsibeni Mdluli (1858-1925) and Ngalifourou (1864-1956). Being the wife of one of the emperor's counselors, Walatta Petros (an Ethiopian Saint) had been described as "a friend of women, a devoted reader, a skilled preacher, and a radical leader." When the Jesuits tried to convert the Ethiopians (see map 8) from their ancient form of Christianity, Walatta Petros risked her life by leaving her husband, who supported the conversion effort, and "led a successful non-violent movement against the Jesuits to preserve the African Christian beliefs."<sup>287</sup> Labotsibeni Mdluli, nicknamed Gwamile for her strong determination, was Queen mother from 1894 to 1899, and then, regent of Swaziland (South Africa) from 1899 to 1921. In accordance with the Swazi system, she exercised true authority to defend Swazi rights and territory from Boer and British intrusions. Ngalifourou was born Ngassé, then took the name Ngalifourou in 1892 when she became Queen of the Téké of Mbé (a town located 150 kilometers from Brazaville) upon her husband's death. She was known for her mystical powers and political influence. In

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Gabriel Amakievi, *African Women in History: A Universalist Approach*, Dialogue and Universaliss, 2005, p. 86.

<sup>286</sup> Carol P. Hoffer, "Mende and Sherbro in High Office", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol 6, N 2, 1972, p. 151.

<sup>287</sup> Wendy Belcher & Michael Kleiner, "The Life of Walatta Petros: The Seventeenth-Century Biography of an African Woman", <https://www.perlego.com/book/741223/the-life-of-walattapetros-a-seventeenthcentury-biography-of-an-african-woman-concise-edition-pdf> (Accessed July 15, 2020)

addition to these famous female rulers, a group of courageous African women formed the elite troops of women soldiers and contributed to the military power of the Kingdom of Dahomey (located within the area of the present-day country of Benin) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These “formidable” warriors were very admired by their people, and feared by their adversaries because they never fled from danger. These are only some examples among many others to show that African women had a certain influence on their territories.<sup>288</sup>

In Africa, motherhood was well- viewed and very appreciated by the whole society due to the deep and powerful bonds between mother and child, and due to the crucial role African mothers performed within their families.<sup>289</sup> In this regard, mothers were the guardians of their children’s welfare, and had explicit responsibility to provide for them materially. They were the household managers providing food, health, education, and family planning to an extent greater than elsewhere in the world.<sup>290</sup> As a matter of fact, mothers in African societies were very respected, and sometimes considered as “Gods” thanks to their productive and reproductive abilities. In addition to being cultivators, traders, leaders, wives and mothers, there were also female priestesses and oracles. All these positions made African women viewed as very useful and important citizens who had participated in the development of their continent.<sup>291</sup>

When Europeans first arrived on coastal communities by the end of the fifteenth century, they noticed the formidable political skills and social vision of African women.<sup>292</sup> For instance, female market traders – especially along the West African coast – acted as arbiters between local societies and European traders. Unfortunately, when the presence of

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<sup>288</sup> Niara Sudarkasa, “The Status of Women in Indigenous African Societies”, *Feminist Studies*, Vol 12, N 1, 1986, pp. 91-103, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3177985> (Accessed July 15, 2020)

<sup>289</sup> Martha Saxton, op. cit., pp. 122-123.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Niara Sudarkasa, op. cit

<sup>292</sup> Alexander Ives Bortolot, “Women Leaders in African History: 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Century”, *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003, [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pwmn/hd\\_pwmn.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pwmn/hd_pwmn.htm) (Accessed December 20, 2022)

European missionaries, traders and officials increased throughout the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, Black women started to, gradually, lose their power and economic autonomy because the European colonists did their best to destroy that African system, and gender discrimination was solidified across the continent.<sup>293</sup>

## **2. The Beginning of Slavery and Black People's Sufferings**

Millions of young Black men and women, in their childbearing years, were captured, then taken by force to the Americas; depriving the African continent of some of its healthiest and ablest men and women. Those Black African captives were, sometimes, obliged to march a distance of about 300 miles (485 km) to achieve the coast before being put in slave trade ships and sailed to the New World. To keep hostages together and prevent escapes, two captives were typically chained together at the ankles, while columns of captives were bound together by ropes over their necks. In such dreadful circumstances, an estimated 10 to 15 percent of the kidnapped blacks died on their way to the coast.<sup>294</sup>

The Middle Passage from Africa to America was a terrifying trip because of the wretched conditions on the slave ships. The captives were brought on board, stripped naked, and given a thorough physical examination by the surgeon or captain. They were given the worst food, and no chance to move freely.<sup>295</sup> For a voyage of around five thousand miles, (8,000 km), the slaves were crowded tightly into tiers below decks; where the ceilings were frequently low and did not allow them to sit upright. As a result, the heat became unbearable,

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<sup>293</sup> Kathleen Sheldon, op. cit

<sup>294</sup> Thomas Lewis, "Transatlantic Slave Trade", <https://www.britannica.com/topic/transatlantic-slave-trade> (Accessed July 15, 2021)

<sup>295</sup> Kelley Robin D.G. & Lewis Earl, *A History of African Americans*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 78.

and oxygen dropped to such a low level that about 15 to 25 percent of African slaves, destined for the Americas, died on the slave ship.<sup>296</sup>

It has been reported that in 1781, both Africans and crew members were dying of an infectious disease during their journey on the slave ship *Zong*, and in order to stop the spread of the disease, Captain Luke Collingwood decided to throw more than 130 Africans overboard. Unfortunately, those Africans were unable to defend themselves for they were, very often, in poor health because of the physical and mental abuse they had suffered from.<sup>297</sup>

Women and children were put in separate quarters, sometimes on deck, due to a lack of room, affording them restricted freedom of movement. The crew, on the other hand, subjected them to violence and sexual abuse.<sup>298</sup> During their voyage, Black women were severely treated by white men who used different methods of torture and punishment to dehumanize them, and to destroy the African people dignity.<sup>299</sup>

Black female captives were, very often, whipped and raped by their white masters. Most pregnant women, who gave birth aboard ship, died during childbirth because of the appalling sanitary conditions, and the lack of adequate care. Female captives, more particularly mothers, suffered a lot during their transportation from the African coast to the Americas; especially when they saw their own children receiving very harsh treatment from white slavers. The latter used to put little children, who refused to eat, in a pot of boiling water or to throw them overboard; the fact that made their mothers feel depressed and traumatized.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Thomas Lewis, op. cit

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Liverpool International Slavery Museum, "Life on Board Slave Ships", 2015, <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/article/section/history-of-slavery/life-on-board-slave-ships/> (Accessed December 22, 2022)

<sup>299</sup> Bell Hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, Boston, South End Press, 1981, p. 19.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

Once they arrived on the American lands, those African captives were supposed to work on cotton, rice, corn, sugarcane and tobacco plantations, especially in the southern colonies which were primarily agrarian societies. It was noticed by some historians that hundreds of thousands of Africans contributed to the establishment and survival of the New World.<sup>301</sup> In Virginia, for example, by 1710 the African population had increased to 23,100 (42 percent of total).<sup>302</sup> Regrettably, the enslaved people in the south suffered a lot, and were usually prohibited from learning to read and write in order to remain ignorant, and to be easily controlled by their masters. The latter forced them to work hard, and they exercised extensive power over them without being checked by any law.<sup>303</sup>

## **2.1. Black Women's Status during the Slavery Period**

Different estimates show that between 63 and 80 percent of African women worked in the fields.<sup>304</sup> Under such circumstances, both Black men and women were expected to do such tasks as clearing new land, digging ditches, cutting and hauling wood, slaughtering livestock and making repairs to buildings and tools, and both were treated and punished in the same way in case of disobedience. As one slave related in a narrative of his life

...women who had sucking children suffered much from their breasts becoming full of milk, the infants being left at home; they therefore could not keep up with the other hands: I have seen the overseer beat them with raw hide so that the blood and the milk flew mingled from their breasts.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> History.com Editors, "Slavery in America", <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery> (Accessed December 22, 2022)

<sup>302</sup> Betty Wood, *The Origins of American Slavery*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1997, p. 88.

<sup>303</sup> Catherine Adams & Elizabeth H. Pleck, *Love of Freedom: Black Women in Colonial and Revolutionary New England*, USA, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 29.

<sup>304</sup> Richard Steckel, *Women, Work and Health Under Plantation Slavery in the United States*, Indiana University Press, 1996, p. 45.

<sup>305</sup> Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves", *Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 13, N° 1, The Massachusetts Review Inc, 1972, p. 88.



In addition to field work, enslaved women performed traditional women's work roles. They worked mainly as maids, in the kitchen, the barn and the garden. They also polished family silver and furniture, helped with clothes and hair, drew baths and barbered the men. They were also required to do some menial domestic chores like sweeping, carrying gallons of water a day, washing the dishes, looking after young children and the elderly, cooking and baking, milking the cows, feeding the chickens, spinning, knitting, carding, sewing and laundering. Even young girls – as young as nine years old – were an important source of household assistance for white families. They allowed white girls to concentrate on their own development while relieving white moms of difficult work. The average Black woman did not live past the age of forty due to excessive work, poor housing conditions, and poor nutrition.<sup>306</sup>

As mentioned at the beginning of the present chapter, African women had witnessed a respectful existence with strong family ties before being transported to the American continent, but once there, and as slaves, their lives changed dramatically. They lost all their rights and, above all, they lost their dignity. Female slaves were very often forced by their masters into sexual relationships with enslaved men to keep the slave population growing instead of importing more slaves from Africa. In the words of the African American historian, John Henrik Clarke (1915-1998), “the family as a functional entity was outlawed and permitted to exist only when it benefited the slave-master. Maintenance of the slave family as a family unit benefited the slave owners only when, and to the extent that such unions created new slaves who could be exploited.”<sup>307</sup>

Black women were also forced to pay with their bodies for food, for diminished severity in treatment and for their children's safety. In her narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave*

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<sup>306</sup> Catherine Adams & Elizabeth H. Pleck, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>307</sup> Angela Davis, “Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves”, op. cit., p. 83.

*Girl*, Harriet Jacobs (1813-1897) explains how Black women were sexually harassed by their masters when she wrote: “my master met me at every turn, reminding me that I belonged to him, and swearing by heaven and earth that he would compel me to submit to him.”<sup>308</sup> The slave holders’ aim was to prove white men’s supremacy, to humiliate the Black population and eliminate any sign of African heritage.<sup>309</sup> W.E.B Du Bois (1868-1963)<sup>310</sup> was so outraged by white men’s behavior vis-à-vis Black women that he, later, said:

I shall forgive the South much in its final judgement day: I shall forgive its slavery, for slavery is a world-old habit; I shall forgive its fighting for a well-lost cause, and for remembering that struggle with tender tears; I shall forgive its so-called ‘pride of race’, the passion of its hot blood, and even its dear, old, laughable strutting and posing; but one thing I shall never forgive, neither in this world nor the world to come: its wanton and continued and persistent insulting of the black womanhood which it sought and seeks to prostitute to its lust.<sup>311</sup>

Those who were raped, and in some cases impregnated, by their white owners suffered a lot because the latter did not feel responsible for their mulatto children and refused to give them their names, or to recognize them as their legitimate heirs.<sup>312</sup> In order to justify their sexual abuse, white men used to describe Black women as passionately sexual.<sup>313</sup> Unfortunately, those female slaves were unable to defend themselves and in case they tried, they were harshly punished and publicly whipped. As one historian pointed out: “being a

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<sup>308</sup> Tiffany S. François, *shift in Portrayal of Black Women in America*, High Point University, 2012, p. 4.

<sup>309</sup> Bell Hooks, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>310</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois was an influential African American rights activist during the early 20th century. Scholar and activist, W.E.B. Du Bois became the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1895. <https://www.biography.com/activist/web-du-bois>

<sup>311</sup> Angela Davis, “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves”, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>312</sup> Kelley Robin, D.G. & Lewis Earl, op. cit., p. 203.

<sup>313</sup> Martha Saxon, op. cit., p. 125.

woman never saved a single female slave from hard labor, beatings, rape, family separation, and death.”<sup>314</sup>

Even the Black men could not protect their abused wives, sisters or daughters because the whole Black family was legally the property of the slave holder, and was at his will. The abolitionist Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880), once, described Black women's sufferings during the period of slavery

The Negro woman is unprotected either by law or public opinion. She is the property of her master, and her daughters are his property. They are allowed to have no conscientious scruples, no sense of shame, no regard for the feelings of husband or parent: they must be entirely subservient to the will of their owner on pain of being whipped as near to death as will comport with his interest or quite to death if it suits his pleasure.<sup>315</sup>

In addition to sexual abuse, Black women, mainly mothers, suffered a lot when they saw their own children taken away from them to be sold to other slave owners. In this sense, it had been reported that when a slave woman, living in Marion County (north of St Louis), discovered her master's intention to sell her three young children to a slave trader, she killed them all and herself rather than let them be taken away.<sup>316</sup> This phenomenon of brutal separation destabilized the family structure of African slave societies making them weak and unstable. As a matter of fact, some women tried to be as loyal and dutiful servants as possible to keep their children from being sold where they could never see them again.<sup>317</sup>

African mothers did their best to protect the family stability because within the African family, the mother's role was of great importance. Slave women used to raise their children without much assistance from slave fathers since the latter were very often sold away from

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<sup>314</sup> History.com Editors, “Women in the Civil War”, 2010, <https://www.history.com/topics/women-in-the-civil-war> (Accessed December 22, 2022)

<sup>315</sup> Bell Hooks, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>316</sup> Martha Saxon, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>317</sup> Tiffany S. François, op. cit., p. 11.

their families too. Therefore, during their working hours on the fields, Black women carried their young babies on their backs, regardless of the weather conditions, and worked for a long time without caring for them to avoid their master's anger and punishment.

A great number of courageous Black women refused to submit to these abuses and were eager to fight for their freedom. They, therefore, played major roles during the slave era, alongside their Black male fellows, in their attempts to get rid of their masters. However, "with the sole exceptions of Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, a great deal of Black females' names remain more or less enshrouded in unrevealed history."<sup>318</sup>

Some examples could be cited to show the courage and determination of certain Black women and what they did to defend themselves as well as their families against the harsh treatment of their white owners. For instance, very often, they put poison in the food of their masters or set fire to their houses. It was reported that in 1712, Black women played an active role during a rebellion where a number of slaves, both men and women, with their clubs and knives killed members of the slaveholding class and managed to wound others. While some of the attackers were captured, others – including a woman – committed suicide rather than surrendered.<sup>319</sup>

Another attack by a woman slave took place in Maryland, 1776, when she courageously destroyed, by fire, her master's house, his outhouses and tobacco house. The poor woman was executed for having done such a thing.<sup>320</sup> The same thing happened, about fifty years later, when another Black woman set a devastating fire in Augusta, Georgia. The poor woman, who acted in such a way to protect herself against the cruelty of slavery, was "executed, dissected and exposed."<sup>321</sup> Those rebellions against the "formidable obstacles" posed by the slave system were very successful because they encouraged other slaves to behave in the same way

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<sup>318</sup> Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves", op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>319</sup> Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, New York, International Publishers, 1970, p. 169.

<sup>320</sup> Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves", op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid*, p. 90.

and, at the same time, they represented a threat for the white slaveholders, who began to express certain fear and despair.<sup>322</sup> Both Black men and women who engaged in open battle during the slavery period were punished equally, and with the same toughness. It had been reported that in some cases Black women slaves might have suffered more severe penalties than those handed out to the men.<sup>323</sup>

Other slaves, simply, decided to run away, thinking that it was the best solution to escape from slavery.<sup>324</sup> The majority of slaves ran away during the outbreak of the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and long after the war. It was much easier for men to run away than for women, who were either pregnant women, mothers or women who nursed their elderly parents; of course, it was difficult for them to abandon those who depended on them.<sup>325</sup>

Enslaved women, who did not run away, contributed to the war effort, and served on both sides: The Loyalist Army as well as the Patriots'. Their masters sent them to some army camps in order to cook for the soldiers, to launder uniforms, to cure the wounded and to construct fortifications. Those who served in the Loyalist Army were rewarded by the British Crown (King George III) when the latter issued certificates of manumission to a big number of female slaves.<sup>326</sup> But, their freedom was not recognized, and was lost through violence. The women who decided to run away risked their lives because in case of being caught, the punishment would be very severe. Historically, the best known Black female runaway and

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<sup>322</sup> Ibid, p. 91.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, p. 95.

<sup>324</sup> Nell Irvin Painter, *Creating Black Americans*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 105.

<sup>325</sup> Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence*, New York, Random House Inc, 2005, p. 122.

<sup>326</sup> Manumissions and emancipations were legal documents that made official the act of setting a Black person free from slavery by a living or deceased slaveholder to protect them from slave catchers and kidnapers. Freedom Papers, "Free At Last? Slavery in Pittsburgh in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries", [https://exhibit.library.pitt.edu/freetlast/papers\\_listing.html#:~:text=Manumissions%20and%20emancipations%20were%20legal,a%20living%20or%20deceased%20slaveholder.&text=to%20protect%20them%20from%20slave%20catchers%20and%20kidnappers](https://exhibit.library.pitt.edu/freetlast/papers_listing.html#:~:text=Manumissions%20and%20emancipations%20were%20legal,a%20living%20or%20deceased%20slaveholder.&text=to%20protect%20them%20from%20slave%20catchers%20and%20kidnappers). (Accessed November 18, 2022)

abolitionist was Harriet Tubman (1822-1913). Thus, the following section of this chapter will provide the reader with further information on Harriet Tubman and other Black women who contributed to the Abolitionist Movement.

## **2.2. The Rise of Abolitionism and Black Women's Involvement**

The Abolitionist Movement rose in the United States, during the 1830's and lasted until the 1870's. Though the movement was led by such prominent men as William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879), Phillips Wendell (1811-1884) and Frederick Douglass (1817-1895), some devoted Black women took part in that struggle.<sup>327</sup> Harriet Tubman or 'Moses', as she was sometimes called, was the best-known Black female abolitionist in the history of the anti-slavery crusade. Born in a plantation in Maryland, Harriet suffered the harsh treatment of her masters who used to beat her while she was still a child. This courageous woman refused to live under white men's control, and on September 17, 1849, she escaped to Philadelphia using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad (see map 8 on the following page). The latter was a secret route through swamps and hidden paths in the woods to lead runaway slaves to the North and Canada. This well-organized system consisted of free and enslaved Blacks, white abolitionists, and other activists.

After reaching Philadelphia, Tubman thought of her family. "I was a stranger in a strange land", she said later, "[M]y father, my mother, my brothers, and sisters, and friends were [in Maryland]. But I was free, and *they* should be free."<sup>328</sup> Consequently, in 1851, she returned to Maryland to liberate her family from slavery. Soon, Tubman became the most important conductor of the Underground Railroad, and made some nineteen successful

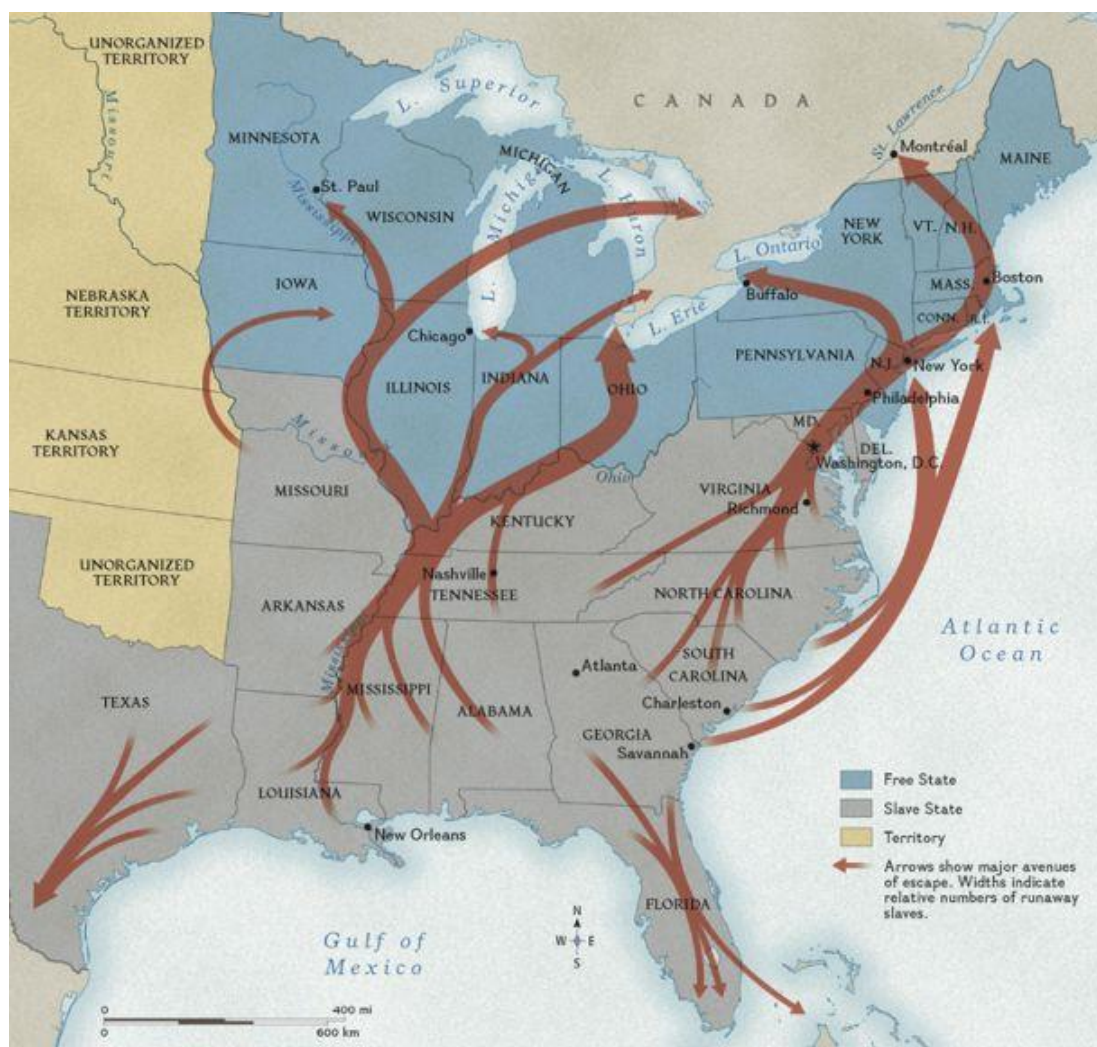
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<sup>327</sup> Gail Collins, *America's women*, USA, Harper Collins Publishers, 2003, p. 170.

<sup>328</sup> Sarah Hopkins Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, Books for Libraries Press, 1971, p. 20.

missions bringing over 300 slaves to their freedom. Though she was aware of the risk of being caught, she sacrificed her life to free her people from white men's oppression.<sup>329</sup>

### Map 8: Underground Railroad: Routes to Freedom



**Source :** <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/undergroundrailroad>

Travelling by night and in extreme secrecy, that small, slender and authoritarian woman used to carry a pistol with her, and whenever she noticed that a slave, who had asked for her help, became frightened and hesitated to follow her, she threatened the person with her pistol saying: “you go on or you die!”<sup>330</sup> In case a runaway slave was accompanied with a baby, Harriet gave the latter something to make it sleep to avoid his cries that would reveal their

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> Elaine Landau, op. cit., p. 63.

escape. White slave owners offered \$40,000 dollars for her capture, but Tubman and the fugitives she assisted were never captured.<sup>331</sup>

Years later, Tubman told an audience: "I was conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can't say – I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger."<sup>332</sup> After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act or Fugitive Slave Law<sup>333</sup> on September 18, 1850, she helped the fugitives to go to Canada and helped the newly freed enslaved people to find work. The abolitionist and former slave Frederick Douglass admired Tubman greatly, and was very proud of her. In 1868, he wrote a letter to honour her and to praise her efforts. He, therefore, wrote:

The difference between us is very marked. Most that I have done and suffered in the service of our cause has been in public, and I have received much encouragement at every step of the way. You, on the other hand, have laboured in a private way. I have wrought in the day – you in the night...The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism. Excepting John Brown – of sacred memory – I know of no one who has willingly encountered more perils and hardships to serve our enslaved people than you have.<sup>334</sup>

Sojourner Truth (1797-1883), is another Black woman who played a crucial role during Abolitionism. She had known the severity of slavery from a very young age, and in 1826, she was able to run away with her infant daughter Sophia. She, then, became very active in the

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<sup>331</sup> Nell Irvin Painter, op. cit., p. 109.

<sup>332</sup> Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*, New York, Little Brown and Company, 2004, p. 192.

<sup>333</sup> The Act was a kind of compromise between Southern slave-holding interests and Northern Free-Soilers. It required that all escaped slaves, upon capture, be returned to their masters and that officials and citizens of free states had to cooperate. The Act contributed to the growing polarization of the country over the issue of slavery, and is considered one of the causes of the Civil War. Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fugitive\\_Slave\\_Act\\_of\\_1850](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fugitive_Slave_Act_of_1850) (Accessed December 22, 2022)

<sup>334</sup> Jean Humez, *Harriet Tubman: The Life and Life Stories*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, pp. 306-307.



Abolitionist Movement and travelled from town to town, using her oratorical skills, to argue that slavery must be outlawed because of its cruelty.<sup>335</sup>

She later became a women's rights supporter when white American women gave birth to their first feminist wave in parallel with the anti-slavery movement (see chapter one). She, therefore, attended the 1851 Convention in Akron, Ohio, where she delivered her famous and unforgettable speech *Ain't I a Woman?* to answer a group of men who, aggressively, humiliated women during that meeting by arguing that women's rights were "impracticable, unnecessary, and a monstrous injury to all mankind."<sup>336</sup> Those men thought that it was ridiculous for women to ask for their right to vote since they were not even able to walk over a puddle, or to get on a carriage without a man's help. With an awe-inspiring voice, Sojourner told the audience that she herself got on carriages several times without being helped by a man

Look at me! She continued, look at my arm! I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children and seen them most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I woman?<sup>337</sup>

Then she added: "You are constantly saying that male supremacy was a Christian principle since Christ himself was a man. But, where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with him."<sup>338</sup> With her convincing answers, Sojourner Truth became the heroine of that convention, and she exemplified Black feminist activism in the nineteenth century. She, therefore, started to attend the rest of the national conventions that followed up to 1861.

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<sup>335</sup> Elaine Landau, *op. cit.*

<sup>336</sup> Linda K. Kerber & Jane Sherron De Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

<sup>337</sup> Elaine Landau, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>338</sup> Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race and Class*, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth were, in fact, not the only Black women who made contributions to the Abolitionist Movement. Many other Black women took part in the anti-slavery cause and helped make it a success. In this respect, Black female antislavery societies were established to say that the prevailing race prejudice must be brought to an end. In fact, Black women were the first to give birth to those societies setting a pattern soon followed by white ones.<sup>339</sup> Therefore, in 1832, Maria Chapman Weston (1806-1885) established the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, but only a few women attended the meeting. However, the leaders were able to collect as much money as possible to finance the movement. Soon afterwards, Maria Chapman Weston, in addition to her three sisters, sat up the Boston Anti-Slavery Society, and their objective was the same.

Other women supported Abolitionism in a different way, especially throughout writing and delivering speeches, yet little attention was given to them.<sup>340</sup> Among these, were Mary Prince (1788-1833) who wrote a book, entitled *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave*, to discuss the terrors of the Caribbean slave trade.<sup>341</sup> It is, also, worth mentioning the abolitionist and lecturer Sarah Parker Remond (1824-1894). Born to free Black parents, Sarah Parker made her first anti-slavery statement when she was sixteen years old. As a young woman, she made anti-slavery talks around Northeast America, and she used to go to England to rally support for the abolitionist cause in the United States.<sup>342</sup>

Furthermore, the poet and orator Frances Harper (1825-1911), who was the child of free Black parents, supported abolition and education throughout her speeches and publications.

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<sup>339</sup> Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Association in American History*, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

<sup>340</sup> Sharon Presley, "Black Women Abolitionists and the Fight for Freedom in the Nineteenth Century", 2016, <https://www.libertarianism.org/columns/black-women-abolitionists-fight-freedom-19th-century> (Accessed October 5, 2021)

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

After a two-year lecture tour for Anti-Slavery Societies, Harper made her public speech "Education and the Elevation of the Coloured Race."<sup>343</sup>

To conclude, the Abolitionist Movement encompassed many more than the well-known William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass, as well as the heroic Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman. All these female names cited in the preceding paragraph took the risk to speak up at a period when women were expected to be quiet, subservient, and apolitical, and when racial discrimination was common in both the North and the South. The abolitionist Frederick Douglass was so proud of Black women's contribution that he, once, said:

When the true history of the anti-slavery cause shall be written, women will occupy large space in its pages; for the cause of the slave has been peculiarly woman's cause. Her heart and her conscience have supplied in large degree its motive and mainspring. Her skill, industry, patience, and perseverance have been wonderfully manifest in every trial hour...her deep moral convictions, and her tender human sensibilities, found convincing and persuasive expression by her pen and her voice.<sup>344</sup>

Soon later, the Abolitionist Movement led to the outbreak of a great civil war between the North and the South on the issue of maintaining or abolishing the institution of slavery. Once again, Black women were present in this Civil War (1861-1865) and did their best to bring slavery to an end. The next section will explain what Black women did.

### **2.3. Black Women's Role During the American Civil war**

The American Civil War (1861-1865), also known as the War of Secession, was the most catastrophic battle in the United States history.<sup>345</sup> On April 12, 1861, the war broke out between the North, which had developed industries and agriculture, and the South, which

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Frederick Douglass, 'Why I became a Woman's Rights Man' in Rayford W. Logan, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, New York, McMillan, 1962, p. 469.

<sup>345</sup> James McPherson, "A Brief Overview of the American Civil War: A Defending Time in Our Nation's History", <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/brief-overview-american-civil-war> (Accessed October 10, 2021)

relied mostly on slavery and the plantation system. While the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) established the United States, the Civil War determined the kind of country it would be. The conflict answered the essential question: whether “this nation, born out of a claim that all men were created equal, would continue to exist as the world's greatest slaveholding republic.”<sup>346</sup>

It has been pointed out that, in addition to Black men's involvement in the war, free and enslaved Black women were determined to improve the image of the African American community, and that they “carried the honor of the race on their shoulders”. Unfortunately, many people do not know this because their contributions (women's contribution) have been largely lost to history.<sup>347</sup> For the sake of illustration, it is important to cite some of Black women's roles during the conflict.

In her book *African American Women During the Civil War*, the historian Ella Forbes made it clear that Black women took part in the Civil War in a variety of ways, and that they offered whatever skills they had: directly as spies, scouts, camp workers, nurses, cooks, seamstresses, and fundraisers; less indirectly by participating in resistance activities like strikes, sabotage, insubordination, and fleeing if enslaved; and indirectly by keeping families and homes together for returning Black soldiers and sailors.<sup>348</sup>

Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, whom it had been talked about so much during the abolition era, also participated in the Civil War. The former collected food, clothes and other supplies for Black volunteer regiments. In 1864, she travelled to Washington, D.C, where she lobbied against segregation and assisted in the integration of streetcars. It happened when a streetcar conductor tried to violently block her from riding. She, therefore, made a complaint and won her subsequent case.<sup>349</sup> After the war, the former slave Sojourner was

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Ella Forbes, *African American Women During the Civil War*, New York, Routledge, 1998, p. 5

<sup>348</sup> Ibid.

<sup>349</sup> Melinda Tims, *Perspectives on the Making of America*, Paris, Ellipses Edition Marketing, 2002, p. 190.

honored with an invitation to the White House and met President Abraham Lincoln. She, then, joined the Freedmen's Bureau to help freed slaves find jobs and build new lives.<sup>350</sup>

As far as Harriet Tubman was concerned, she joined the Union Army as a cook and nurse before becoming an armed scout and spy. She was the first woman to command an armed expedition during the war, leading the raid at Combahee Ferry that freed over seven hundred enslaved people. In this respect, when he wrote his biography of Harriet Tubman, the American author Earl Conrad (1906-1986) demonstrated the crucial contributions of that woman by declaring:

General Tubman was head of the Intelligence Service in the Department of the South throughout the Civil War, she is the only American woman to lead troops black and white on the field of battle, as she did in the Department of the South...She was a compelling and stirring orator in the councils of the abolitionists and the anti-slavers, a favorite of the antislavery conferences. She was the fellow planner with Douglass, Martin Delany, Wendell Phillips, Geiritt Smith and other leaders of the antislavery movement.<sup>351</sup>

However, Tubman was refused a regular salary, despite her years of service, because she was a woman.<sup>352</sup> The US government had been reluctant to recognize its debt to her until 1899 when she was granted a compromise sum of twenty dollars per month (\$8 from her widow's pension plus \$12 for her service as a nurse). But, her status as a scout and spy was not acknowledged.<sup>353</sup>

Concerned with the welfare of newly freed slaves, Susan Paul Vashon (1838-1912) and Elizabeth Keckley (1818-1907) were both inspired by other female abolitionists and supported the war. The former founded the Ladies Refugee Aid Society in Kansas for the

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<sup>350</sup> Burton W. Folsom, "Black History Month: The Crusade of Sojourner Truth", 1999, <https://www.mackinac.org/V1999-05> (Accessed July 12, 2021)

<sup>351</sup> Earl Conrad, "I Bring you General Tubman", *The Black Scholar*, Vol 1, N°3, 1970, p. 4.

<sup>352</sup> Catherine Clinton, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>353</sup> Kristen T. Oertel, *Harriet Tubman: Slavery, the Civil War, and Civil Rights in Nineteenth Century America*, London, Routledge, 2015, p. 92.

rescue of former slaves who came there. The latter, after purchasing her freedom in 1855, founded the Contraband Relief Association, in 1862, to provide food, clothing, and shelter to the poorest segments of the African American population who flooded into Washington during the Civil War. Keckley was able to gain support for the association from prominent abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, Wendell Phillips, and President and Mrs. Lincoln.<sup>354</sup>

Other intelligence work involves Black women working as domestics; Mary Elizabeth Bowser is one of them. She took the identity of an uneducated slave woman and secured a job as a house servant in the Confederate White House. That position helped her get access to lists of army movements, information on the whereabouts of Union captives and military plans. She, therefore, passed on the information to the Union Army before being discovered.<sup>355</sup>

After a fight that lasted four years, Northern victory ended the institution of slavery, that had divided the country, upon the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment (see the text in chapter one). The nine-tenths of Africans, who had been enslaved, were freed, however, this achievement came at the cost of 625,000 lives.<sup>356</sup> After talking about Black women during slavery, about their participation in the anti-slavery cause and the Civil War, let us talk about their support to white women's advocates, who started to focus on women's enfranchisement immediately after the end of the Civil War.

### **3. Black Women and their Suffrage Support**

As mentioned in the first chapter of this research work, middle class white American women, who led the Women's Rights Movement, resumed their suffrage campaign immediately after the end of the Civil War. The campaign was highly supported by such

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<sup>354</sup> "the Civil War in America: Biographies", <https://loc.gov/exhibits/civil-war-in-america/biographies/elizabeth-keckley.html> (Accessed July 8, 2021)

<sup>355</sup>Theresa McDevitt, "The Brave Black Women who were Civil War Spies", <https://msmagazine.com/2011/02/28/the-brave-black-women> (Accessed July 8, 2021)

<sup>356</sup> James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 9.

educated Black women as Josephine St Pierre Ruffin (1842-1924), Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) and Mary Church Terrell (1863-1954). In this respect, Ida B. Wells published *The Woman's Era* newspaper in Boston, 1895, with various articles written by Black women to ask for their voting right. For instance, Adella Hunt Logan (1863-1915), a member of the Tuskegee Institute, wrote:

If white American women, with all their natural and acquired advantages need the ballot, that right protective of all other rights, if Anglo-Saxons have been helped by it - and they have - how much more do black Americans, male and female, need the strong defense of a vote to secure their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?<sup>357</sup>

In the same year, Josephine St Pierre gathered about one hundred Black women in the city of Boston to form the National Federation of Afro American Women (NFAAW) with Mrs Booker T. Washington as president. The organization aimed at supporting women's enfranchisement and protecting the Black population from the ravages of racism. Unlike her white counterparts, the NFAAW leader declared that the organization welcomed all women. A year later, another Black female organization was set up under the leadership of Mary Church Terrell. It was the National Association of Coloured Women (NACW), and its most prominent members were Harriet Tubman, Frances E. W. Harper and Ida B. Wells. This association, too, focused on the cause of women and their right to vote. These were, in fact, the main organizations founded by Black women during the nineteenth century to urge the Cleveland Administration (1893-1897) to introduce a new amendment that would enfranchise all American women.

As explained earlier, in the first chapter, after a long struggle that lasted for seventy-two years, American women, finally, gained their right to vote in 1920 thanks to the Nineteenth Amendment. However, this victory still deprived a lot of Black women to exercise this right,

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<sup>357</sup> Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, "Just as Well as He: Adella Hunt Logan", <https://www.nps.gov/people/just-as-well-as-he-adella-hunt-logan.htm> (Accessed July 10, 2021)

mainly in the Southern states, because of the adoption of segregation rules. For example, Black women were required to pay taxes, to have educational tests and to own a minimum amount of property to be able to vote. And since the majority of Black women in the south did not respond to those conditions because they were the poorest and the least educated, they lost their right to vote.<sup>358</sup> Black women did not gain their social, economic and political equality with white people until after the rise of the Black Civil Rights Movement, during the 1960's, where they played a crucial role.<sup>359</sup> But before talking about that movement and Black women's contribution, it seems necessary to discuss what they did during World War II (1939-1945); that war which had occurred years before the rise of the Civil Rights Movement.

#### **4. Black Women and World War II**

In addition to the Abolitionist Movement and the Civil War, that witnessed Black women's involvement, World War II (1939-1945), too, knew a great participation of the same women. They contributed to the war effort and viewed it as an opportunity to escape labour as domestic servants, for a period of time, and earn better wages. Therefore, they did their best to join the workplace and serve their country at this pivotal time. Consequently, when the Roosevelt Administration (1933-1945) made it clear that the nation needed its female citizens' contribution – as a result of the wartime labour shortage – African American women volunteered in large numbers.<sup>360</sup>

Black women were accepted to work in factories building ships, tanks, and airplanes. However, they endured both gender and racial discrimination since white women very often

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<sup>358</sup> Lamia Bouabdallah, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid*, p. 71.

<sup>360</sup> Aaron Randle, "Black Rosies: The Forgotten African American Heroines of the WWII Homefront", 2020, <https://www.history.com/news/black-rosie-the-riveters-wwii-homefront-great-migration> (Accessed September 1, 2021)



refused to work beside them because of their skin colour.<sup>361</sup> For instance, in 1943, an Electric plant in Baltimore built separate toilet facilities for Black and white workers because white women asked for it. White women even went on strikes to express their refusal to share restrooms with African American women. Only menial and dangerous positions were given to Black women. The latter were supposed to perform the most difficult and lowest paid work frequently on night shifts and in janitorial slots.<sup>362</sup> Under such circumstances, Black women mainly found war jobs in dangerous industries like munitions plants because they were denied such occupations as a telephone operator, a clerical worker or a waitress in white restaurants.<sup>363</sup>

Black women were also required to deliver all the letters and parcels that came from Europe to their rightful European recipients being in the United States as soldiers. It was a very complicated task, first because of the large number of letters and packages; secondly because of the incomplete information about the addressees; The fact that made women waste a lot of time to find the right person. Thanks to their determination and perseverance, African American women working in the 6888<sup>th</sup> Central Postal Directory Battalion were able to complete their mission in three months instead of the estimated six.<sup>364</sup> Unfortunately, Black women's contribution was largely unrecognized and unrewarded, though they did their work in a satisfying way.<sup>365</sup>

Like white women, Black ones enlisted in the Women's Army Corps, the Navy Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), and the Coast Guard Semper Paratus

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<sup>361</sup> Maureen Honey, "African American Women in World War II", [http://inside.sfuhs.org/dept/history/US\\_History\\_reader/Chapter11/1945%20African%20American%20Women%20in%20World%20War%20II.pdf](http://inside.sfuhs.org/dept/history/US_History_reader/Chapter11/1945%20African%20American%20Women%20in%20World%20War%20II.pdf) (Accessed July 8, 2021)

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> J. Chamberlin, "African American Women in the Military during WWII", 2020, <https://unwritten-record.blogs.archives.gov/2020/03/12/african-american-women-in-the-military-during-wwii/> (Accessed July 10, 2021)

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

Always Ready (SPAR). The first five African American women who entered the SPAR were Olivia Hooker, Dorothy Winifred Byrd, Julia Mosley, Yvonne Cumberbatch and Aileen Cooke. All these Armed Services had been adopting race discrimination rules. As a result, Black women worked in black-only units involving cleaning and laundering, they lived in separate quarters, ate at separate tables in mess halls, participated in segregated training and used segregated recreation facilities.<sup>366</sup>

Concerning nursing, Black female nurses were permitted to look after Black soldiers only until 1943 when the Cadet Nurse Corps opened its doors to African American women. It was thanks to Frances Payne Bolton, a Congresswoman from Ohio, who introduced an amendment to the Nurse Training Bill in order to eradicate racial bias. As a matter of fact, more than 3,000 minorities were enrolled in the Cadet Nurse Corps<sup>367</sup>, and Phyllis Mae Dailey became the first Black commissioned Navy nurse in March 1945.<sup>368</sup>

In spite of the fact that Black women struggled to find other jobs than domestic servants, the latter remained their primary occupation during the war (though the percentage fell dramatically from 60 to 44 percent) because they faced a great difficulty to get skilled well-paid jobs.<sup>369</sup> Consequently, immediately after the end of the war, 1945, Black women found themselves obliged to resume work as maids and cooks. Victims of a double discrimination, they started to think of an eventual Black feminist movement to liberate themselves from racism and sexism. However, before they established their movement, they took part in the 1960's Black Civil Rights Movement which, later on, paved the way for Black feminism.

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, "Cadet Nurse Corps, 1943", <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/cadet-nurse-corps-1943> (Accessed August 1, 2021)

<sup>368</sup> Meg Roussel, "Phyllis Mae Dailey: First Black Navy Nurse", The National WWII Museum, 2012, <http://www.nww2m.com/2012/03/phyllis-mae-dailey-first-black-navy-nurse/> (Accessed August 2, 2021)

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

## **5. The Rise of the Civil Rights Movement and Black Women's Contribution**

The period of the 1960's knew an unprecedented explosion of black rebellion, known as the Black Civil Rights Movement, to ask for more justice towards the Blacks. The latter suffered from extreme racial discrimination: for example, in public transportation and schools white people and "persons of colour" were separated, and in case that separation was not respected, by the Black population, very severe fines or imprisonment would be imposed; the segregation was extended to public facilities as well. Therefore, no direct contact between Blacks and whites was allowed in parks, cemeteries, theatres and restaurants.<sup>370</sup>

That racial discrimination pushed the Black population to organize the Civil Rights Movement, in which women were very active to express their anger vis-à-vis discriminating policies. Rosa Parks (1913-2005) was one of them. That courageous Black woman became an international icon of resistance to racial discrimination for she believed in the principle that all people should be treated equally. She was inspired by the former slave Sojourner Truth, and she fought for equality and justice in the South.<sup>371</sup>

Rosa Parks lived in Montgomery, Alabama, and was offended by that racial segregation that forbade Black people to have free access to libraries, restaurants, parks and other public places, and to be mixed with the White inhabitants. That woman, who worked as a seamstress most of her life, became very active in the Civil Rights Movement, and worked as a secretary for the Montgomery branch of the National Association for the Advancement of the Coloured People (NAACP)<sup>372</sup>. She was determined to improve Black people's lives through the

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<sup>370</sup> Lamia Bouabdallah, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid, p. 64.

<sup>372</sup> The NAACP was created in 1909 by W.E.B. DuBois, Ida Bell Wells, Mary White Ovington, and others to work for the abolition of segregation and discrimination in housing, education, employment, voting, transportation, and to ensure African Americans their constitutional rights. The Editors of Encyclopedia, "National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/National-Association-for-the-Advancement-of-Colored-People> (Accessed December 24, 2022)

desegregation of the buses in Montgomery, and through asking for the right to vote. She, therefore, tried to register to vote but she failed.<sup>373</sup>

On one occasion, and more exactly on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat in the "coloured" section of the bus to a White man. She said:

People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was forty-two. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.<sup>374</sup>

She was, then, arrested and fined ten dollars; the fact that led to the one-year historic Montgomery Bus Boycott. The latter was organized by Jo Ann Robinson, Professor at the university of Alabama, who urged all African Americans to support the boycott in order to stop the racial discrimination and humiliation they were suffering from. Accordingly, the Black inhabitants of Montgomery responded positively, and boycotted all the city buses for more than a year. Although the supporters of the boycott were severely punished, they continued their boycott until the public transportation segregation became illegal in the following year.<sup>375</sup>

This incident with Rosa Parks was viewed as the "final straw that breaks the camel's back", and marked the beginning of the Black Civil Rights Movement where Black women were considered as its backbone.<sup>376</sup> Parks' courage to protest against that injustice towards the Black population made historians think of her as "The Mother of the Civil Rights Movement" and she became the symbol of freedom. She, once, declared:

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<sup>373</sup> Douglas Brinkley, *Rosa Parks: A Life*, New York, Penguin Books, 2000, p. 56.

<sup>374</sup> Rosa Parks & James Haskins, *Rosa Parks: My Story*, New York, Dial Books, p. 116.

<sup>375</sup> Lamia Bouabdallah, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid*, p. 64.

I was determined to achieve the total freedom that our history lessons taught us. When I decided to give up my seat, it was not that day, or bus, in particular. I just wanted to be free like everybody else. I did not want to be continually humiliated over something I had no control over: the colour of my skin.<sup>377</sup>

Even the South African leader Nelson Mandela recognized the importance of that woman's act. He, therefore, said: "she is who inspired us, who taught us to sit down for our rights, to be fearless when facing our oppressors."<sup>378</sup>

Inspired by Rosa Parks, other courageous Black women, such as Ella Baker, Septima Poisette Clark, Fannie Lou Hamer and Coretta Scott King, joined the Civil Rights Movement. They were very active and did their utmost to make an end to segregation in the United States. They, thus, organized strikes, marches, sit-ins and boycotts in order to save the Black community from the ravages of racism.<sup>379</sup> In this regard, Ella Baker (1903-1986) declared: "The movement of the fifties and sixties was carried largely by women...it's true that the women who carried the movement is much larger than that of men."<sup>380</sup>

Baker grew up with a strong sense of social justice thanks, in part, to her grandmother's stories about life during slavery. She became a member of the NAACP in 1940 and worked as a field secretary. Then, in 1957, she helped Martin Luther King to establish the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and served as its director, while King served as the SCLC's first president. The SCLC was set up to coordinate and support local organizations fighting for the full equality of African Americans in all aspects of American life. Operating

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<sup>377</sup> Douglas Brinkley, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid, p. 157.

<sup>379</sup> Bell Hooks, op. cit., p. 185.

<sup>380</sup> Paula Giddings, quoted in Lamia Bouabdallah, op. cit., p. 71.

particularly in the South and some border states, the SCLC ran initiatives for leadership-training programs, citizen-education projects, and voter-registration drives.<sup>381</sup>

Three years later, Baker left the SCLC to assist a group of Black students, from North Carolina A&T University, who organized a sit-in because they had been refused to be served in their university lunch counter due to their skin colour. Baker was eager to help the new student activists since she saw them as a valuable resource and contribution to the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>382</sup> Consequently, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was born. At the beginning of its creation the SCLC promoted nonviolence, but when the organization became more politically involved, its members faced increased violence. Hence, the SNCC changed its attitude from one of nonviolence to one of greater militancy after the mid-1960s.<sup>383</sup>

Septima Poinsette Clark (1898-1987), historically known as the “Queen of the Civil Rights Movement”<sup>384</sup>, was born in Charleston, South Carolina, where her parents encouraged her to get an education. In 1916, she was qualified as a teacher, but could not teach in Charleston public schools because the latter did not accept African American teachers.<sup>385</sup> She, therefore, became an instructor on South Carolina's Johns Island in the same year. Three years later, Clark went back to Charleston and joined the NAACP to begin her activism against segregation. She attempted to make the city hire African American teachers in its public schools, and her attempt proved successful after collecting signatures in favour of the change.

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<sup>381</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia, “Southern Christian Leadership Conference: American Organization”, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Southern-Christian-Leadership-Conference> (Accessed November 22, 2022)

<sup>382</sup> The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, “Who was Ella Baker?”, <https://ellabakercenter.org/who-was-ella-baker/> (Accessed December 28, 2021)

<sup>383</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia, “Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: American Organization”, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Student-Nonviolent-Coordinating-Committee> (Accessed December 28, 2021)

<sup>384</sup> Sheila Hardy & Stephen P. Hardy, *Extraordinary People of the Civil Rights Movement*, Library of Congress, Canada, 2007, p. 25.

<sup>385</sup> Biography.com Editors, “Septima Poinsette Clark Biography”, <https://www.biography.com/activist/septima-poinsette-clark>. (Accessed December 29, 2021)

In addition, she asked for equal salaries between Black and white teachers, and she later helped create more than 800 citizenship schools, and register about two million African American voters in the South.<sup>386</sup>

Fannie Lou Hamer (1917-1977) was also recognized as one of the most powerful voices of the Black Civil Rights Movement, until her death, thanks to her efforts for better economic opportunities for the African American population.<sup>387</sup> Her own sufferings in a racist environment pushed her to focus attention on the living conditions of African-Americans in the South. Like the above mentioned Black female civil rights activists, Hamer was a member of the SNCC, and she became active in helping with the voter registration efforts. Although she was frequently threatened, arrested and beaten by angry whites, she was not discouraged and continued to fight racial segregation and injustice in the South. Besides her activism in the Civil Rights Movement, Hamer helped the poor and managed to increase business opportunities for minorities living in her Mississippi community.<sup>388</sup>

Coretta Scott King (1927-2006), Martin Luther King's wife, was another example of Black women's contribution for social, economic and political justice. She took part in the Montgomery Bus Boycott and supported the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.<sup>389</sup> She had been known as the "First Lady of the Civil Rights Movement" for she used to make speeches in order to spread her husband's philosophy of non-violence. Even after her husband's

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<sup>386</sup> Kelley Robin D. G. & Lewis Earl, op. cit., p. 471.

<sup>387</sup> Zita Allen, *Black Women Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement*, Canada, Library of Congress, 1996, p. 106.

<sup>388</sup> History.com Editors, "Fannie Lou Hamer", 2009, <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/fannie-lou-hamer> (Accessed December 29, 2021)

<sup>389</sup> The Civil Rights Act was signed into law on July 2, 1964. It ended segregation in public places and banned employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. It is considered one of the crowning legislative achievements of the civil rights movement. Thomas E. Patterson, *We The People*, New York, McGraw Hill, 2008, p. 175.

assassination in 1968, she remained engaged in the civil rights struggle, and she established the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change.<sup>390</sup>

From the above mentioned examples, one may say that women played major roles in the Civil Rights Movement. They also had an important part in the foundation and management of the above cited organizations – the SCLC and the SNCC – however, their efforts were rarely recognized. Within those organizations, Black female members were frequently exposed to sexism, and treated as second-class citizens.<sup>391</sup> For example, Black male members dominated the powerful positions and were in charge of decision-making, while women were relegated to clerical jobs. On one occasion, Stokely Carmichael, one of the SNCC leaders, declared: “the only position for women in SNCC is prone!”<sup>392</sup>

By doing so, Black men behaved in the same way as the White people who used to oppress them.<sup>393</sup> As a matter of fact, Black women were deceived and tried to join the second wave of feminism that flourished in parallel with the Black Civil Rights Movement (already explained in the second chapter of this thesis) to fight against gender inequality. Black women wished the creation of a multi-racial movement, to defend the rights of both Black and White women. They believed that “if only whites would give up their prejudice, we could all live together harmoniously.”<sup>394</sup> However, they were spurned by the White female leaders who remained ignorant about racism and the problems faced by women of colour.<sup>395</sup> That emphasis on gender at the expense of race and class had been characterized by observers as “naïve, hurtful, and obtuse about what it means to be a woman of colour in the United

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<sup>390</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia, “Coretta Scott King”, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Coretta-Scott-King> (Accessed December 25, 2022)

<sup>391</sup> Dennis J. Urban, Jr, “The Women of the SNCC: Struggle, Sexism and the Emergence of Feminist Consciousness (1960-1966)”, *International Social Science Review*, Vol 77, N°3/4, 2002, p. 185.

<sup>392</sup> Winifred Breines, “Struggling to Connect: White and Black Feminism in the Movement Years”, *The American Sociological Association*, Vol 6, N°1, 2007, p. 19.

<sup>393</sup> Dennis J. Urban, Jr, op. cit., p. 188.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

<sup>395</sup> Winifred Breines, op. cit., p. 18.



States.”<sup>396</sup> Being victims of double discrimination – sex and race discrimination – Black women decided to organize their own movement to end racism, sexism and class oppression.<sup>397</sup>

## **6. The Emergence of the Black Feminist Movement**

As the Civil Rights Movement excluded women from leadership roles, and since the mainstream feminist movement, mostly concentrated on concerns that primarily impacted middle-class White women, Black feminism grew to prominence in the 1960's. Angela Davis, Bell Hooks, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins emerged as leading academics on Black feminism.<sup>398</sup> Black female activists decided to establish their own organizations to fight against sex and race discrimination, and to achieve more privileges in the fields of education, health care, security in ghettos, the workforce, politics and other issues related to sexuality and reproduction.<sup>399</sup>

It was not an easy task for Black women to form their own feminist movement because they had to “prove to other Black women that feminism was not only for White women.”<sup>400</sup> They had to convince their community that even Black women should enjoy the same social, economic and political rights as men and White women. For example, they desired the same economic benefits as their White female fellows for they were the most afflicted by job and income discrimination against women.<sup>401</sup>

Consequently, the Black activist Johnnie Tillmon (1926-1995) helped found the Aid to Needy Children (ANC) Mothers Anonymous in 1963, one of the earliest grassroots welfare

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>398</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, New York, Routledge, 2009.

<sup>399</sup> Melinda Tims, op. cit., p. 192.

<sup>400</sup> Stewart Burns, “Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations 1968-1980”, *Journal of American History*, Vol 93, N 1, 2006, p. 296.

<sup>401</sup> Lamia Bouabdallah, op. cit., p. 88.

mothers' organizations, to ask for equal pay for women, child care and voter registration. Later, the ANC Mothers Anonymous became part of the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) founded in Spring 1966. The NWRO was overwhelmingly African American, and it asked for improvements in welfare legislation, greater help for recipients and more compassionate treatment from government caseworkers. The women organizers on welfare (Johnnie Tillmon in Los Angeles and Beulah Sanders in New York City) were given official decision-making authority.<sup>402</sup>

Unfortunately, by the early 1970's, the NWRO had witnessed some financial problems and was forced to declare bankruptcy, in 1975, and to cease operations soon after. Despite its reputation as a movement of poor people, the NWRO was also a movement of Black women. Its female members regarded their battle as intrinsically linked to issues of race, class, and gender. That is why they battled for the right to economic stability, they debunked the stereotype that families headed by Black women were dysfunctional, and they saw themselves as part of a greater struggle for black freedom. In doing so, they laid the framework for future Black women's organizations.<sup>403</sup>

The National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO), founded in 1973, New York City, by Michelle Wallace, Doris Wright, Florynce Kennedy, Faith Ringgold, Eleanor Holmes Norton and Margaret Sloan Hunter, was the most well-known black female organization of the 1970's.<sup>404</sup> The founding members convened a meeting to which 400 women from different backgrounds – well educated, middle class women and poorly educated women – came to ask for political, social and economic equality for Black females, and to discuss the

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<sup>402</sup> "National Welfare Rights Organization", *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, <https://www.encyclopedia.com> (Accessed November 15, 2022)

<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

<sup>404</sup> Winifred Breines, op. cit., p. 21.

issues of racism, sexism and classism Black women suffered from daily.<sup>405</sup> The organization announced in its statement of purpose:

The distorted male-dominated media image of the Women's Liberation Movement has clouded the vital and revolutionary importance of this movement to Third World women, especially Black women. The Movement has been characterized as the exclusive property of so-called White middle-class women and any Black women seen involved in this movement have been seen as "selling out," "dividing the race," and an assortment of nonsensical epithets. Black feminists resent these charges and have therefore established The National Black Feminist Organization, in order to address ourselves to the particular and specific needs of the larger, but almost cast-aside half of the Black race in Amerikkka, the Black woman.<sup>406</sup>

Within a year, the NBFO reached 2,000 members in ten chapters around the country<sup>407</sup>, but it dissolved in 1976 due to internal disagreements about the most effective strategy for pursuing black feminist liberation, a lack of support from much larger and older black sororities, personal and regional disputes among members, and feelings of split loyalty to the causes of black liberation and feminist liberation.<sup>408</sup>

The Combahee River Collective (CRC) was also an important Black female organization. It was founded in Boston, in 1974, by Barbara Smith (1946-) – an American lesbian feminist and socialist who played a significant role in Black feminism – and some members who left the NBFO to create their own collective since their politics was more radical, notably in terms of lesbianism and socialism. In this regard, the American historian Duchess Harris stated in her essay *From the Kennedy Commission to Combahee Collective*

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<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Jone Johnson Lewis, "Profile and History: National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO)", <https://www.thoughtco.com/national-black-feminist-organization-nbfo-3528292> (Accessed December 25, 2022)

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

that "... their vision for social change was more radical than the NBFO."<sup>409</sup> The name of the organization was suggested by its founder, Barbara Smith, to commemorate Harriet Tubman's action at the Combahee River in the Port Royal district of South Carolina, during the Civil War, to free more than 700 slaves (already explained in the second section of this chapter).

The organization members were involved in the fight for school desegregation in Boston, community campaigns against police brutality in Black communities, and picket lines demanding construction employment for Black workers.<sup>410</sup> The members also made it clear that they were antiracist, unlike White women, and antisexist, unlike men. They, therefore, affirmed their solidarity with Black men because the Black community as a whole required loyalty and solidarity.<sup>411</sup>

Additionally, the CRC tackled the issue of violence against women, especially after what had happened in 1979 when a group of twelve poor Black women, and a White woman, were murdered in Boston. Fearful and enraged at the police and media for downplaying the murders, Black feminists mobilized. The CRC members wrote and distributed a brochure analysing poor Black women's situation. They wrote: "Our sisters died because they are women just as surely as they died because they are Black."<sup>412</sup>

As a result, Boston feminists organized battered women's shelters to protect women against violence, crisis centers for victims of rape, and "Take Back the Night" demonstrations asking the authorities to make the streets safe for women.<sup>413</sup> Barbara Smith described the early activities of the CRC, in her 1995 essay *Doing it from Scratch: The Challenge of Black Lesbian Organizing*, as "consciousness raising and political work on a multitude of issues,

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<sup>409</sup> Duchess Harris, "From the Kennedy Commission to the Combahee Collective: Black Feminist Organizing, 1960-80", *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*, edited by Thomas-Collier Bettye and Franklin V.P, New York, New York University Press, 2001, p. 294.

<sup>410</sup> Jaime M. Grant, *Lesbian Histories and Cultures*, Routledge, 2013, pp. 184-185.

<sup>411</sup> Winifred Breines, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid.

along with the building of friendship networks, community and a rich Black women's culture where none had existed before.”<sup>414</sup>

Despite the fact that the struggle was long and hard, African American women made substantial strides in different fields of life. Consequently, from the 1970's, women of colour were more accepted in certain jobs like being mayors or managers of department stores, and they were able to make wealth.<sup>415</sup> In 1972, Shirley Chisholm (1924-2005) became the first Black American woman to run for presidency. That woman is an example of Afro-Americans who, thanks to the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Feminist Movement, succeeded to destroy those barriers that used to block their progress because of their race. Before running for presidency, Shirley Chisholm, a former teacher, had served as director of the Hamilton-Madison Child Care Center from 1953 to 1959 and as an educational consultant to New York City's Bureau of Child Welfare from 1959 to 1964. Then, in 1968, she became the first Black woman to earn election to the American Congress. She served in the House of Representatives for seven years during which she fought for women's rights and other minority rights.<sup>416</sup>

Black women became famous in the field of literature, too, and succeeded in creating an African American fiction by giving voice to Black women's preoccupations and experiences. Throughout their writings, such Black female authors as Alice Walker (1944-), Toni Morrison (1931-2019) and Maya Angelou (1928-2014) revealed a great history of Black people, mainly women, and gained a great deal of consideration.<sup>417</sup> Alice Walker, born in 1944 in Georgia, became a feminist and vocal advocate for human rights. As a student, she was attracted by the Black Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, and she quickly joined it to become an activist.

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<sup>414</sup> Barbara Smith, *The Truth that Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender and Freedom*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 1998, p. 172.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid, p. 98.

<sup>416</sup> Lamia Bouabdallah, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid, p. 92.

Later, when the Black Feminist Movement emerged, Walker started to express her attachment to the issue of race and gender through literary works, and she invented the word "Womanism" to distinguish Black feminism from White feminism.<sup>418</sup>

Walker's efforts to defend Black women were reflected in her works because the majority of her characters were Black women. Alice Walker was the author of *Meridian* (1976), *The Color Purple*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1982<sup>419</sup>, *Horses make a Landscape Look More Beautiful* (1985) and *Her Blue Body Everything We Know: Earthling Poems* (1991). In his *Dictionary of Literary Biography* essay, Thadious M. Davis commented:

Walker writes best of the social and personal drama in the lives of familiar people who struggle for survival of self in hostile environments. She has expressed a special concern with exploring the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties and the triumph of black women.<sup>420</sup>

In addition to Thadious M. Davis's comment, the second feminist wave leader, Gloria Steinem, also recognized Walker's determination to support Black women in their struggle against sexism, racism and classism. In this regard, Steinem said: "she comes at universality through the path of an American Black woman's experience. ... She speaks the female experience more powerfully for being able to pursue it across boundaries of race and class."<sup>421</sup>

Toni Morrison was born on February 18, 1931, Ohio. Since her early childhood she was taught, by her family, to love and appreciate her black culture. As an educated adult, Morrison became a fiction writer, and was known for her exploration of African-American realities, particularly those of Black women, since the majority of her characters were Black women fighting to identify themselves, and their cultural identity in an unfair world. Morrison also

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<sup>418</sup> Ibid.

<sup>419</sup> The Pulitzer Prize is a series of yearly awards given by Columbia University, New York City, for exceptional public service and accomplishment in journalism, writing and music, The Editors of Encyclopedia, "Pulitzer Prize", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pulitzer-Prize> (Accessed January 13, 2022)

<sup>420</sup> Poetry Foundation, "Alice Walker", <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/alice-walker> (Accessed January 10, 2022)

<sup>421</sup> Ibid.

wrote about the difficulties faced by African-American students as a result of the integration of the American public education system. Thanks to her use of fantasy and her “sinuous poetic style”, she gave her stories remarkable weight and depth.<sup>422</sup>

Maya Angelou, born in 1928, Missouri, was a victim of racial prejudice and discrimination. She, later, studied dance and acting, and she became a famous African American dancer, actress, poet, author, screenwriter and civil rights activist. During World War II, she was the first Black female cable car conductor in San Francisco. Then, when Black feminism came into being during the 1970's, she wrote her famous memoir, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, which made her an international star. In addition, Angelou was the first African-American woman to have a script produced for the film *Georgia*, released in 1972.<sup>423</sup>

Angelou also published several collections of poetry including *Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well* (1975), *And Still I Rise* (1978), *Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?* (1983). In 1993, she wrote her famous poem *On The Pulse of Morning* to be recited at President Bill Clinton's inaugural ceremony. Even the American President Barack Obama (2009-2017) issued a statement to recognize Angelou's courage and success as a Black woman: “She is a brilliant writer, a fierce friend, and a truly phenomenal woman. she had the ability to remind us that we are all God's children; that we all have something to offer.”<sup>424</sup>

Broadly speaking, the present chapter has analyzed the different experiences Black women went through since the day they had been transported to the American Continent. They suffered a lot for the only reason that they were Black and they were women. However, their race and sex did not prevent them from taking part in such important events in American

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<sup>422</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia, “Toni Morrison”, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Toni-Morrison> (Accessed January 13, 2022)

<sup>423</sup> Biography.com Editors, “Maya Angelou Biography”, <https://www.biography.com/writer/maya-angelou>. (Accessed January 16, 2022)

<sup>424</sup> Ibid.

*Chapter Three: Black Women's Sufferings and the Appearance of their Feminist Movement (1970's-1980's)*

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history as Abolitionism, the Civil War, World War II and the Civil Rights Movement. Being a Black in a racist society and being a woman in a patriarchal society neither prevented them to lead their own feminist movement to guarantee certain rights for themselves, and to change men and white women's vision towards Black females. Finally, after discussing the various sufferings of White and Black American women (throughout the three chapters), and after explaining how they gave birth to their movement, it seems necessary to examine the evolution of feminism in the United States, and how the movement changed the American social life. This will be discussed in the last chapter of my research work.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### **The Evolution of Feminism in the U.S.A and its Negative Impact on American Social Life (1980's-1990's)**

From what has been said since the beginning of this research work, one cannot ignore that feminism did much for women for it helped them free themselves from gender inequality in different fields of life. But at the same time, this new freedom and status of the American woman affected the American society, and contributed to the collapse of the family as claimed by a reviewer writing for the National Review, Maggie Gallagher: “the biggest danger facing us today comes not from discrimination in the workplace but from the collapse of the family.”<sup>425</sup> Feminism was also responsible for the breakup of certain social values and institutions such as marriage, and it made women less happy as mentioned in Susan Faludi’s book *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* “behind this celebration of the American woman’s victory, behind the news – cheerfully and endlessly – repeating that the struggle for women’s rights is won, another message flashes. You may be free and equal now, it says to women, but you have never been more miserable.”<sup>426</sup> As a result, feminism in the United States faced a backlash during the 1980’s which was considered, by feminists, as a “decade that produced one long, painful and unremitting campaign to thwart women’s

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<sup>425</sup> Maggie Gallagher, “Review of Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Woman”, *National Review*, Vol 44, N 6, 1992, p. 42.

<sup>426</sup> Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, New York, Crown Publishing Group, 1991, p. ix

progress.”<sup>427</sup> Thus, in the following chapter special attention will be focused on feminism during the Reagan Administration (1981-1989), the Bush Administration (1989-1993), and the Clinton Administration (1993-2001). The chapter will also discuss the media reaction vis-à-vis the American feminist movement, the drawbacks of the movement and the latter's negative impact on American social life.

## **1. The Reagan Administration and the New Right Opposition to Feminism**

Due to his traditional vision of gender roles, Ronald Wilson Reagan (1911-2004), the 40<sup>th</sup> American President, was a staunch opponent of feminist movements in general. That is why, Reagan's presidency (1981-1989) is very often described as “an era of backlash against women's rights.”<sup>428</sup> Before undertaking his political career, Reagan succeeded a screen test and became a Hollywood actor during the 1940's and 1950's. He appeared in more than fifty films as “a sincere, wholesome, easy-going good guy.”<sup>429</sup> Gradually, he became interested in politics and in 1966, he announced his candidacy for governor of California. Thanks to his remarkable skill as an orator, Reagan won the election by nearly one million votes although he had been criticized by Democrat Edmund G. Brown – a former Governor of California – for his lack of political experience.<sup>430</sup>

Reagan's entrance in the field of politics, during the 1960's, coincided with the emergence of the second wave of feminism; however, he was no friend of the feminist movement. Reagan was known for his conservatism for he believed that both men and women had distinct roles to play. Men, according to him, belonged to the professional world and were entirely responsible for sustaining their families, but their women belonged to the private and

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<sup>427</sup> Ibid, p. 459.

<sup>428</sup> Françoise Coste, “Women, Ladies, Girls, Gals...: Ronald Reagan and the Evolution of Gender Roles in the United States”, <https://journals.openedition.org/miranda/8602> (Accessed March 21, 2022)

<sup>429</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia, “Ronald Reagan”, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ronald-Reagan> (Accessed March 21, 2022)

<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

home sector where they should take care of their husbands and children.<sup>431</sup> His conservative beliefs were clear when he, secretly, asked his second wife Nancy Davis, a relatively unknown actress, to give up her job and take on a more submissive position in their household. Nancy accepted her husband's request and became a devoted housewife for the rest of her life by explaining that "if you try to make two careers work, one of them has to suffer." Then, she added: "maybe some women can do it, but not me."<sup>432</sup> Nancy's reaction encouraged Reagan's drift to the Right.<sup>433</sup>

During his years as governor, Reagan started preparations for a serious presidential candidacy. Unfortunately for women's groups, his presidential campaign was based on an anti-feminist agenda for he was a conservative and very influenced by the ideologies and principles of the New Right.<sup>434</sup> He made it clear that he shared the latter's culture and worldview, and that it was time to go back to a more traditional way of life. In this context, Reagan declared: "the time ha[d] come to turn to God and reassert our trust in Him for our great nation's healing. We need to join forces to reclaim the great principles embodied in the Judeo-Christian traditions and in Holy Scriptures."<sup>435</sup>

Reagan's presidential campaign program opposed the income support and social service spending upon which low-income women relied. It included substantial tax cuts, greater defense expenditures, a balanced budget, and a constitutional amendment prohibiting

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<sup>431</sup>Françoise Coste, op. cit.

<sup>432</sup> Ronald Reagan & Richard G. Hubler, *Where's the Rest of Me?* New York, A Dell Book, 1965, pp. 273-274.

<sup>433</sup> Reagan had absorbed the liberal Democratic opinions of his father and became a great admirer of Franklin Roosevelt after his election in 1932. Reagan's political views were progressively becoming more conservative by the end of the 1940s, and he backed Republican Dwight Eisenhower in the presidential elections of 1952 and 1956. He also gave 200 speeches in favor of Nixon's presidential campaign against Democrat John F. Kennedy in 1960. Reagan officially switched his political party allegiance to Republican in 1962. The Editors of Encyclopedia, "Ronald Reagan", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ronald-Reagan> (Accessed March 24, 2022)

<sup>434</sup> the New Right consisted of conservative activists who voiced opposition on a variety of issues, including abortion, homosexuality, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), and most forms of taxation. Ronald Reagan is often seen as its iconic hero. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/New-Right> (Accessed March 24, 2022)

<sup>435</sup> Françoise Coste, op. cit.

abortion. Reagan explained that “interrupting a pregnancy means the taking of a human life.”<sup>436</sup> The latter worried women’s advocates, who immediately guessed that the New Right’s intention was “to turn the clock back to 1954, and their articulation of the idea that women’s equality was responsible for women’s unhappiness.”<sup>437</sup>

In addition to his opposition to abortion, Reagan opposed the already proposed Equal Rights Amendment (see chapter two for more details about the ERA) because he was convinced that it would drive women into military service. According to him, the passage of this amendment would be a bad thing “not because women didn't necessarily want to be soldiers, but because the high physical or skill standards of the military would have to be equal for men and women, so many standards might have to be lowered, and the quality of the military would deteriorate.”<sup>438</sup> Finally, Reagan explained that despite his opposition to the ERA, he would “establish a liaison with the 50 governors to encourage them to eliminate, wherever it exists, discrimination against women.”<sup>439</sup>

Unfortunately, during Reagan’s presidential campaign, Americans noticed the absence of female members in the campaign’s high command which looked like “a good old boys’ club.”<sup>440</sup> In fact, despite his early promises to “guaranteeing equality of treatment [as] the government’s proper function”, the candidate preferred to have “the boys” as his advisers.<sup>441</sup> And in order to conceal his deep detachment from women's problems, a Women’s Policy Board was formed within the campaign, and Marilyn Thayer was nominated to join the senior staff as a “special adviser”. These gestures, however, were insufficient since Thayer’s nomination took place six weeks before the election. Moreover, she was not considered, by

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<sup>436</sup> Quoted in Françoise Coste, op. cit

<sup>437</sup> Susan Faludi, op. cit., p. 230.

<sup>438</sup> Françoise Coste, op. cit.

<sup>439</sup> Ronald Reagan 1980 Republican National Convention Speech, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA3pTToOJPw> (Accessed March 31, 2022)

<sup>440</sup> Françoise Coste, op. cit.

<sup>441</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, “Facing a Renewed Right: American Feminism and the Reagan/Bush Challenge”, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol 27, N 4, December 1994, p. 675.

the rest of the team as a policy expert, who could assist the campaign on any topic, but rather as a consultant who would examine policy statements related to women and family concerns.<sup>442</sup>

Soon, the Women's Policy Board became a source of embarrassment for the campaign because the majority of Reagan's female appointees to the Board were moderate Republicans who backed abortion rights and the ERA. When New Right groups learned this, they became furious and sent the campaign into a frenzy. As a result, Reagan's campaign manager, Bill Casey, decided, after a few days, to organize a second commission known as the Women's Policy Committee, which comprised anti-abortion and anti-ERA activists.<sup>443</sup> Although Ronald Reagan continued to consider himself as a great champion of women's rights when he, once, declared:

As governor [of California], I signed legislation to prohibit sexual discrimination in employment and business matters, [and] bills to establish the right of married women to obtain credit in their own name and [...] to allow married women to buy and sell securities in their own name, [to] equalize a woman's right to change her name, [...] to extend state unemployment disability insurance benefits to pregnant employees and to increase the penalties for rape.<sup>444</sup>

women's groups were understandably severe in their condemnation of the Reagan campaign because they believed that his reaction towards abortion and the ERA eclipsed his pledge to work for equality. Thus, when fifty-six percent of men voted for Reagan, only forty-seven percent of women did.<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Françoise Coste, op. cit.

<sup>443</sup> William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America*, New York, Broadway Books, 1996, p. 214.

<sup>444</sup> Françoise Coste, op. cit.

<sup>445</sup> David T. Courtwright, *No Right Turn: Conservative Politics in a Liberal America*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2010, p. 165.

When Ronald Reagan entered the White House in 1981, women suffered the most since they could not expect much from an anti-feminist president whose conservative views remained as strong as ever. During his presidency, women were most of the time kept distant from the White House, and their opinions were not usually taken into account. One of the women's activists in the reproductive rights field observed: "In the Reagan/Bush years, the White House was actively hostile to us. We just couldn't do business with them. Some people would return our calls but only on a clandestine basis...Back then, we were the anti-Christ."<sup>446</sup>

The new American President launched a series of dramatic economic reforms that affected deeply low-income single mothers; mainly Black women who represented a great proportion of poor women relying on governmental support and social service.<sup>447</sup> For instance, all social programs – such as food stamps, Medicaid, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), energy-assistance payments in the winter, milk programs and summer food programs in poor neighbourhoods, federal subsidies to school lunches, or training programs for the unemployed – were primarily targeted and witnessed a decline of twenty-five percent in their budget. As a result, nearly a million people who had previously received government assistance lost their benefits, and the proportion of children living in poverty began to rise.<sup>448</sup>

Under such circumstances, Dr Lenora Cole Alexander, an educated Black woman who served as director of the Women's Bureau<sup>449</sup> from 1981 to 1986, exploited her role as director

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<sup>446</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, op. cit., p. 688.

<sup>447</sup> Marisa Chappell, "Reagan's 'Gender Gap' Strategy and the Limitations of Free-Market Feminism", *Journal of Policy History*, Vol 24, N 1, 2012, p. 123.

<sup>448</sup> Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1991, p. 516.

<sup>449</sup> The United States Women's Bureau, existing since 1920, is an agency of the United States government within the United States Department of Labor. It works to create parity for women in the labour force by conducting research and policy analysis, to inform and promote policy change, and to increase public awareness and education. *Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia,*

to urge President Reagan to “lessen or resolve the impact of those budget cuts on women and suggested that single mothers get priority placement in jobs programs and training for jobs...which are higher paying and will provide self-sufficiency.”<sup>450</sup> divorced women, too, were not allowed to receive financial help. The ‘Reaganites’ were convinced that it would encourage women to ask for divorce, and that it would contribute to the breakup of the American family; and as mentioned before, Ronald Reagan was a conservative to whom the family was a sacred institution to be protected.<sup>451</sup>

Another point to confirm Reagan’s anti-feminist beliefs was that the majority of women who were in the workforce, were employed in children and family-related fields. Reagan refused to employ women in politics for he thought that they “formed a complicated species which he found hard to comprehend.”<sup>452</sup> He, therefore, used to call the women who did not support his policies “pretty aggressive gals”, and those who supported him “good little girls.”<sup>453</sup>

As far as salaries were concerned, there existed a ‘pay-gap’ between men and women workers during that period, and even the President and his advisers did not deny this fact. They explained that men worked for longer periods of time throughout their lifetime (37 years for men against 26 for women on average), then they referred to married women's reduced mobility, unwillingness to accept as much overtime, and refusal to accept supplementary training.<sup>454</sup> Therefore, when women activists proposed the Women’s Economic Equity Act to address the principal impediments faced by working women such as pay discrimination and the shortage of day care centers in the U.S.A, Reagan and his administration were opposed to

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Women%27s\\_Bureau#List\\_of\\_directors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Women%27s_Bureau#List_of_directors) (Accessed October 5, 2022)

<sup>450</sup> Marisa Chappell, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>451</sup> Françoise Coste, op. cit.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

it. They were sure that the law was horrible, and that supporting it – just to satisfy women – would be foolish. As a result, the Women's Economic Equity Act was rejected by Congress.<sup>455</sup>

In spite of the fact that Reagan did not support feminism, and though he was constantly hostile to women's issues and unable to understand their lives, struggles and demands, he established a Task Force on Legal Equity for Women, in December 1981, to assist the Justice Department in identifying and eliminating sex discrimination in federal law; however, little action was taken.<sup>456</sup> Additionally, an important initiative was taken by the president; it was the nomination of a woman to the Supreme Court: Sandra Day O'Connor, a Republican judge from Arizona (see appendix V). In fact, Reagan had already promised, during his presidential campaign, that if he were elected president, he would nominate the first woman to the Supreme Court. Thus, when he won the elections and became president of the United States, he chose Sandra Day O'Connor. Reagan and his advisers were smart enough to realize that "it was a very good political move which would go a long way towards solving the problem we have with the lack of women in this administration in high places."<sup>457</sup>

Though O'Connor was a supporter of the ERA, and voted twice for anti-abortion laws during the 1970's, Reagan decided to nominate her to the Supreme Court. The reason for this choice was that when he first met her and asked her about her support for such issues, she explained that "such votes did not reflect her personal views." He, therefore, concluded: "she declares abortion is personally repugnant to her. I think she'll make a good justice."<sup>458</sup> To sum up, the 'Reaganites' were, somehow, tactful because they were aware that making oneself an obstacle to women's advancement would certainly be "political suicide" in modern America. Consequently, when Reagan ran for presidency for the second time, in 1984, fifty-eight

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<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

<sup>456</sup> Marisa Chappell, op.cit., p. 124.

<sup>457</sup> Françoise Coste, op. cit.

<sup>458</sup> Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, New York, Harper Perennial, 2007, p. 28.



percent of women voted for him.<sup>459</sup> Though the percentage of female voters was higher, no new advancement for the feminist movement was noticed during Reagan's second term, except the fact that women continued to keep their right to enter universities and to have professional careers. (Those rights had been gained a long time before the election of Reagan as President). After this brief description of the situation of women during the Reagan Administration, the following section will be about the situation of feminism during the presidency of George H. W. Bush (1989-1993)

## **2. The Bush Administration and the Women's Movement Situation**

George Herbert Walker Bush was born in Milton, Massachusetts, in 1924. He joined the U.S. Naval Reserve after he had graduated from Phillips Academy, and he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for having served, bravely, as a torpedo bomber pilot on aircraft carriers, in the Pacific, during World War II (1939-1945). After the end of the war, Bush moved to Texas, with his young family, where he became a salesman of oil field supplies.<sup>460</sup>

George H.W. Bush entered the political field in 1959 when he joined the Republican Party; in which he was very active. Then, in 1966, he was elected as a Republican member in the U.S. House of Representatives; a seat that he abandoned four years later. Soon, the Nixon Administration (1969-1974) appointed him to serve as a U.S ambassador to the United Nations, and in 1979, Bush announced his candidacy for presidency. But, he, immediately, gave up his campaign to express his deep support for Reagan who chose him as his running mate.<sup>461</sup>

By the end of Reagan's second term, Bush announced his candidacy for president, for the second time, and was able to defeat the Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis. As a

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<sup>459</sup> Françoise Coste, op. cit.

<sup>460</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia, "George H. W. Bush", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-H-W-Bush> (Accessed October 5, 2022)

<sup>461</sup> Ibid.

result, George H. W. Bush became the 41<sup>st</sup> President of the United States of America from 1989 to 1993. As a Republican President, he continued the Reagan's program, based on conservative ideas, that was not very pleasant with feminists. The latter believed "the Reagan and Bush administrations were basically the same."<sup>462</sup>

Once in office, President Bush appointed new cabinet members; however, most of them were men. This clearly antifeminist behaviour might be linked to the fact that he was a Republican (Republicans' philosophy is based on conservatism which in turn opposes change or innovation), and the fact that "he inherited an increasingly conservative Supreme Court bench."<sup>463</sup> The following table provides a list of cabinet members in the administration of President George H.W. Bush:

**Table 3: Cabinet of President George H.W. Bush (1989–1993)**

| DEPARTMENTS                   | NAMES OF THE MEMBERS  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| State                         | James Addison Baker III   |
| Treasury                      | Nicholas Frederick Brady  |
| Attorney General              | Richard Lewis (Dick) Thornburgh<br>William P. Barr (from November 20, 1991) |
| Interior                      | Manuel Lujan, Jr.   |
| Agriculture                   | Clayton Keith Yeutter<br>Edward Madigan (from March 7, 1991)                |
| Commerce                      | Robert Adam Mosbacher   |
| Labour                        | Elizabeth Hanford Dole  |
| Defense                       | Dick Cheney   |
| Health and Human Services     | Louis Wade Sullivan   |
| Housing and Urban Development | Jack Kemp   |
| Transportation                | Samuel K. Skinner<br>Andrew H. Card (from January 22, 1992)                 |
| Energy                        | James David Watkins   |

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<sup>462</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, op. cit., p. 690.

<sup>463</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, op. cit., p. 687.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Education        | Lauro Fred Cavazos, Jr.<br>Lamar Alexander (from March 14, 1991) |
| Veterans Affairs | Edward Joseph Derwinski (from March 15, 1989)                    |

**Source:** *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-H-W-Bush> (Accessed September 24, 2022)

From the information contained in the above table, one can notice that only male names were at the head of each department, during the Bush Administration, except Elizabeth Hanford Dole who had already served as Secretary of Transportation under the Reagan Administration.

Bush's interest in foreign matters did not influence him to ignore home policy making. Therefore, he tackled the issues of homelessness, violence, and drug addiction, and on July 26, 1990, he signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The latter prohibited disability discrimination in employment, public accommodations, and transportation. In this context, Bush said: "I am going to do whatever it takes to make sure the disabled are included in the mainstream."<sup>464</sup>

Like his predecessor, Bush was not a friend of feminists and he did little for them. In terms of assessment, female activists regarded the Bush Administration as adverse to the goals of the Women's Movement. They talked of a hostile climate and felt isolated from the White House. According to a specialist in the employment field, "we had some meetings under Ronald Reagan and George Bush, but it just wasn't worth our time or theirs."<sup>465</sup> To illustrate the hostility of the Bush Administration towards women's rights, see the following table which summarizes key judicial and legislative actions after 1988 using existing accounts of US Supreme Court and congressional decisions. Each national-level decision is coded as positive (+), negative (-) or mixed (+/-). In this table, formal outcomes are grouped according

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<sup>464</sup> Stephen Knott, "George H.W. Bush: Domestic Affairs", <https://millercenter.org/president/bush/domestic-affairs> (Accessed September 25, 2022)

<sup>465</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, op. cit., p. 688.

to five main areas: (A) equal rights including legislative and judicial commitment to women's equality; (B) reform of family law including divorce policy affecting women and children following marriage dissolution; (C) reproduction including access to abortion; (D) violence against women including attention to rape and wife assault; and (E) employment issues including child care and anti-discrimination provisions.<sup>466</sup>

**Table 4: Legislative and Judicial Action after Bush's Election**

| AREAS               | CASES  | DECISIONS |
|---------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>EQUAL RIGHTS</b> | Jett v. Dallas Independent School District, 1989.                            | (-)       |
|                     | Metro Broadcasting v. Federal Communications Commission, 1990.               | (+)       |
|                     | Civil Rights Act blocked, 1990.  | (-)       |
|                     | Civil Rights Act, 1991.  | (+/-)     |
|                     | Shaw v. Reno, 1993.  | (-)       |
| <b>FAMILY LAW</b>   | Mississippi Choctaw Indians v. Holyfield, 1989.                              | (-)       |
|                     | Mansell v. Mansell, 1989.  | (-)       |
| <b>REPRODUCTION</b> | Webster v. Reproductive Health Services, 1989.                               | (-)       |
|                     | Hodgson v. Minnesota, 1990.  | (-)       |
|                     | Ohio v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health, 1990.                          | (-)       |
|                     | Rust v. Sullivan, 1991.  | (-)       |
|                     | Planned Parenthood Federation v. Agency for International Development, 1991. | (-)       |
|                     | Efforts to overturn "gag" rule on Family Planning blocked, 1991-92.          | (-)       |
|                     | Planned Parenthood of South-eastern Pennsylvania v. Casey, 1992.             | (+/-)     |
|                     | Women's Health Care Services v. Operation Rescue, 1993.                      | (-)       |
| <b>VIOLENCE</b>     | No major decisions   |           |
| <b>EMPLOYMENT</b>   | Martin v. Wilks, 1989.   | (-)       |
|                     | Lorraine v. AT & T Technologies, 1989.                                       | (-)       |
|                     | Wards Cove Packing v. Atonio, 1989.  | (-)       |
|                     | Child Care Assistance Act, 1989.   | (+/-)     |

<sup>466</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, op. cit., p. 686.

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|--|--|-------|
|  | City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson, 1989.               | (-)   |
|  | Patterson v. McLean Credit Union, 1989.              | (-)   |
|  | Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins, 1989.                   | (+/-) |
|  | Family and Medical Leave Act blocked, 1990-92.       | (-)   |
|  | Displaced Homemakers Job Training Act, 1990.         | (+)   |
|  | Act for Better Child Care Services, 1990.            | (+/-) |
|  | United Automobile Workers v. Johnson Controls, 1991. | (+)   |
|  | Non-traditional Employment for Women Act, 1991.      | (+)   |
|  | St Mary's Honor Center v. Hicks, 1993.               | (-)   |

**Source:** Sylvia Bashevkin, "Facing a Renewed Right: American Feminism and the Reagan/Bush Challenge", *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol 27, N4, 1994, p. 686.

From the given information in the table above, it is clear that the Bush Administration was severe towards women since four decisions only, among a total of twenty-eight, were pro-feminist; whereas, nineteen were unfavourable to women's interests.

In addition to this, during the Bush Administration, feminists were confronted with Republican control of the Senate and Bush's readiness to use presidential vetoes. For example, the President initially vetoed the 1991 Civil Rights Act which aimed to "restore and strengthen civil rights laws that ban discrimination in employment, and for other purposes."<sup>467</sup> The veto was criticized by civil rights activists and liberals alike, notably Senator Edward Kennedy who said: "Bush was more interested in appeasing extremists in his party than in providing simple justice."<sup>468</sup> As a matter of fact, feminists thought that "passing legislation

<sup>467</sup> President George H. W. Bush initially vetoed the proposed Civil Rights Act of 1990. He feared that employers would adopt a rigid race-and-gender-based hiring system that would shield them from lawsuits. Months later, several senators made changes and shaped the bill in line with the demands of President Bush. Afterward and a year later, President Bush signed the Civil Rights Act of 1991, which became law on 21 November 1991. <https://khourilaw.com/civil-rights-act-of-1991/> (Accessed September 27, 2022).

<sup>468</sup> Monica Rhor, "George H.W. Bush Leaves Mixed Record on Race, Civil Rights", <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/12/03/george-h-w-bush-race-civil-rights-war-drugs/2197675002/> (Accessed October 11, 2022)

became like passing a constitutional amendment” because the amount of time and energy needed to defeat each veto was tremendous.<sup>469</sup>

Black women were disappointed when President Bush designated Clarence Thomas, the second African American after Thurgood Marshall, to serve as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. The disappointment was explained by the fact that Clarence Thomas had been accused of sexual harassment by several Black women among whom Anita Hill, Rose Jourdain, Sukari Hardnett, and Angela Wright. Anita Hill, a lawyer, declared that Clarence Thomas had harassed her sexually while he was Head of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and she was serving as his adviser. The same thing was confirmed by the other three women when they denounced their boss of engaging indecent office conversation, which he denied. Unfortunately, the three ladies were not mandated to give a formal testimony, and Thomas Clarence’s nomination was approved by the Senate.<sup>470</sup>

After being ruled by two successive Republican Presidents (Ronald Reagan and George H.W Bush), the United States witnessed the coming of a new president: the Democrat Bill Clinton. Thus, the following section will deal with the Clinton Administration (1993-2001) and its relationship with the Women’s Movement.

### **3. Feminism under the Clinton Administration**

Bill Clinton was born William Jefferson Blythe III on August 19, 1946, in Hope, Arkansas. Three months before his birth, his father died in an automobile accident and his mother, Virginia Dell Blythe, soon married another man, Roger Clinton, and the boy took his stepfather’s name. In 1968, Bill Clinton was awarded a scholarship to Oxford after he had

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<sup>469</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, op. cit., p. 691.

<sup>470</sup> Terry Gross, <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/28/1040911313/anita-hill-belonging-sexual-harassment-conversation> (Accessed December 27, 2022)

graduated from Georgetown University. Five years later, and after receiving a law degree, he returned to Arkansas to teach law at university.<sup>471</sup>

Bill Clinton entered politics and became governor of Arkansas in 1978. As governor, he did his best to improve the quality of public education; the fact that made him earn national recognition. Some years later, he announced his candidacy for president and, after a hard campaign, he defeated the Republican President George H.W. Bush by a vote of 370 to 168<sup>472</sup>. Bill Clinton, a Democrat, became the new President of the United States in 1993 and continued to rule the country until 2001.

The Clinton Administration knew a difficult start and remained fragile, mainly during the first term, because the United States had been under an extended period of conservative rule. Therefore, the new administration confronted Republican legislators on Capitol Hill who, frequently, attempted to restore their Republican power and authority.<sup>473</sup> For instance, the president's health care reform program (see appendix VI) during 1993-1994 never received a vote on Capitol Hill because House Republicans, under the leadership of Newt Gingrich<sup>474</sup>, deliberately decided to deny Clinton a victory on health care as a means of regaining control of Congress. Gingrich's tactic was based on raising anxiety among middle-class Americans that the Clinton proposal would threaten their current health-care arrangements.<sup>475</sup> Additionally, the president faced conservative pressures which urged him to

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<sup>471</sup> William Jefferson Clinton, "Clinton Biographies", <https://www.clintonlibrary.gov/research/clinton-biographies> (Accessed October 4, 2022)

<sup>472</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "Bill Clinton President of United States", <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bill-Clinton> (Accessed October 04, 2022)

<sup>473</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, "Rethinking Retrenchment: North American Social Policy during the Early Clinton and Chrétien Years", *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol 33, N 1, 2000, p. 22.

<sup>474</sup> Newt Gingrich, in full Newton Leroy Gingrich, was born on June 17, 1943, Pennsylvania. He served as the 50<sup>th</sup> speaker of the United States House of Representatives from 1995 to 1998. He was the first Republican to hold the office in forty years. The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Newt Gingrich", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Newt-Gingrich>. (Accessed November 29, 2022).

<sup>475</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, "Rethinking Retrenchment: North American Social Policy during the Early Clinton and Chrétien Years", op. cit., p. 24.

“reduce government spending...and push citizens who received public assistance toward greater individual self-reliance.”<sup>476</sup>

The Clinton Administration was also criticized by some conservative military leaders, among whom General Colin Powell, mainly when the president attempted to stop discrimination against gay men and lesbians in the military as it had been promised during his campaign. Finally, Bill Clinton received conservative disapproval when he appointed his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, to preside over the Task Force on National Health Care Reform. In fact, Clinton’s conservative predecessors always objected to his liberal views and his wife’s feminist beliefs.<sup>477</sup>

In spite of the above mentioned obstacles, President Clinton was able to make significant changes to social policy including “tax credits for employers to hire long-term welfare recipients, and a continuation of food stamp benefits for people on social assistance who were seeking paid work.”<sup>478</sup> Moreover, the new president proved to be more understanding vis-à-vis women than his predecessors since Congress enacted important bills related to women’s and family issues such as the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 (see appendix VII) and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994 (see appendix VIII). The former stated:

*Eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:*

- *The birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;*
- *To bond with a child (leave must be taken within one year of the child’s birth or placement);*
- *To care for the employee’s spouse, child, or parent who has a qualifying serious health condition;*

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<sup>476</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>477</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bill-Clinton/Presidency> (Accessed November 29, 2022)

<sup>478</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, “Rethinking Retrenchment: North American Social Policy during the Early Clinton and Chrétien Years”, op. cit., p. 34.



- *For the employee's own qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job;*
- *For qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military member who is the employee's spouse, child, or parent.*<sup>479</sup>

According to feminists, the Act's approval was a significant step forward, because it had been constantly denied since the mid-1980s.<sup>480</sup> In addition, they viewed President Clinton as an ally mainly when he overturned, in 1993, the Mexico City policy which prevented the United States from providing foreign aid to nations that supported abortion.<sup>481</sup>

As far as the VAWA (Title IV of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act) was concerned, it was passed in response to the gravity of the crimes including domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The act guaranteed:

Safe Streets for Women, Safe Homes for Women, Civil Rights for Women, Equal Justice for Women in the Courts Act, Violence Against Women Act Improvements, National Stalker and Domestic Violence Reduction, and Protections for Battered Immigrant Women and Children.<sup>482</sup>

The VAWA was significant for it was the first complete federal legislative package aimed at ending violence against women. It was also a victory for women's organizations that worked hard to persuade Congress to enact federal safeguards for women on the basis that states were failing to confront this violence. The protections and provisions afforded by the 1994 legislation were subsequently expanded and improved in the Violence Against Women Act of

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<sup>479</sup> "Employee Rights Under the Family and Medical Leave Act", <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/legacy/files/fmlaen.pdf> (Accessed October 11, 2022)

<sup>480</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, "Facing a Renewed Right: American Feminism and the Reagan/Bush Challenge", op. cit., p. 695.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

<sup>482</sup> "Violence Against Women Act", <https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/3355> (Accessed October 11, 2022)

2000, and the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005.<sup>483</sup>

Bill Clinton was able to earn feminists' support because women made up about forty-four percent of his administration appointees.<sup>484</sup> They occupied high-level posts and made day-to-day decisions that had national and international impact during the president's two tenure in office.<sup>485</sup> They were Janet Reno (Attorney General), Donna Shalala (Secretary of Health and Human Services), Carol Browner (Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency), Aida Alvarez (Administrator of the Small Business Association), Charlene Barshefsky (United States Trade Representative), Janice LaChance (Director of the Office of Personnel Management) and Ruth Bader Ginsburg (Justice on the United States Supreme Court).

As far as educated Black women were concerned, they left an everlasting mark on the American political scene thanks to the important posts they occupied during Bill Clinton presidency. They were Hazel R. O'Leary, Alexis Herman, Loretta Lynch and Joycelyn Elders. O'Leary had already been nominated to assume several posts during the Jimmy Carter Administration (1977-1981). For instance, she was appointed assistant administrator of the Federal Energy Administration, general counsel of the Community Services Administration, and administrator of the Economic Regulatory Administration at the Department of Energy. When Bill Clinton took office in 1993, he proposed O'Leary to be Secretary of Energy, and the Senate overwhelmingly approved her the next day. By accepting the appointment, O'Leary became the first woman and the first African American to serve as Secretary of

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<sup>483</sup> "History of the Violence Against Women Act", <https://www.legalmomentum.org/history-vawa> (Accessed October 09, 2022)

<sup>484</sup> "Clinton – Gore Accomplishments: Supporting Women and Families", <https://clintonwhitehouse3.archives.gov/WH/Accomplishments/women.html> (Accessed October 11, 2022).

<sup>485</sup> Karen Garner, *Gender and Foreign Policy in the Clinton Administration*, U.S.A, First Forum Press, 2013, p. 2.

Energy.<sup>486</sup> O'Leary was commended for declassifying historical Department of Energy data, which revealed that American people had been, unintentionally, utilized in radiation testing. She, therefore, announced a \$4.6 million compensation to the families of all victims of previous radiation tests.<sup>487</sup>

Alexis Herman was another African American female who marked the Clinton's Administration by becoming the twenty-third Secretary of Labour. But, before being appointed by President Clinton, this Xavier University of Louisiana graduate had already worked as a social worker on the Mississippi Gulf Coast to improve the working conditions of Black labourers and women in the region. She also campaigned for shipyards to provide training to unskilled Black employees. Later on, Herman became the leader of an organization that worked to advance women of colour into professional and paraprofessional careers. The organization was known as the Southern Region's Council Black Women's Employment Program.<sup>488</sup> In 1993, President Clinton nominated Herman as deputy director of the Presidential Transition Office and four years later, she was sworn in as Secretary of Labour. She, therefore, became the first Black woman holding that position. As Secretary of Labour, Herman was determined in her support for raising the minimum wage by \$.50 to \$5.15 per hour; believing that higher pay would increase workers' purchasing power.<sup>489</sup>

Another name to be added to the list of educated Black women serving under the Clinton Administration: Loretta Lynch. She was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, to a school librarian and a Baptist preacher. She attended Shaw University and then Harvard Law School. Lynch was the chief assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New

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<sup>486</sup>Currie N, "Before Kamala: Black Women in Presidential Administrations", <https://rediscovering-black-history.blogs.archives.gov/2021/01/19/before-kamala-black-women-in-presidential-administrations/> (Accessed October 16, 2022)

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

York from 1998 to 1999, when she headed the Brooklyn office. Then, she was appointed United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York by President Bill Clinton in 1999. During her service in this post, Lynch supervised the prosecution of New York police officers, and met with the family of Eric Garner, an unarmed man who was killed while being held in a banned chokehold, to discuss the prosecution of the police officer accused of Garner's death.<sup>490</sup>

Joycelyn Elders, who was born in 1933 to poor farming parents and who grew up in a segregated, impoverished part of Arkansas, was able to earn a scholarship at the Philander Smith College, in Little Rock, after graduating from high school. She used to sweep floors to pay for her college education. Elders, who was interested in biology and chemistry, decided to be a doctor mainly after she had, once, heard Edith Irby Jones (the first African American to attend the University of Arkansas Medical School) speak at a college sorority. Elders, who had never met a doctor before the age of 16, aspired to be like Jones.<sup>491</sup> She, finally, completed her internship in paediatrics at the University of Minnesota before returning to the University of Arkansas for her residency in 1961. She, later, rose to the position of chief resident supervising the all-white, all-male residents and interns. In 1967, she obtained her master's degree in biochemistry, and in 1971, she was promoted to assistant professor of paediatrics at the university's Medical School. She became full professor in 1976.<sup>492</sup>

When Bill Clinton was governor of Arkansas, he appointed Elders head of the Arkansas Department of Health in 1987. Even though she provoked controversy among conservatives, and received criticism for her progressive initiatives such as advocating for clinics and broader sex education, Elders was, later, appointed United States Surgeon General when Bill Clinton became President in 1993, and continued to bring controversial issues up for debate.

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<sup>490</sup> Ibid.

<sup>491</sup> "Celebrating America's Women Physicians", [https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography\\_98.html](https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_98.html) (Accessed October 19, 2022)

<sup>492</sup> Ibid.

As the first African American, and just the second woman to lead the United States Public Health Service, Elders “doubled childhood immunizations and expanded the state's prenatal care program” during her fifteen months in service.<sup>493</sup>

As a Democrat, and contrary to his Republican predecessors, President Clinton brought feminist goals “into the mainstream of American foreign policy” as he stated: “We cannot advance our ideals and interests unless we focus more attention on the fundamental human rights and basic needs of women and girls.”<sup>494</sup> Thus, Madeleine K. Albright became the most noticeable woman in the administration's foreign policy positions, and served as ambassador to the United Nations from 1993 to 1997. Thereafter, she was appointed as the nation's first female Secretary of State from 1997 to 2001.<sup>495</sup>

Albright and the other liberal feminists working inside the Clinton Administration aimed to dismantle the old patriarchal institutional structures of the government in order to satisfy women's demands and interests. They also intended to increase women's legal, political, social, and economic rights, as well as to improve women's unequal position through the nation's foreign policy and foreign aid allocations since the latter “affected populations of ‘global women’.”<sup>496</sup> As a matter of fact, Madeleine Albright and First Lady Hillary Clinton made strategic connections with some feminist non-governmental organizations such as the Center for Global Women's Leadership, the International Women's Health Coalition, and the International Women's Tribune Centre (to name a few of them). Thanks to that collaboration between insiders and outsiders, the American foreign policy started to include women's rights

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<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

<sup>494</sup> Karen Garner, *op.cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>496</sup> “Global Women refer to women living in countries that were engaged in international wars or civil wars or that were developing countries that received foreign aid.” Ibid, pp. 2-3.

and empowerment in its program to a far higher extent than in the past.<sup>497</sup> In this respect, Secretary Albright announced in honour of International Women's Day in March, 1997:

Let me begin this morning with one very simple statement. Advancing the status of women is not only a moral imperative; it is being actively integrated into the foreign policy of the United States. It is our mission. It is the right thing to do, and, frankly, it is the smart thing to do.<sup>498</sup>

As women, both Black and White, started to make more progress, mainly during the Clinton Administration, anti-feminists began to worry about the future of their nation. This will be discussed in the following section to explain how the media tried to destroy the American Women's Rights Movement.

#### **4. The Media Criticism against Feminism**

During the 1980's and 1990's, the Women's Movement was severely attacked by the media through the latter's attempt to destroy the evolution of feminism. The media made it clear that women's exaggeration in their demands for total equality, in all fields, would cause the loss of faith, tradition and social values, and would "create an instability that many people were not ready for."<sup>499</sup>

Advertisers, newspapers, movies, and television blamed feminism for American women's and families' troubles. For this reason, "The mainstream media is very often accused of being unfriendly to feminism throughout the way it portrayed the movement and the issues it focused on."<sup>500</sup> The media made feminism a national "dirty word" and did its best to discourage female militants whenever they made significant strides toward independence and equality. Therefore, some bad stories around the Women's Movement were built and negative

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<sup>497</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>499</sup> Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>500</sup> Debra Baker Beck, "The 'F' Word: How the Media Frame Feminism", *NWSA Journal*, Vol 10, N°1, 1998, p. 139.

connotations around the word “feminism” were created, by the media, to fracture the movement and to turn women against one another. The word “feminist” was, very often, associated with adjectives like “hairy”, “bubbleheaded”, “man-hating”, “angries”.<sup>501</sup> By doing so, the media proved its willingness to sweep the concept of feminism out of the public’s awareness. In this respect, the author Debra Baker Beck published an article entitled: *The ‘F’ Word: How the Media Frame Feminism* to reveal how the media was so harsh towards feminism and its supporters. She wrote

Bra-burners is only one of the several less-than-kind labels attached to feminists in the media...In the media, the opposite of “family” often is “feminist”. Other popular stereotypical descriptors of feminists include “bubbleheaded”, “Amazons”, “angries”, “radical”, and “hairy”. The practice of labelling feminists as lesbians or “dykes” has been a particularly effective means of silencing supporters and scaring away others who share feminist views.<sup>502</sup>

The American historian and philosopher, John Fiske, too, declared that the media defined the concept of feminism in a negative way, and made gender roles seem a reality that must be accepted by any society. He said:

The media use meaning-laden codes that define ‘reality’. A code is a ‘system of signs, whose rules and conventions are shared amongst members of a culture, and which is used to generate and circulate meanings in and for that culture’. What passes for reality in any culture is the product of that culture’s codes. So ‘reality’ is always already encoded, it is never ‘raw’.<sup>503</sup>

When referring to feminism, the media always highlighted the occasional disagreements that took place within the second feminist wave between its two main leaders, Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, on certain issues (explained in chapter two). Their objective was to devalue the movement, to prove that women were incapable to get along with each other, and

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<sup>501</sup> Ibid, p. 143.

<sup>502</sup> Marrie Rebecca Olsen, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>503</sup> John Fiske, *Television Culture*, New York, Routledge, 1987, pp. 4-5.

to confirm that traditional theory which used to consider “male as reasonable and right and the alternative [women fighting for equal rights – or worse] as insignificant.”<sup>504</sup>

Every time feminists attempted to gain the media’s confidence so that it might represent them in a positive way, they failed. The media, in fact, continued to believe and to make people, too, believe that *female* was the opposite of *male*.<sup>505</sup> That nastiness of mass media vis-à-vis the Women’s Movement, pushed a great number of women to avoid expressing their support and assuming that they were feminist. Thus, when asked if they were feminist, some women replied: “I am not a feminist, but...”, and they continued to speak and to use expressions of support for the various achievements made by the movement.<sup>506</sup> In fact, they did not want to be considered as “trouble-makers who dared to challenge the very basis of a patriarchal society.”<sup>507</sup> It was also noticed that this continual rejection of feminism might have affected some women, psychologically, and made them build a bad image about themselves.

In this regard, Marilyn Gist stated:

To the frequent extent that media neglect women, portray them as marginally powerful, or objectify them sexually, these signals become internalized by many women as low self-esteem or an obsession with physical attractiveness.<sup>508</sup>

Although women made up twenty-five percent of broadcast news directors and only nine percent of newspaper management, they were far from being able to change the existing dominant gendered standpoint.<sup>509</sup> According to the author Debra Baker Beck, women were still not in a position “to influence the media, and to overcome the need to make profit.”<sup>510</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> Debra Baker Beck, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>505</sup> Pamela J. Creedon, “Framing Feminism : A Feminist Primer for the Mass Media”, *Media Studies Journal*, 1993, p. 72.

<sup>506</sup> Claudia Wallis, “Onward Women”, *Time Magazine*, December 4, 1989, p. 82.

<sup>507</sup> Debra Baker Beck, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>508</sup> Marilyn Gist, “Through the Looking Glass: Diversity and Reflected Appraisals of the Self in Mass Media”, *Women in Mass Communication*, Newbury Park, CA Sage Publications, 1993, p. 111.

<sup>509</sup> Pamela J. Creedon, “The Challenge of Re-Visioning Gender Values”, *ibid*, p. 20.

<sup>510</sup> Debra Baker Beck, op. cit., p. 150.



For her, the greatest hope for creating a more 'female friendly' media in order to save the image of feminism, was by putting more women in decision making positions.<sup>511</sup>

During the 1980's and the 1990's, female journalists continued to face open prejudice, and were, still, unable to achieve parity with their male fellows in the newsroom. The latter were neither inviting nor encouraging environments for women.<sup>512</sup> For example, despite more than two decades of Title IX (go to chapter two for more details) passed, the overall hierarchy in sports coverage and sports beats remained constant. "Major men's professional sports and men's collegiate football and basketball continued to be ranked first, followed by everything else, which may or may not include women's sports."<sup>513</sup>

While most observers claimed that mass media was very unpleasant towards feminism, one observer, Flora Davis, had a somewhat different opinion vis-à-vis the media's attitude. She asserted that the media originally spotlighted the Women's Movement, and played a crucial role in expanding the movement's issues, leaders and activities by bringing women to consciousness raising groups, and engaging discussions about feminism and women's roles in the world.<sup>514</sup> For instance, some entertainment programs dealt with controversial issues such as rape, equal employment opportunities, abortion, racial and sexual discrimination. Flora Davis declared that the media, unconsciously, helped women make their voice heard by the whole nation. She wrote: "Social movements need press coverage. That's how they get their message out to the general public."<sup>515</sup> After this discussion about the reaction of the media towards the feminist movement in the United States of America, the next section will be devoted to the negative side of the movement and how it affected the American society in different fields of life.

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<sup>511</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>512</sup> Pamela J. Creedon, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid, p.7.

<sup>514</sup> Debra Baker Beck, op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

## **5. The Drawbacks of Feminism and the Latter's Negative Impact on American Social Life**

From the beginning of this thesis, much has been said about the crucial role White and Black women activists played to help women achieve their basic rights, to realize their dreams and reach their objectives (more details are given in the previous chapters). Hence, one cannot deny the fact that feminism helped American women make more progress in their lives. But, according to a report from the National Bureau of Economic Research “As women gained more freedom, more education, and more power, they became *less* happy.”<sup>516</sup> Thus, it is essential to indicate that the new status of the American woman, who became more independent and who joined the men's sphere, dramatically affected them and their society as well. The main focus of attention in this section is on the disadvantages of the Women's Rights Movement, and how it changed the American society and women's lives in a negative way.

By the late twentieth century, “sex” in America was no longer a taboo, and women started to practise it at a very young age to prove their sexual independence. According to Carol Liebau's book, *Prude: How The Sex Obsessed Culture Damages Girls (and America, Too!)*, the age of first intercourse for females, in 1999, decreased from 19 to 15, and the proportion of sexually active women increased from thirteen to forty-seven percent during the same period.<sup>517</sup>

As a result, the American society had grown more tolerant of sex, and parents tried to do better with their own children. They decided to be more permissive in their discipline allowing their children to make moral judgements on their own.<sup>518</sup> In other words, feminists

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<sup>516</sup> Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid, p. 58.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

succeeded in pushing modern parents to reject their ancient standards of being the main source of teaching their kids cultural values as explained by Dr. Jean Marie Twenge (Professor of psychology at San Diego State University) when she wrote: “parenting is an incredibly powerful force for spreading cultural values.”<sup>519</sup>

The feminist Jessica Valenti argued in her book, *The Purity Myth*, that “women are just like men and should feel free to sleep around.”<sup>520</sup> Naomi Wolf was also another feminist who encouraged women “to embrace their inner ‘slut’.”<sup>521</sup> As a result of this pressure, seventy-three percent of American women had approved of premarital sex by 1999, and began to refuse to delay sex activity until being married. It was a pity for Conservative women because some of them accepted to engage in hook-ups in order not to be viewed as having a problem. In this context, and according to a research published in the Archives of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, forty-one percent of fourteen to seventeen-year-old females had “unwanted sex.”<sup>522</sup> And of course, this new phenomenon of practising sex freely led to the rise of teen infections; from a few to nine million new cases per year. Moreover, it resulted in unwanted pregnancies, the diagnosis of cervical cancer among teenagers, and the spread of HIV and AIDS.<sup>523</sup>

Another negative impact of feminism on the American society is that war declared by feminists against men and nature. Those women’s advocates, who pretended defending women, contributed to the disorganization of their society where both men and women used to have their own roles to make life simpler and easier.<sup>524</sup> It is fantastic that the feminist movement enabled women to achieve success outside the house (explained in the previous

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<sup>519</sup> Jean M. Twenge & W.Keith Campbell, *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement*, New York, Free Press, 2010, p. 85.

<sup>520</sup> Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid, p. 67.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid, p. 66.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid, p. 120.

chapters), but it should not jeopardize the delicate balance between men and women; mainly husbands and wives. Due to feminist arguments and influence, men and women no longer lived in harmony, rather, there was a real cultural conflict over gender roles and women started to look for their freedom from men.<sup>525</sup> In one of her articles for the *New York Times*, Natalie Angier, author and journalist, wrote: “women may not find this surprising, but one of the most persistent and frustrating problems to evolutionary biology is the male. Specifically...why doesn't he just go away?”<sup>526</sup>

The next point to be discussed is the institution of marriage. By the late twentieth century, women's attitude towards marriage was no longer the same. On the one hand, the feminine nature of women taught them that marriage was crucial, children might make life more enjoyable and men were required in their lives, and on the other hand, the culture convinced them that marrying and having children would disturb and ruin their lives. In this regard, Elizabeth Gilbert, an American writer influenced by feminist ideas said: “marriage threatens women's independence, as well as their well-being”, then she added “I saw [marriage] as oppressive and outdated. And stupid and useless. And possibly very, very destructive.”<sup>527</sup> Consequently, 1990's American women were no longer encouraged to search for a solid, career-oriented person. And under such circumstances, men felt useless, unnecessary, and humiliated because their role of being considered as the only breadwinners and protectors of their families was destroyed by feminist leaders. Some men, even, refused to marry.<sup>528</sup>

Accordingly, that new viewpoint about marriage had been deeply entrenched in American culture, and gave birth to a generation of disgruntled young women who were reluctant to marry. 1990's American women were convinced that a woman's loyalty to her

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<sup>525</sup> Ibid, p. 168.

<sup>526</sup> Natalie Angier, “The Male of the Species: why Is He Needed?”, *New York Times*, May 17, 1994.

<sup>527</sup> Lucy Kaylin, “Elizabeth Gilbert interview”, *O: The Oprah Magazine*, December 14, 2009.

<sup>528</sup> Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, op. cit., p. 78.

husband and children prevented her from using her brain in ways that benefited society. Rather, they preferred to be sexually liberated and free of the obligations and expectations of marriage and parenthood. They also preferred to be financially independent. According to conservatives who opposed such a feminist attack against marriage and motherhood, “careers should be icing on the cake; not the cake itself.”<sup>529</sup>

The next point that needs to be clarified is that feminism also resulted in the appearance of a new social phenomenon: fatherless children and illegitimacy. Once American women became more independent and started to engage in hook-ups, they frequently found themselves with fatherless babies. During the 1990's, an estimated twenty-one million children lived in households without their biological fathers.<sup>530</sup> And for feminists, it was no more a problem for a woman to raise her kids without the presence of their father. Unfortunately, it had been noticed that “the majority of social ills such as drug abuse, promiscuity, unwanted pregnancies, school dropouts, runaways, suicides, and crime came from homes where children grew up without their own fathers.”<sup>531</sup>

Another drawback of feminism, that should be raised, is that this movement indirectly made American mothers feel no longer compelled to care for their own children.<sup>532</sup> Most research indicates that in 1990, American parents' dependence on day care reached its peak, and that more married couples placed systematically their kids (three to five-year-old children as well as new-borns and toddlers ) in day care centers.<sup>533</sup> That was the result of feminists' desire to free women from child-care responsibility and to make them pursue their own ambitions (as already mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis).

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<sup>529</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid, p. 160.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

<sup>533</sup> Sandra L. Hofferth, “Day Care in the Next Decade: 1980-1990”, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 41, N° 3, National Council on Family Relations, 1979, p. 649.

The above-mentioned phenomenon changed the American people's attitude about the concept of parenthood. Husbands and wives no longer saw themselves as one entity, but rather as distinct beings sharing space. In the past, mothers were less preoccupied with themselves and more concerned with their children's well-being, then, came feminists who questioned the importance of motherhood. They promoted the impression that women should prioritize their jobs above their children because, for them, motherhood and housewifery were lowbrow occupations for intellectual women. The result was that both fathers and mothers were simply concerned with their own careers.<sup>534</sup> In her book, *Domestic Tranquility: A Brief Against Feminism*, Carolyn Graglia explained clearly the negative impact of feminism on parenthood and American families when she wrote:

*Society has been weakened by its curtailing of women's domestic role, which contributes substantially – possibly more than any other single activity – to societal health and stability. All indicia of familial well-being demonstrate that our society was a significantly better place for families in the decade before the feminist revival.*<sup>535</sup>

It is clear that when moms worked full-time outside the house, they did not have time to care for their kids, cook three healthy meals a day, transport their children to various activities, and take them to their doctors' appointments. As expressed by a Russian proverb: "if you chase two rabbits, you will not catch either one."<sup>536</sup> Thus, women were constantly trying to balance between their careers and family life, the fact that, frequently, led them to feel stressed and anxious. And this feeling led, in turn, to unbalanced children and households. As justified by the American author Suzanne Venker: "America witnessed an

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<sup>534</sup> Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>535</sup> Carolyn Graglia, *Domestic Tranquility: A Brief Against Feminism*, Dallas, Spence Publishing, 1998, p. 25.

<sup>536</sup> Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, op. cit., p. 97.

increase in kid obesity, chronic sleep deprivation, and a total breakdown of parental discipline as a result of absent moms.<sup>537</sup>

It had been shown, by some research, that it was detrimental to have too much day care. For example, most children whose mothers stayed with them at home did not experience the same levels of separation anxiety and melancholy as children whose mothers worked full-time. Due to the long hours spent in day care centers, children might experience stress and behavioural difficulties. For instance, about twenty-nine states in America provided mental health treatments to children aged three and four.<sup>538</sup> In this regard, Sue Schellenbarger (creator of the *Wall Street Journal's* Work and Family column) wrote: “from 9.5 percent to 14.2 percent of children under six have emotional problems serious enough to hurt their ability to function, including anxiety or behavioural disorders.”<sup>539</sup>

In another study published in the Archives of General Psychiatry, Lynn Hopson (executive director of a New Haven , Connecticut, preschool) said: “we are seeing more and more children with challenging behaviours every year.”<sup>540</sup> Indeed, children who got academic education too early were at risk, according to David Elkind (an American child psychologist and author), since it could harm a child's self-esteem, damage a child's natural desire to study, and stifle a child's natural abilities and talents. Dr Elkind wrote:

*There is no evidence that such early instruction has lasting benefits, and considerable evidence that it can do lasting harm...if we do not wake up to the potential danger of these harmful practices, we may do serious damage to a large segment of the next generation.*<sup>541</sup>

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<sup>537</sup> Ibid, p. 100.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid, p. 120.

<sup>539</sup> Sue Schellenbarger, “Therapy in Preschools: Can it Have Lasting Benefits?”, quoted in Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid.

<sup>541</sup> David Elkind, *The Hurried Child: Growing up too Fast Too Soon*, New York, Da Capo, 2001, p. 32.

To avoid all these problems because of absent mothers who, convinced by feminist theories, chose to give more attention to their professional careers, working women should make space for both work and family. They should “give parenthood at least as much time and concern as their job” to minimize family disruption, and child’s psychological and behavioural disorder. Thus, women should choose suitable jobs, and plan to stay with their babies for a while instead of rejecting motherhood and considering it as an obstacle to their progress, as claimed by feminists.<sup>542</sup>

Another repercussion of feminism on the American society is that, over the years, the feminist movement developed into a radical one. Radical feminists began to ask for a thorough societal restructuring to eradicate male power. They even exaggerated in their demands when they insisted on women’s right to choose their own partners, and fought against compulsory heterosexuality.<sup>543</sup> Despite the fact that the roots of lesbianism can be traced back to the seventeenth century, when two women (Sarah White Norman and Mary Vincent Hammon) from Plymouth Colony were prosecuted in 1648 for “lewd behavior with each other upon a bed”<sup>544</sup>, this phenomenon had become more and more common by the late twentieth century to encourage women “to focus their efforts, attentions, relationships and activities towards their fellow women rather than men.”<sup>545</sup> Some lesbian key thinkers and activists include Charlotte Bunch and Rita Mae Brown, in addition to the Black Audre Lorde.

Born in 1944, in West Jefferson, North Carolina, Charlotte Bunch participated in a variety of extracurricular activities during her college years, including work with the Young Women's Christian Association; the Methodist student movement; a poverty program in

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<sup>542</sup> Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>543</sup> Ellen Willis, “Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism”, *The 60's without Apology*, Vol 10, N9, 1984, pp. 91-118.

<sup>544</sup> Boris Kenneth, *Same-sex Desire in the English Renaissance: A Sourcebook of texts (1470-1650)*, Taylor & Frances, 2003, p. 113.

<sup>545</sup> Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence (1980)”, *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1985*, W.W.Norton & Company, 1986, p. 23.



Oakland, California; and various civil rights groups. As a lesbian writer and activist, she worked to defend and protect the lesbian community in the United States, and to get gender and sexual orientation included in international human rights agendas. She, therefore, founded the Center for Women's Global Leadership, by the late 1980's, to advance women's well-being around the world.<sup>546</sup> She was the co-editor of several books among which: *Learning Our Way: Essays in Feminist Education*.

Rita Mae Brown was born in 1944 in Hanover, Pennsylvania, to a single adolescent mother. She was raised by her mother's cousin Julia and her husband Ralph because Rita's mother abandoned her. In 1964, she was expelled from the University of Florida because of her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. She, then, moved to New York where she received a certificate in cinematography from the New York School of Arts. During the 1970's, Brown defended lesbians throughout writing a ten-paragraph manifesto *The Woman-Identified Woman* to fight for the right of sexual orientation.<sup>547</sup> As a lesbian, Brown lived with Fannie Flagg, an American actress and screenwriter, but their relationship did not last more than a year. Then, she fell in love with Martina Navratilova, a tennis champion, and lived together in Charlottesville. They broke up a year later because Navratilova feared that her sexual orientation would affect her application for United States citizenship.<sup>548</sup>

Audre Lorde was a Black lesbian born on February 18, 1934 to Frederic and Linda Belmar Lorde, immigrants from Grenada (see map 9), and grew up in Manhattan. She started writing poems at a very young age, about twelve years old. When she joined the National University of Mexico, in Cuernavaca, she discovered her talent of a poet. She soon wrote her famous poem *Martha*, in which she expressed her identity as a lesbian woman, in addition to

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<sup>546</sup> *National Women's Hall of Fame*, "Charlotte Ann Bunch", <https://www.womenofthehall.org/inductee/charlotte-anne-bunch/> (Accessed November 27, 2022)

<sup>547</sup> The full text is available online on <http://repository.duke.edu/dc/wlmpc/wlmms01011>

<sup>548</sup> Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, "Rita Mae Brown", [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rita\\_Mae\\_Brown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rita_Mae_Brown) (Accessed November 27, 2022)

her 1984 collection *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Lorde used her writing to emphasize on matters of social and racial injustice, and to show her support for homosexuality. She once said: “I write for those women who do not speak, for those who do not have a voice because they were so terrified, because we are taught to respect fear more than ourselves. We’ve been taught that silence would save us, but it won’t.”<sup>549</sup> Lorde’s encouragement for women’s rights and the “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer” (LGBTQ) community went beyond her literary career, for instance, she was a major figure at the second National March on Washington that took place on October 11, 1987 where she defended lesbian and gay rights.<sup>550</sup>

Gradually, lesbianism became almost a “normal” phenomenon, and lesbians became more visible in, religion, politics, and entertainment. For example, in 1984, Reconstructionist Judaism<sup>551</sup>, a Jewish denomination, allowed openly lesbian rabbis and cantors. Therefore, Stacy Offner was appointed as the first openly lesbian rabbi by a prominent Jewish congregation; Shir Tikvah Congregation of Minneapolis.<sup>552</sup>

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<sup>549</sup> Gwen Aviles, Ariel Jao & Brooke Sopelsa, “16 Queer Black Trailblazers who Made History”, <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/nbc-out-proud/black-history-month-17-lgbtq-black-pioneers-who-made-history-n1130856> (Accessed November 3, 2022)

<sup>550</sup> Mariana Brandman, “Audre Lorde”, *National Women’s History Museum*, 2021, <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/audre-lorde> (Accessed October 28, 2022)

<sup>551</sup> Reconstructionist Judaism is a politically and religiously progressive Jewish movement that is the smallest and youngest of the so-called “big four” American Jewish denominations. It encompasses roughly 100 synagogues in the United States and a handful overseas, and is the only one of the major movements that was established in the United States. *My Jewish Learning*, “What is Reconstructionist Judaism?”, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/reconstructionist-judaism-today/> (Accessed June 30, 2022)

<sup>552</sup> Dana Evan Kaplan, *Contemporary American Judaism: Transformation and Renewal*, Columbia University Press, 2009, p. 255.

Politically speaking, a number of White and Black lesbian women were appointed to important political positions in the United States during the 1990's. Dale McCormick became the first open lesbian elected as a member of the American Senate in 1990 and, a year later, Sherry Harris made history by becoming the first openly African-American lesbian to be elected to the City Council in Seattle, Washington. In 1993, the Clinton Administration (1993-2001) appointed the lesbian Roberta Achtenberg to the position of Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. Despite her sexual orientation, she "became the first out LGBTQ presidential appointee ever confirmed by the U.S. Senate."<sup>553</sup> Regarding the Judiciary, Deborah Batts (1947-2019) became, in 1994, the first Black lesbian federal judge. She was nominated by President Clinton, and her sexual orientation did not prevent the Senate to confirm her.<sup>554</sup>

In addition to the religious and political spheres, lesbian tales and openly lesbian performers were included in entertainment. For instance, the first lesbian kiss on television occurred on *L.A.Law* series, in 1991, between the fictitious characters C. J. Lamb (played by Amanda Donohoe) and Abby (played by Michele Greene). Then, in 1996, the first lesbian wedding on television was held for the fictional characters Carol (played by Jane Sibbett) and Susan (played by Jessica Hetch) on the American television series *Friends*. Ellen DeGeneres came out as a lesbian in 1997, one of the first celebrities to do so and, later that year, her character Ellen Morgan, on the television program *Ellen*, came out as a lesbian; making her the first openly lesbian actress to play an openly homosexual character on television.<sup>555</sup> These were only a few examples to show the evolution of lesbianism in the United States as a result of feminism.

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<sup>553</sup> Roberta Achtenberg, "First Out LGBTQ Senate-Confirmed Presidential Appointee", <https://www.prideandprogress.org/hall-of-fame/roberta-achtenberg> (Accessed November 6, 2022)

<sup>554</sup> Katharine Q. Seelye & Benjamin Weiser, "Deborah A. Batts: First Openly Gay Federal Judge Dies at 72", <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/05/nyregion/deborah-batts-dead.html> (Accessed November 6, 2022)

<sup>555</sup> Kathy Belge, "A History of Lesbians on T.V.", <https://www.liveabout.com/a-history-of-lesbians-on-tv-2170812> (Accessed July 2, 2022)

To conclude, this chapter has analysed the situation of feminism during the Reagan, Bush and Clinton Administrations, and how Republicans and Democrats dealt with such a movement. The chapter has also discussed the backlash that feminism faced, especially from the media which built a bad image about the movement to destroy it. Finally, the chapter has examined the impact of that movement on the American society, and how it caused some social disorder, as recalled by the writer Mary Kaissan in her book, *The Feminist Mistake: The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture*, “feminism was undeniably an important part of the philosophical quake.”<sup>556</sup>

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<sup>556</sup> Mary Kaissan, *The Feminist Mistake: The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Illinois, Crossway Books, 2005, p. 9.

# CONCLUSION

Broadly speaking, this thesis has analysed the rise of feminism in the United States of America, and how it developed from a movement asking for the civil and political rights of women – the first wave – into a movement criticizing the institutions of marriage and motherhood – the second wave. It has also examined the situation of Black women and how they, later on, gave birth to their own feminist movement to free themselves from the double discrimination – sex and race discrimination – they witnessed within the American nation. Finally, the work discussed the evolution of feminism, and how it changed the American society in a negative way by the late twentieth century.

Certainly, Olympe De Gouge, Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen and others were foremothers of the women's movement. All of them fought for the dignity, intelligence, and inherent human potential of the female sex. However, it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that women decided to give birth to an officially organized movement to challenge the patriarchal system based on men's superiority and women's inferiority.

In the United States of America, the roots of the Women's Rights Movement can be traced back to the late eighteenth century when Abigail Adams spoke, in her letters, on behalf of women's right to education. Unfortunately, no positive results were achieved until the middle of the nineteenth century when the Seneca Falls Convention, the first female meeting, was organized to ask for women's basic rights, as the right to education, the right to have a job, the right to have their own money, the right to ask for divorce, and the right to vote.

Once those rights achieved, women stopped their struggle and it was not until the 1960's that a second feminist wave emerged. Its leaders, Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, encouraged women to challenge marriage and motherhood, which had flourished in post-World War II, and to join the workplace in order to prove women's capacities.

Gradually, white and black women left their private sphere to enter the public one in a great number. Working mothers began to rely on day care centers to free themselves from the burden of childcare. Even in the workforce, women started to compete with men to be on the same pedestal with them in order to symbolize equality. Unfortunately, this "new" status of women impacted the American society in a negative way for women, brainwashed by left-wing feminists, declared a war against men and against nature. And instead of liberating themselves, they made their life more perplexed.

On the basis of facts cited in this research work, one may deduce that in addition to the positive results women achieved, thanks to feminism, the latter pushed them into a cultural conflict as well; especially when women's claims became different from those made by the "first wavers". In this respect, the historian Sara Evans declared: "A radical feminist movement grew directly out of the New Left...after 1970, women's liberation was a label appropriated by a very wide variety of groups of women who may have had little or no connection to its originators."<sup>557</sup>

To conclude, one may say that before the coming of feminism, men and women were aware of gender disparities. Husbands admired their wives' maternal talents, while women admired their husbands as breadwinners. Once feminism arrived, with the intention to challenge the existing patriarchal system, new repercussions appeared; mainly when the movement attacked the family through the negative image it gave on marriage and motherhood as commented by Phyllis Schlafly: "the women's libbers are radicals who are

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<sup>557</sup> Marie Rebecca Olsen, op.cit., p. 25.

waging a total assault on the family, on marriage, and on children.”<sup>558</sup> As a matter of fact, it is time to stop talking about women’s rights, women’s needs, and women’s issues. It is time to stop the gender war, and to stop considering men as adversaries.

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<sup>558</sup> Suzanne Venker & Phyllis Schlafly, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

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## APPENDIX I

### **The Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776**

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed, but when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their rights, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. the history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the

depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures. He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the

Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions, we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence.

They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each

other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

**Source:** Kenneth Prewitt & Sidney Verba, *Principles of American Government*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, New York, Harper & Row Publishers, 1980, pp. 327-328.

## APPENDIX II

### **The Declaration of Sentiments of the Seneca Falls Convention July 19-20, 1848**

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves, by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise. He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men - both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes, with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master - the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women - the law, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.

He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education - all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in Church as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation, - in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

**Source:** Mary Beth Norton & Ruth M. Alexander, *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Massachusetts, D.C. Heath & Company, 1996, pp. 167-168.



## **APPENDIX III**

### **The National Organization for Women's 1966 Statement of Purpose**

We, men and women who hereby constitute ourselves as the National Organization for Women, believe that the time has come for a new movement toward true equality for all women in America, and toward a fully equal partnership of the sexes, as part of the world-wide revolution of human rights now taking place within and beyond our national borders.

The purpose of NOW is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.

We believe the time has come to move beyond the abstract argument, discussion and symposia over the status and special nature of women which has raged in America in recent years; the time has come to confront, with concrete action, the conditions that now prevent women from enjoying the equality of opportunity and freedom of choice which is their right, as individual Americans, and as human beings.

NOW is dedicated to the proposition that women, first and foremost, are human beings, who, like all other people in our society, must have the chance to develop their fullest human potential. We believe that women can achieve such equality only by accepting to the full the challenges and responsibilities they share with all other people in our society, as part of the decision-making mainstream of American political, economic and social life.

We organize to initiate or support action, nationally, or in any part of this nation, by individuals or organizations, to break through the silken curtain of prejudice and discrimination against women in government, industry, the professions, the churches, the political parties, the judiciary, the labor unions, in education, science, medicine, law, religion and every other field of importance in American society. Enormous changes taking place in our society make it both possible and urgently necessary to advance the unfinished revolution of women toward true equality, now. With a life span lengthened to nearly 75 years it is no longer either necessary or possible for women to devote the greater part of their lives to child-rearing; yet childbearing and rearing which continues to be a most important part of most women's lives — still is used to justify barring women from equal professional and economic participation and advance.

Today's technology has reduced most of the productive chores which women once performed in the home and in mass-production industries based upon routine unskilled labor. This same technology has virtually eliminated the quality of muscular strength as a criterion for filling most jobs, while intensifying American industry's need for creative intelligence. In view of this new industrial

revolution created by automation in the mid-twentieth century, women can and must participate in old and new fields of society in full equality — or become permanent outsiders.

Despite all the talk about the status of American women in recent years, the actual position of women in the United States has declined, and is declining, to an alarming degree throughout the 1950's and 60's. Although 46.4% of all American women between the ages of 18 and 65 now work outside the home, the overwhelming majority — 75% — are in routine clerical, sales, or factory jobs, or they are household workers, cleaning women, hospital attendants. About two-thirds of Negro women workers are in the lowest paid service occupations. Working women are becoming increasingly — not less — concentrated on the bottom of the job ladder. As a consequence, full-time women workers today earn on the average only 60% of what men earn, and that wage gap has been increasing over the past twenty-five years in every major industry group. In 1964, of all women with a yearly income, 89% earned under \$5,000 a year; half of all full-time year round women workers earned less than \$3,690; only 1.4% of full-time year round women workers had an annual income of \$10,000 or more.

Further, with higher education increasingly essential in today's society, too few women are entering and finishing college or going on to graduate or professional school. Today, women earn only one in three of the B.A.'s and M.A.'s granted, and one in ten of the Ph.D.'s.

In all the professions considered of importance to society, and in the executive ranks of industry and government, women are losing ground. Where they are present it is only a token handful. Women comprise less than 1% of federal judges; less than 4% of all lawyers; 7% of doctors. Yet women represent 51% of the U.S. population. And, increasingly, men are replacing women in the top positions in secondary and elementary schools, in social work, and in libraries — once thought to be women's fields.

Official pronouncements of the advance in the status of women hide not only the reality of this dangerous decline, but the fact that nothing is being done to stop it. The excellent reports of the President's Commission on the Status of Women and of the State Commissions have not been fully implemented. Such Commissions have power only to advise. They have no power to enforce their recommendation; nor have they the freedom to organize American women and men to press for action on them. The reports of these commissions have, however, created a basis upon which it is now possible to build. Discrimination in employment on the basis of sex is now prohibited by federal law, in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. But although nearly one-third of the cases brought before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission during the first year dealt with sex discrimination and the proportion is increasing dramatically, the Commission has not made clear its intention to enforce the law with the same seriousness on behalf of women as of other victims of discrimination. Many of these cases were Negro women, who are the victims of double discrimination of race and sex.

Until now, too few women's organizations and official spokesmen have been willing to speak out against these dangers facing women. Too many women have been restrained by the fear of being called 'feminist.' There is no civil rights movement to speak for women, as there has been for Negroes and other victims of discrimination. The National Organization for Women must therefore begin to speak.

WE BELIEVE that the power of American law, and the protection guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution to the civil rights of all individuals, must be effectively applied and enforced to isolate and remove patterns of sex discrimination, to ensure equality of opportunity in employment and education, and equality of civil and political rights and responsibilities on behalf of women, as well as for Negroes and other deprived groups.

We realize that women's problems are linked to many broader questions of social justice; their solution will require concerted action by many groups. Therefore, convinced that human rights for all are indivisible, we expect to give active support to the common cause of equal rights for all those who suffer discrimination and deprivation, and we call upon other organizations committed to such goals to support our efforts toward equality for women.

WE DO NOT ACCEPT the token appointment of a few women to high-level positions in government and industry as a substitute for serious continuing effort to recruit and advance women according to their individual abilities. To this end, we urge American government and industry to mobilize the same resources of ingenuity and command with which they have solved problems of far greater difficulty than those now impeding the progress of women.

WE BELIEVE that this nation has a capacity at least as great as other nations, to innovate new social institutions which will enable women to enjoy the true equality of opportunity and responsibility in society, without conflict with their responsibilities as mothers and homemakers. In such innovations, America does not lead the Western world, but lags by decades behind many European countries. We do not accept the traditional assumption that a woman has to choose between marriage and motherhood, on the one hand, and serious participation in industry or the professions on the other. We question the present expectation that all normal women will retire from job or profession for 10 or 15 years, to devote their full time to raising children, only to reenter the job market at a relatively minor level. This, in itself, is a deterrent to the aspirations of women, to their acceptance into management or professional training courses, and to the very possibility of equality of opportunity or real choice, for all but a few women. Above all, we reject the assumption that these problems are the unique responsibility of each individual woman, rather than a basic social dilemma which society must solve. True equality of opportunity and freedom of choice for women requires such practical, and possible innovations as a nationwide network of child-care centers, which will make it unnecessary for women to retire completely from society until their children are grown, and national programs to provide

retraining for women who have chosen to care for their children full-time.

WE BELIEVE that it is as essential for every girl to be educated to her full potential of human ability as it is for every boy — with the knowledge that such education is the key to effective participation in today's economy and that, for a girl as for a boy, education can only be serious where there is expectation that it will be used in society. We believe that American educators are capable of devising means of imparting such expectations to girl students. Moreover, we consider the decline in the proportion of women receiving higher and professional education to be evidence of discrimination. This discrimination may take the form of quotas against the admission of women to colleges, and professional schools; lack of encouragement by parents, counselors and educators; denial of loans or fellowships; or the traditional or arbitrary procedures in graduate and professional training geared in terms of men, which inadvertently discriminate against women. We believe that the same serious attention must be given to high school dropouts who are girls as to boys.

WE REJECT the current assumptions that a man must carry the sole burden of supporting himself, his wife, and family, and that a woman is automatically entitled to lifelong support by a man upon her marriage, or that marriage, home and family are primarily woman's world and responsibility — hers, to dominate — his to support. We believe that a true partnership between the sexes demands a different concept of marriage, an equitable sharing of the responsibilities of home and children and of the economic burdens of their support. We believe that proper recognition should be given to the economic and social value of homemaking and child-care. To these ends, we will seek to open a reexamination of laws and mores governing marriage and divorce, for we believe that the current state of "half-equity" between the sexes discriminates against both men and women, and is the cause of much unnecessary hostility between the sexes.

WE BELIEVE that women must now exercise their political rights and responsibilities as American citizens. They must refuse to be segregated on the basis of sex into separate-and-not-equal ladies' auxiliaries in the political parties, and they must demand representation according to their numbers in the regularly constituted party committees — at local, state, and national levels — and in the informal power structure, participating fully in the selection of candidates and political decision-making, and running for office themselves.

IN THE INTERESTS OF THE HUMAN DIGNITY OF WOMEN, we will protest, and endeavor to change, the false image of women now prevalent in the mass media, and in the texts, ceremonies, laws, and practices of our major social institutions. Such images perpetuate contempt for women by society and by women for themselves. We are similarly opposed to all policies and practices — in church, state, college, factory, or office — which, in the guise of protectiveness, not only deny opportunities but also foster in women self-denigration, dependence, and evasion of responsibility, undermine their confidence in their own abilities and foster contempt for women.

NOW WILL HOLD ITSELF INDEPENDENT OF ANY POLITICAL PARTY in order to mobilize the political power of all women and men intent on our goals. We will strive to ensure that no party, candidate, president, senator, governor, congressman, or any public official who betrays or ignores the principle of full equality between the sexes is elected or appointed to office. If it is necessary to mobilize the votes of men and women who believe in our cause, in order to win for women the final right to be fully free and equal human beings, we so commit ourselves.

WE BELIEVE THAT women will do most to create a new image of women by acting now, and by speaking out in behalf of their own equality, freedom, and human dignity – – not in pleas for special privilege, nor in enmity toward men, who are also victims of the current, half-equality between the sexes – – but in an active, self-respecting partnership with men. By so doing, women will develop confidence in their own ability to determine actively, in partnership with men, the conditions of their life, their choices, their future and their society.

**Source:** <https://now.org/about/history/statement-of-purpose/>

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **Helen Reddy Song “I Am Woman”**

I am woman, hear me roar In numbers too big to ignore  
And I know too much to go back an' pretend 'Cause I've heard it all before  
And I've been down there on the floor No one's ever gonna keep me down again

Oh yes I am wise  
But it's wisdom born of pain Yes, I've paid the price  
But look how much I gained If I have to, I can do anything I am strong (strong)  
I am invincible (invincible) I am woman

You can bend but never break me 'Cause it only serves to make me  
More determined to achieve my final goal And I come back even stronger  
Not a novice any longer  
'Cause you've deepened the conviction in my soul

Oh yes I am wise  
But it's wisdom born of pain Yes, I've paid the price  
But look how much I gained If I have to, I can do anything I am strong (strong)  
I am invincible (invincible) I am woman

I am woman watch me grow See me standing toe to toe  
As I spread my lovin' arms across the land But I'm still an embryo  
With a long long way to go  
Until I make my brother understand

Oh yes I am wise  
But it's wisdom born of pain Yes, I've paid the price

But look how much I gained If I have to I can face anything I am strong (strong)

I am invincible (invincible) I am woman

Oh, I am woman I am invincible

I am strong

**Source** : <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/helenreddy/iamwoman.html>

## **APPENDIX V**

### **Ronald Reagan's Speech on the Nomination and eventual Appointment of Sandra Day O'Connor to the Supreme Court (July 7, 1981)**

Ladies and gentlemen, I have a statement to make. And then following that statement, if there are any questions you might have, I shall refer you to the Attorney General.

As President of the United States, I have the honor and the privilege to pick thousands of appointees for positions in Federal Government. Each is important and deserves a great deal of care for each individual called upon to make his or her contribution, often at personal sacrifice, to shaping the policy of the Nation. Thus each has an obligation to you, in varying degrees, has an impact on your life.

In addition, as President, I have the privilege to make a certain number of nominations which have a more lasting influence on our lives, for they are the lifetime appointments of those men and women called upon to serve in the judiciary in our Federal district courts and courts of appeals. These individuals dispense justice and provide for us these most cherished guarantees of protections of our criminal and civil laws. But, without doubt, the most awesome appointment is a guarantee to us of so many things, because it is a President—as a President, I can make an appointment to the United States Supreme Court.

Those who sit in the Supreme Court interpret the laws of our land and truly do leave their footprints on the sands of time. Long after the policies of Presidents and Senators and Congressmen of any given era may have passed from public memory, they'll be remembered.

After very careful review and consideration, I have made the decision as to my nominee to fill the vacancy on the United States Supreme Court created by the resignation of Justice Stewart. Since I am aware of the great amount of speculation about this appointment, I want to share this very important decision with you as soon as possible.

Needless to say, most of the speculation has centered on the question of whether I would consider a woman to fill this first vacancy. As the press has accurately pointed out, during my campaign for the Presidency I made a commitment that one of my first appointments to the Supreme Court vacancy would be the most qualified woman that I could possibly find.

Now, this is not to say that I would appoint a woman merely to do so. That would not be fair to women nor to future generations of all Americans whose lives are so deeply affected by decisions of



the Court. Rather, I pledged to appoint a woman who meets the very high standards that I demand of all court appointees. I have identified such a person.

So today, I'm pleased to announce that upon completion of all the necessary checks by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, I will send to the Senate the nomination of Judge Sandra Day O'Connor of Arizona Court of Appeals for confirmation as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

She is truly a person for all seasons, possessing those unique qualities of temperament, fairness, intellectual capacity, and devotion to the public good which have characterized the 101 brethren who have preceded her. I commend her to you, and I urge the Senate's swift bipartisan confirmation so that as soon as possible she may take her seat on the Court and her place in history.

**Source:** Ronald Reagan, "Remarks Announcing the Intention to Nominate Sandra Day O'Connor to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States", *The Achievements and Failures of the Reagan Presidency: An American Presidency Project Exclusive Analysis in Commemoration of the 40<sup>th</sup> President's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday*. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-announcing-the-intention-nominate-sandra-day-oconnor-be-associate-justice-the> (Accessed November 26, 2022).

## **APPENDIX VI**

### **Bill Clinton Address on Health Care Reform (September 22, 1993)**

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, my fellow Americans, before I begin my words tonight I would like to ask that we all bow in a moment of silent prayer for the memory of those who were killed and those who have been injured in the tragic train accident in Alabama today. Amen.

My fellow Americans, tonight we come together to write a new chapter in the American story. Our forebears enshrined the American dream: life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness. Every generation of Americans has worked to strengthen that legacy, to make our country a place of freedom and opportunity, a place where people who work hard can rise to their full potential, a place where their children can have a better future.

From the settling of the frontier to the landing on the Moon, ours has been a continuous story of challenges defined, obstacles overcome, new horizons secured. That is what makes America what it is and Americans what we are. Now we are in a time of profound change and opportunity. The end of the cold war, the information age, the global economy have brought us both opportunity and hope and strife and uncertainty. Our purpose in this dynamic age must be to make change our friend and not our enemy.

To achieve that goal, we must face all our challenges with confidence, with faith, and with discipline, whether we're reducing the deficit, creating tomorrow's jobs and training our people to fill them, converting from a high-tech defense to a high-tech domestic economy, expanding trade, reinventing Government, making our streets safer, or rewarding work over idleness. All these challenges require us to change.

If Americans are to have the courage to change in a difficult time, we must first be secure in our most basic needs. Tonight I want to talk to you about the most critical thing we can do to build that security. This health care system of ours is badly broken, and it is time to fix it. Despite the dedication of literally millions of talented health care professionals, our health care is too uncertain and too expensive, too bureaucratic and too wasteful. It has too much fraud and too much greed.

At long last, after decades of false starts, we must make this our most urgent priority, giving every American health security, health care that can never be taken away, health care that is always there. That is what we must do tonight

On this journey, as on all others of true consequence, there will be rough spots in the road and honest

disagreements about how we should proceed. After all, tiffs is a complicated issue. But every successful journey is guided by fixed stars. And if we can agree on some basic values and principles, we will reach tiffs destination, and we will reach it together.

So tonight I want to talk to you about the principles that I believe must embody our efforts to reform America's health care system: security, simplicity, savings, choice, quality, and responsibility.

When I launched our Nation on this journey to reform the health care system I knew we needed a talented navigator, someone with a rigorous mind, a steady compass, a caring heart. Luckily for me and for our Nation, I didn't have to look very far.

Over the last 8 months, Hillary and those working with her have talked to literally thousands of Americans to understand the strengths and the frailties of this system of ours. They met with over 1,100 health care organizations. They talked with doctors and nurses, pharmacists and drug company representatives, hospital administrators, insurance company executives, and small and large businesses. They spoke with self-employed people. They talked with people who had insurance and people who didn't. They talked with union members and older Americans and advocates for our children. The First Lady also consulted, as all of you know, extensively with governmental leaders in both parties in the States of our Nation and especially here on Capitol Hill. Hillary and the task force received and read over 700,000 letters from ordinary citizens. What they wrote and the bravery with which they told their stories is really what calls us all here tonight.

Every one of us knows someone who's worked hard and played by the rules and still been hurt by this system that just doesn't work for too many people. But I'd like to tell you about just one. Kerry Kennedy owns a small furniture store that employs seven people in Titusville, Florida. Like most small business owners, he's poured his heart and soul, his sweat and blood into that business for years. But over the last several years, again like most small business owners, he's seen his health care premiums skyrocket, even in years when no claims were made. And last year, he painfully discovered he could no longer afford to provide coverage for all his workers because his insurance company told him that two of his workers had become high risks because of their advanced age. The problem wits that those two people were his mother and father, the people who founded the business and still work in the store.

This story speaks for millions of others. And from them we have learned a powerful truth. We have to preserve and strengthen what is right with the health care system, but we have got to fix what is wrong with it.

Now, we all know what's right. We're blessed with the best health care professionals on Earth, the finest health care institutions, the best medical research, the most sophisticated technology. My mother is a nurse. I grew up around hospitals. Doctors and nurses were the first professional people I ever knew or learned to look up to. They are what is right with this health care system. But we also know

that we can no longer afford to continue to ignore what is wrong.

Millions of Americans are just a pink slip away from losing their health insurance and one serious illness away from losing all their savings. Millions more are locked into the jobs they have now just because they or someone in their family has once been sick and they have what is called the preexisting condition. And on any given day, over 37 million Americans, most of them working people and their little children, have no health insurance at all.

And in spite of all this, our medical bills are growing at over twice the rate of inflation, and the United States spends over a third more of its income on health care than any other nation on Earth. And the gap is growing, causing many of our companies in global competition severe disadvantage. There is no excuse for this kind of system. We know other people have done better. We know people in our own country are doing better. We have no excuse. My fellow Americans, we must fix this system, and it has to begin with congressional action.

I believe as strongly as I can say that we can reform the costliest and most wasteful system on the face of the Earth without enacting new broad-based taxes. I believe it because of the conversations I have had with thousands of health care professionals around the country, with people who are outside this city but are inside experts on the way this system works and wastes money.

The proposal that I describe tonight borrows many of the principles and ideas that have been embraced in plans introduced by both Republicans and Democrats in this Congress. For the first time in this century, leaders of both political parties have joined together around the principle of providing universal, comprehensive health care. It is a magic moment, and we must seize it.

I want to say to all of you I have been deeply moved by the spirit of this debate, by the openness of all people to new ideas and argument and information. The American people would be proud to know that earlier this week when a health care university was held for Members of Congress just to try to give everybody the same amount of information, over 320 Republicans and Democrats signed up and showed up for 2 days just to learn the basic facts of the complicated problem before us.

Both sides are willing to say, "We have listened to the people. We know the cost of going forward with this system is far greater than the cost of change." Both sides, I think, understand the literal ethical imperative of doing something about the system we have now. Rising above these difficulties and our past differences to solve this problem will go a long way toward defining who we are and who we intend to be as a people in this difficult and challenging era. I believe we all understand that. And so tonight, let me ask all of you, every Member of the House, every Member of the Senate, each Republican and each Democrat, let us keep this spirit and let us keep this commitment until this job is done. We owe it to the American people. [Applause]

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Now, if I might, I would like to review the six principles I mentioned earlier and describe how we think we can best fulfill those principles.

First and most important, security. This principle speaks to the human misery, to the costs, to the anxiety we hear about every day, all of us, when people talk about their problems with the present system. Security means that those who do not now have health care coverage will have it, and for those who have it, it will never be taken away. We must achieve that security as soon as possible.

Under our plan, every American would receive a health care security card that will guarantee a comprehensive package of benefits over the course of an entire lifetime, roughly comparable to the benefit package offered by most Fortune 500 companies. This health care security card will offer this package of benefits in a way that can never be taken away. So let us agree on this: Whatever else we disagree on, before this Congress finishes its work next year, you will pass and I will sign legislation to guarantee this security to every citizen of this country.

With this card, if you lose your job or you switch jobs, you're covered. If you leave your job to start a small business, you're covered. If you're an early retiree, you're covered. If someone in your family has unfortunately had an illness that qualifies as a preexisting condition, you're still covered. If you get sick or a member of your family gets sick, even if it's a life-threatening illness, you're covered. And if an insurance company tries to drop you for any reason, you will still be covered, because that will be illegal. This card will give comprehensive coverage. It will cover people for hospital care, doctor visits, emergency and lab services, diagnostic services like Pap smears and mammograms and cholesterol tests, substance abuse, and mental health treatment.

And equally important, for both health care and economic reasons, this program for the first time would provide a broad range of preventive services including regular checkups and well baby visits. Now, it's just common sense. We know, any family doctor will tell you, that people will stay healthier and long-term costs of the health system will be lower if we have comprehensive preventive services.

You know how all of our mothers told us that an ounce of prevention was worth a pound of cure? Our mothers were right. And it's a lesson, like so many lessons from our mothers, that we have waited too long to live by. It is time to start doing it.

Health care security must also apply to older Americans. This is something I imagine all of us in this room feel very deeply about. The first thing I want to say about that is that we must maintain the Medicare program. It works to provide that kind of security. But this time and for the first time, I believe Medicare should provide coverage for the cost of prescription drugs.

Yes, it will cost some more in the beginning. But again, any physician who deals with the elderly will tell you that there are thousands of elderly people in every State who are not poor enough to be on Medicaid but just above that line and on Medicare, who desperately need medicine, who make decisions every week between medicine and food. Any doctor who deals with the elderly will tell you

that there are many elderly people who don't get medicine, who get sicker and sicker and eventually go to the doctor and wind up spending more money and draining more money from the health care system than they would if they had regular treatment in the way that only adequate medicine can provide.

I also believe that over time, we should phase in long-term care for the disabled and the elderly on a comprehensive basis. As we proceed with this health care reform, we cannot forget that the most rapidly growing percentage of Americans are those over 80. We cannot break faith with them. We have to do better by them.

The second principle is simplicity. Our health care system must be simpler for the patients and simpler for those who actually deliver health care: our doctors, our nurses, our other medical professionals. Today we have more than 1,500 insurers, with hundreds and hundreds of different forms. No other nation has a system like this. These forms are time consuming for health care providers. They're expensive for health care consumers. They're exasperating for anyone who's ever tried to sit down around a table and wade through them and figure them out.

The medical care industry is literally drowning in paperwork. In recent years, the number of administrators in our hospitals has grown by 4 times the rate that the number of doctors has grown. A hospital ought to be a house of healing, not a monument to paperwork and bureaucracy.

Just a few days ago, the Vice President and I had the honor of visiting the Children's Hospital here in Washington where they do wonderful, often miraculous things for very sick children. A nurse named Debbie Freiberg told us that she was in the cancer and bone marrow unit. The other day a little boy asked her just to stay at his side during his chemotherapy. And she had to walk away from that child because she had been instructed to go to yet another class to learn how to fill out another form for something that didn't have a lick to do with the health care of the children she was helping. That is wrong, and we can stop it, and we ought to do it.

We met a very compelling doctor named Lillian Beard, a pediatrician, who said that she didn't get into her profession to spend hours and hours—some doctors up to 25 hours a week—just filling out forms. She told us she became a doctor to keep children well and to help save those who got sick. We can relieve people like her of this burden. We learned, the Vice President and I did, that in the Washington Children's Hospital alone, the administrators told us they spend \$2 million a year in one hospital filling out forms that have nothing whatever to do with keeping up with the treatment of the patients.

And the doctors there applauded when I was told and I related to them that they spend so much time filling out paperwork, that if they only had to fill out those paperwork requirements necessary to monitor the health of the children, each doctor on that one hospital staff, 200 of them, could see another 500 children a year. That is 10,000 children a year. I think we can save money in this system if we simplify it. And we can make the doctors and the nurses and the people that are giving their lives to

help us all be healthier a whole lot happier, too, on their jobs.

Under our proposal there would be one standard insurance form, not hundreds of them. We will simplify also—and we must—the Government's rules and regulations, because they are a big part of this problem. This is one of those cases where the physician should heal thyself. We have to reinvent the way we relate to the health care system, along with reinventing Government. A doctor should not have to check with a bureaucrat in an office thousands of miles away before ordering a simple blood test. That's not right, and we can change it. And doctors, nurses, and consumers shouldn't have to worry about the fine print. If we have this one simple form, there won't be any fine print. People will know what it means.

The third principle is savings. Reform must produce savings in this health care system. It has to. We're spending over 14 percent of our income on health care. Canada's at 10. Nobody else is over 9. We're competing with all these people for the future. And the other major countries, they cover everybody, and they cover them with services as generous as the best company policies here in this country.

Rampant medical inflation is eating away at our wages, our savings, our investment capital, our ability to create new jobs in the private sector, and this public Treasury. You know the budget we just adopted had steep cuts in defense, a 5-year freeze on the discretionary spending, so critical to reeducating America and investing in jobs and helping us to convert from a defense to a domestic economy. But we passed a budget which has Medicaid increases of between 16 and 11 percent a year over the next 5 years and Medicare increases of between 11 and 9 percent in an environment where we assume inflation will be at 4 percent or less. We cannot continue to do this. Our competitiveness, our whole economy, the integrity of the way the Government works, and ultimately, our living standards depend upon our ability to achieve savings without harming the quality of health care.

Unless we do this, our workers will lose \$655 in income each year by the end of the decade. Small businesses will continue to face skyrocketing premiums. And a full third of small businesses now covering their employees say they will be forced to drop their insurance. Large corporations will bear bigger disadvantages in global competition. And health care costs devour more and more and more of our budget. Pretty soon all of you or the people who succeed you will be showing up here and writing out checks for health care and interest on the debt and worrying about whether we've got enough defense, and that will be it, unless we have the courage to achieve the savings that are plainly there before us. Every State and local government will continue to cut back on everything from education to law enforcement to pay more and more for the same health care.

These rising costs are a special nightmare for our small businesses, the engine of our entrepreneurship and our job creation in America today. Health care premiums for small businesses are 35 percent higher than those of large corporations today. And they will keep rising at double-digit rates unless we act.

So how will we achieve these savings? Rather than looking at price control or looking away as the price spiral continues, rather than using the heavy hand of Government to try to control what's happening or continuing to ignore what's happening, we believe there is a third way to achieve these savings. First, to give groups of consumers and small businesses the same market bargaining power that large corporations and large groups of public employees now have, we want to let market forces enable plans to compete. We want to force these plans to compete on the basis of price and quality, not simply to allow them to continue making money by turning people away who are sick or old or performing mountains of unnecessary procedures. But we also believe we should back this system up with limits on how much plans can raise their premiums year-in and year-out, forcing people, again, to continue to pay more for the same health care, without regard to inflation or the rising population needs.

We want to create what has been missing in this system for too long and what every successful nation who has dealt with this problem has already had to do: to have a combination of private market forces and a sound public policy that will support that competition, but limit the rate at which prices can exceed the rate of inflation and population growth, if the competition doesn't work, especially in the early going.

The second thing I want to say is that unless everybody is covered—and this is a very important thing—unless everybody is covered, we will never be able to fully put the brakes on health care inflation. Why is that? Because when people don't have any health insurance, they still get health care, but they get it when it's too late, when it's too expensive, often from the most expensive place of all, the emergency room. Usually by the time they show up, their illnesses are more severe, and their mortality rates are much higher in our hospitals than those who have insurance. So they cost us more. And what else happens? Since they get the care but they don't pay, who does pay? All the rest of us. We pay in higher hospital bills and higher insurance premiums. This cost shifting is a major problem.

The third thing we can do to save money is simply by simplifying the system, what we've already discussed. Freeing the health care providers from these costly and unnecessary paperwork and administrative decisions will save tens of billions of dollars. We spend twice as much as any other major country does on paperwork. We spend at least a dime on the dollar more than any other major country. That is a stunning statistic. It is something that every Republican and every Democrat ought to be able to say, we agree that we're going to squeeze this out.

We cannot tolerate this. This has nothing to do with keeping people well or helping them when they're sick. We should invest the money in something else.

We also have to crack down on fraud and abuse in the system. That drains billions of dollars a year. It is a very large figure, according to every health care expert I've ever spoken with. So I believe we can achieve large savings.



And that large savings can be used to cover the unemployed, uninsured and will be used for people who realize those savings in the private sector to increase their ability to invest and grow, to hire new workers or to give their workers pay raises, many of them for the first time in years.

Now, nobody has to take my word for this. You can ask Dr. Koop. He's up here with us tonight, and I thank him for being here. Since he left his distinguished tenure as our Surgeon General, he has spent an enormous amount of time studying our health care system, how it operates, what's right and wrong with it. He says we could spend \$200 billion every year, more than 20 percent of the total budget, without sacrificing the high quality of American medicine.

Ask the public employees in California, who've held their own premiums down by adopting the same strategy that I want every American to be able to adopt, bargaining within the limits of a strict budget. Ask Xerox, which saved an estimated \$1,000 per worker on their health insurance premium. Ask the staff of the Mayo Clinic, who we all agree provides some of the finest health care in the world. They are holding their cost increases to less than half the national average. Ask the people of Hawaii, the only State that covers virtually all of their citizens and has still been able to keep costs below the national average.

People may disagree over the best way to fix this system. We may all disagree about how quickly we can do the thing that we have to do. But we cannot disagree that we can find tens of billions of dollars in savings in what is clearly the most costly and the most bureaucratic system in the entire world. And we have to do something about that, and we have to do it now.

The fourth principle is choice. Americans believe they ought to be able to choose their own health care plan and keep their own doctors. And I think all of us agree. Under any plan we pass, they ought to have that right. But today, under our broken health care system, in spite of the rhetoric of choice, the fact is that that power is slipping away for more and more Americans.

Of course, it is usually the employer, not the employee, who makes the initial choice of what health care plan the employee will be in. And if your employer offers only one plan, as nearly three-quarters of small or medium-sized firms do today, you're stuck with that plan and the doctors that it covers.

I propose to give every American a choice among high quality plans. You can stay with your current doctor, join a network of doctors and hospitals, or join a health maintenance organization. If you don't like your plan, every year you'll have a chance to choose a new one. The choice will be left to the American citizen, the worker, not the boss and certainly not some Government bureaucrat.

We also believe that doctors should have a choice as to what plans they practice in. Otherwise, citizens may have their own choices limited. We want to end the discrimination that is now growing against doctors and to permit them to practice in several different plans. Choice is important for doctors, and it is absolutely critical for our consumers. We've got to have it in whatever plan we pass.

The fifth principle is quality. If we reformed everything else in health care but failed to preserve and enhance the high quality of our medical care, we will have taken a step backward, not forward. Quality is something that we simply can't leave to chance. When you board an airplane, you feel better knowing that the plane had to meet standards designed to protect your safety. And we can't ask any less of our health care system.

Our proposal will create report cards on health plans, so that consumers can choose the highest quality health care providers and reward them with their business. At the same time, our plan will track quality indicators, so that doctors can make better and smarter choices of the kind of care they provide. We have evidence that more efficient delivery of health care doesn't decrease quality. In fact, it may enhance it.

Let me just give you one example of one commonly performed procedure, the coronary bypass operation. Pennsylvania discovered that patients who were charged \$21,000 for this surgery received as good or better care as patients who were charged \$84,000 for the same procedure in the same State. High prices simply don't always equal good quality. Our plan will guarantee that high quality information is available in even the most remote areas of this country so that we can have high quality service, linking rural doctors, for example, with hospitals with high-tech urban medical centers. And our plan will ensure the quality of continuing progress on a whole range of issues by speeding research on effective prevention and treatment measures for cancer, for AIDS, for Alzheimer's, for heart disease, and for other chronic diseases. We have to safeguard the finest medical research establishment in the entire world. And we will do that with this plan. Indeed, we will even make it better.

The sixth and final principle is responsibility. We need to restore a sense that we're all in this together and that we all have a responsibility to be a part of the solution. Responsibility has to start with those who profit from the current system. Responsibility means insurance companies should no longer be allowed to cast people aside when they get sick. It should apply to laboratories that submit fraudulent bills, to lawyers who abuse malpractice claims, to doctors who order unnecessary procedures. It means drug companies should no longer charge 3 times more per prescription drugs, made in America here in the United States, than they charge for the same drugs overseas.

In short, responsibility should apply to anybody who abuses this system and drives up the cost for honest, hard-working citizens and undermines confidence in the honest, gifted health care providers we have. Responsibility also means changing some behaviors in this country that drive up our costs like crazy. And without changing it we'll never have the system we ought to have, we will never.

Let me just mention a few and start with the most important: The outrageous costs of violence in this country stem in large measure from the fact that this is the only country in the world where teenagers can roam the streets at random with semiautomatic weapons and be better armed than the police.

But let's not kid ourselves; it's not that simple. We also have higher rates of AIDS, of smoking and

excessive drinking, of teen pregnancy, of low birth weight babies. And we have the third worst immunization rate of any nation in the Western Hemisphere. We have to change our ways if we ever really want to be healthy as a people and have an affordable health care system. And no one can deny that.

But let me say this-and I hope every American will listen, because this is not an easy thing to hear-responsibility in our health care system isn't just about them. It's about you. It's about me. It's about each of us. Too many of us have not taken responsibility for our own health care and for our own relations to the health care system. Many of us who have had fully paid health care plans have used the system whether we needed it or not without thinking what the costs were. Many people who use this system don't pay a penny for their care even though they can afford to. I think those who don't have any health insurance should be responsible for paying a portion of their new coverage. There can't be any something for nothing, and we have to demonstrate that to people. This is not a free system. Even small contributions, as small as the \$10 copayment when you visit a doctor, illustrates that this is something of value. There is a cost to it. It is not free.

And I want to tell you that I believe that all of us should have insurance. Why should the rest of us pick up the tab when a guy who doesn't think he needs insurance or says he can't afford it gets in an accident, winds up in an emergency room, gets good care, and everybody else pays? Why should the small business people who are struggling to keep afloat and take care of their employees have to pay to maintain this wonderful health care infrastructure for those who refuse to do anything? If we're going to produce a better health care system for every one of us, every one of us is going to have to do our part. There cannot be any such thing as a free ride. We have to pay for it. We have to pay for it.

Tonight I want to say plainly how I think we should do that. Most of the money will come, under my way of thinking, as it does today, from premiums paid by employers and individuals. That's the way it happens today. But under this health care security plan, every employer and every individual will be asked to contribute something to health care.

This concept was first conveyed to the Congress about 20 years ago by President Nixon. And today, a lot of people agree with the concept of shared responsibility between employers and employees and that the best thing to do is to ask every employer and every employee to share that. The Chamber of Commerce has said that, and they're not in the business of hurting small business. The American Medical Association has said that.

Some call it an employer mandate, but I think it's the fairest way to achieve responsibility in the health care system. And it's the easiest for ordinary Americans to understand because it builds on what we already have and what already works for so many Americans. It is the reform that is not only easiest to understand but easiest to implement in a way that is fair to small business, because we can give a discount to help struggling small businesses meet the cost of covering their employees. We should

require the east bureaucracy or disruption and create the cooperation we need to make the system cost conscious, even as we expand coverage. And we should do it in a way that does not cripple small businesses and low-wage workers.

Every employer should provide coverage, just as three-quarters do now. Those that pay are picking up the tab for those who don't today. I don't think that's right. To finance the rest of reform, we can achieve new savings, as I have outlined, in both the Federal Government and the private sector through better decision making and increased competition. And we will impose new taxes on tobacco. I don't think that should be the only source of revenues. I believe we should also ask for a modest contribution from big employers who opt out of the system to make up for what those who are in the system pay for medical research, for health education centers, for all the subsidies to small business, for all the things that everyone else is contributing to. But between those two things, we believe we can pay for this package of benefits and universal coverage and a subsidy program that will help small business.

These sources can cover the cost of the proposal that I have described tonight. We subjected the numbers in our proposal to the scrutiny of not only all the major agencies in Government—I know a lot of people don't trust them, but it would be interesting for the American people to know that this was the first time that the financial experts on health care in all of the different Government agencies have ever been required to sit in the room together and agree on numbers. It had never happened before. But obviously, that's not enough. So then we gave these numbers to actuaries from major accounting firms and major Fortune 500 companies who have no stake in this other than to see that our efforts succeed. So I believe our numbers are good and achievable.

Now, what does this mean to an individual American citizen? Some will be asked to pay more. If you're an employer and you aren't insuring your workers at all, you'll have to pay more. But if you're a small business with fewer than 50 employees, you'll get a subsidy. If you're a firm that provides only very limited coverage, you may have to pay more. But some firms will pay the same or less for more coverage.

If you're a young, single person in your twenties and you're already insured, your rates may go up somewhat because you're going to go into a big pool with middle-aged people and older people, and we want to enable people to keep their insurance even when someone in their family gets sick. But I think that's fair because when the young get older they will benefit from it, first, and secondly, even those who pay a little more today will benefit 4, 5, 6, 7 years from now by our bringing health care costs closer to inflation.

Over the long run, we can all win. But some will have to pay more in the short run. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the Americans watching this tonight will pay the same or less for health care coverage that will be the same or better than the coverage they have tonight. That is the central reality.

If you currently get your health insurance through your job, under our plan you still will. And for the first time, everybody will get to choose from among at least three plans to belong to. If you're a small business owner who wants to provide health insurance to your family and your employees, but you can't afford it because the system is stacked against you, this plan will give you a discount that will finally make insurance affordable. If you're already providing insurance, your rates may well drop because we'll help you as a small business person join thousands of others to get the same benefits big corporations get at the same price they get those benefits. If you're self-employed, you'll pay less, and you will get to deduct from your taxes 100 percent of your health care premiums. If you're a large employer, your health care costs won't go up as fast, so that you will have more money to put into higher wages and new jobs and to put into the work of being competitive in this tough global economy.

Now, these, my fellow Americans, are the principles on which I think we should base our efforts: security, simplicity, savings, choice, quality, and responsibility. These are the guiding stars that we should follow on our journey toward health care reform.

Over the coming months, you'll be bombarded with information from all kinds of sources. There will be some who will stoutly disagree with what I have proposed and with all other plans in the Congress, for that matter. And some of the arguments will be genuinely sincere and enlightening. Others may simply be scare tactics by those who are motivated by the self-interest they have in the waste the system now generates, because that waste is providing jobs, incomes, and money for some people. I ask you only to think of this when you hear all of these arguments: Ask yourself whether the cost of staying on this same course isn't greater than the cost of change. And ask yourself, when you hear the arguments, whether the arguments are in your interest or someone else's. This is something we have got to try to do together.

I want also to say to the Representatives in Congress, you have a special duty to look beyond these arguments. I ask you instead to look into the eyes of the sick child who needs care, to think of the face of the woman who's been told not only that her condition is malignant but not covered by her insurance, to look at the bottom lines of the businesses driven to bankruptcy by health care costs, to look at the "for sale" signs in front of the homes of families who have lost everything because of their health care costs.

I ask you to remember the kind of people I met over the last year and a half: the elderly couple in New Hampshire that broke down and cried because of their shame at having an empty refrigerator to pay for their drags; a woman who lost a \$50,000 job that she used to support her six children because her youngest child was so ill that she couldn't keep health insurance, and the only way to get care for the child was to get public assistance; a young couple that had a sick child and could only get insurance from one of the parents' employers that was a nonprofit corporation with 20 employees, and so they

had to face the question of whether to let this poor person with a sick child go or raise the premiums of every employee in the firm by \$200; and on and on and on.

I know we have differences of opinion, but we are here tonight in a spirit that is animated by the problems of those people and by the sheer knowledge that if we can look into our heart, we will not be able to say that the greatest nation in the history of the world is powerless to confront this crisis.

Our history and our heritage tell us that we can meet this challenge. Everything about America's past tells us we will do it. So I say to you, let us write that new chapter in the American story. Let us guarantee every American comprehensive health benefits that can never be taken away.

You know, in spite of all the work we've done together and all the progress we've made, there's still a lot of people who say it would be an outright miracle if we passed health care reform. But my fellow Americans, in a time of change you have to have miracles. And miracles do happen. I mean, just a few days ago we saw a simple handshake shatter decades of deadlock in the Middle East. We've seen the walls crumble in Berlin and South Africa. We see the ongoing brave struggle of the people of Russia to seize freedom and democracy.

And now it is our turn to strike a blow for freedom in this country, the freedom of Americans to live without fear that their own Nation's health care system won't be there for them when they need it. It's hard to believe that there was once a time in this century when that kind of fear gripped old age, when retirement was nearly synonymous with poverty and older Americans died in the street. That's unthinkable today, because over a half a century ago Americans had the courage to change, to create a Social Security System that ensures that no Americans will be forgotten in their later years.

Forty years from now, our grandchildren will also find it unthinkable that there was a time in this country when hardworking families lost their homes, their savings, their businesses, lost everything simply because their children got sick or because they had to change jobs. Our grandchildren will find such things unthinkable tomorrow if we have the courage to change today.

This is our chance. This is our journey. And when our work is done, we will know that we have answered the call of history and met the challenge of our time.

Thank you very much, and God bless America.

**Source:** Bill Clinton, *Address on Health Care Reform September 22, 1993*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20161018221153/http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/speech-3926> (Accessed November 26, 2022)

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## APPENDIX VII

### **Employee Rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) The United States Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division**

#### **Leave Entitlements**

Eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:

- The birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- To bond with a child (leave must be taken within one year of the child's birth or placement);
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a qualifying serious health condition;
- For the employee's own qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job;
- For qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military member who is the employee's spouse, child, or parent.

An eligible employee who is a covered servicemember's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may also take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the servicemember with a serious injury or illness

An employee does not need to use leave in one block. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, employees may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule.

Employees may choose, or an employer may require, use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. If an employee substitutes accrued paid leave for FMLA leave, the employee must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

#### **Benefits and Protections**

While employees are on FMLA leave, employers must continue health insurance coverage as if the employees were not on leave.

Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to the same job or one nearly identical to it with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

An employer may not interfere with an individual's FMLA rights or retaliate against someone for using or trying to use FMLA leave, opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA, or being involved in any proceeding under or related to the FMLA.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

An employee who works for a covered employer must meet three criteria in order to be eligible for FMLA leave. The employee must:

- Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months.
- Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before taking leave;\* and
- Work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.

\*Special "hours of service" requirements apply to airline flight crew employees.

### **Requesting Leave**

Generally, employees must give 30-days' advance notice of the need for FMLA leave. If it is not possible to give 30-days' notice, an employee must notify the employer as soon as possible and, generally, follow the employer's usual procedures.

Employees do not have to share a medical diagnosis, but must provide enough information to the employer so it can determine if the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. Sufficient information could include informing an employer that the employee is or will be unable to perform his or her job functions, that a family member cannot perform daily activities, or that hospitalization or continuing medical treatment is necessary. Employees must inform the employer if the need for leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Employers can require a certification or periodic certification supporting the need for leave. If the employer determines that the certification is incomplete, it must provide a written notice indicating what additional information is required.

### **Employer responsibilities**

Once an employer becomes aware that an employee's need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, the employer must notify the employee if he or she is eligible for FMLA leave and, if eligible, must also provide a notice of rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. If the employee is not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for ineligibility.

Employers must notify their employees if leave will be designated as FMLA leave, and if so, how much leave will be designated as FMLA leave.



**Enforcement**

Employees may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labour, Wage and Hour Division, or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

**Source:**      <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/legacy/files/fmlaen.pdf>  
(Accessed October 11, 2022)

## **APPENDIX VIII**

### **Public Law 103-322-Sept. 13, 1994 103d Congress**

### **TITLE IV: Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**

#### **Subtitle A: Safe Streets for Women**

Chapter 1: Federal Penalties for Sex Crimes Sec. 40111. Repeat offenders

Sec. 40112. Federal penalties

Sec. 40113. Mandatory restitution for sex crimes

Sec. 40114. Authorization for Federal victim's counsellors

Chapter 2: Law Enforcement and Prosecution Grants to Reduce Violent Crimes Against Women

Sec. 40121. Grants to combat violent crimes against women

Chapter 3: Safety for Women in Public Transit and Public Parks

Sec. 40131. Grants for capital improvements to prevent crime in public transportation Sec. 40132.

Grants for capital improvements to prevent crime in national parks

Sec. 40133. Grants for capital improvements to prevent crime in public parks Chapter 4: New Evidentiary Rules

Sec. 40141. Sexual history in in criminal and civil cases Chapter 5: Assistance to Victims of Sexual Assault

Sec. 40151. Education and prevention grants to reduce sexual assaults against women Sec. 40152. Training programs

Sec. 40153. Confidentiality of communications between sexual assault or domestic violence victims and their counsellors

Sec. 40154. Information programs

Sec. 40155. Education and prevention grants to reduce sexual abuse of runaway, homeless, and street youth

Sec. 40156. Victims of child abuse programs

#### **Subtitle B: Safe Homes for Women**

Chapter 1: National Domestic Violence Hotline Sec. 40211. Grant for national domestic violence

hotline

Chapter 2: Interstate Inforcement Sec. 40221. Interstate inforcement

Chapter 3: Arrest Policies in Domestic Violence Cases Sec. 40231. Encouraging arrest policies

Chapter 4: Shelter Grants

Sec. 40241. Grants for battered women's shelters Chapter 5: Youth Education

Sec. 40251. Youth education and domestic violence

Chapter 6: Community Programs on Domestic Violence

Sec. 40261. Establishment of community programs on domestic violence Chapter 7: Family Violence Prevention and Services Act Amendments

Sec. 40271. Grantee reporting

Sec. 40272. Technical amendments

Chapter 8: Confidentiality for Abused Persons Sec. 40281. Confidentiality of abused person's address

Chapter 9: Data and Research Sec. 40291. Research agenda

Sec. 40292. State databases

Sec. 40293. Number and cost of injuries

Chapter 10: Rural, Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Enforcement Sec. 40295. Rural domestic violence and child abuse enforcement assistance

**Subtitle C: Civil Rights for Women**

Sec. 40301. Short title Sec. 40302. Civil rights

Sec. 40303. Attorney's fees

Sec. 40304. Sense of the Senate concerning protection of the privacy of rape victims

**Subtitle D: Equal Justice for Women in the Courts Act**

Chapter 1: Education and Training for Judges and Court Personnel in State Courts Sec. 40411. Grants authorized

Sec. 40412. Training provided by grants

Sec. 40413. Cooperation in developing programs in making grants under this title Sec. 40414. Authorization of appropriations

Chapter 2: Education and Training for Judges and Court Personnel in Federal Courts Sec. 40421. Authorizations of circuit studies; education and training grants

Sec. 40422. Authorization of appropriations

**Subtitle E: Violence Against Women Act Improvements**

Sec. 40501. Pre-trial detention in sex offense cases

Sec. 40502. Increased penalties for sex offenses against victims below the age of 16 Sec. 40503. Payment of cost of testing for sexually transmitted diseases

Sec. 40504. Extension and strengthening of restitution

Sec. 40505. Enforcement of restitution orders through suspension of Federal benefits Sec. 40506. National baseline study on campus sexual assault

Sec. 40507. Report on battered women's syndrome

Sec. 40508. Report on confidentiality of addresses for victims of domestic violence Sec. 40509. Report on recordkeeping relating to domestic violence

**Subtitle F: National Stalker and Domestic Violence Reduction**

Sec. 40601. Authorizing access to Federal criminal information databases Sec. 40602. Grant program

Sec. 40603. Authorization of appropriations Sec. 40604. Application requirements

Sec. 40605. Disbursement

Sec. 40606. Technical assistance, training, and evaluations Sec. 40607. Training programs for judges

Sec. 40608. Recommendations on intrastate communication

Sec. 40609. Inclusion in national incident-based reporting system Sec. 40610. Report to Congress

Sec. 40611. Definitions

**Subtitle G: Protections for Battered Immigrant Women and Children**

Sec. 40701. Alien petitioning rights for immediate relative or second preference status Sec. 40702. Use of credible evidence in spousal waiver applications

Sec. 40703. Suspension of deportation

**Source:** <https://www.congress.gov/103/statute/STATUTE-108/STATUTE-108-Pg1796.pdf>