

## A. Gender Equality Issues

### 1. Women's Suffrage Movement

- a) Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Seneca Falls Convention 1848
  - (i) Women who opposed slavery confronted the opposition of men who objected to the participation of women in political affairs
  - (ii) Many female abolitionists also became the early advocates for women's rights
  - (iii) Some equated women's position in society with that of African - Americans
  - (iv) Advocates of rights for women who began their careers as abolitionists organized a meeting at Seneca Falls in 1848
  - (v) This convention saw the drafting of a declaration of principles (Declaration of Sentiments) that were patterned on the Declaration of Independence
- b) Susan B. Anthony and American Rights Association
  - (i) Became a leading campaigner for women's rights in the 1850s
  - (ii) Recognized the need for effective organization to bring pressure on male - dominated society
  - (iii) Began the American Rights Association as a tool to use to organize further and carry on pressure for Women's suffrage
- c) Woman's Christian Temperance Union
  - (i) The National Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was founded in Cleveland, Ohio in November of 1874.
  - (ii) After listening to a lecture by Dr. Dio Lewis, groups were moved to a non-violent protest against the dangers of alcohol. Normally quiet housewives dropped to their knees in pray-ins in local saloons and demanded that the sale of liquor be stopped.
  - (iii) In three months the women had driven liquor out of 250 communities, and for the first time felt what could be accomplished by standing together.
  - (iv) Through education and example, the WCTU hoped to obtain pledges of total abstinence from alcohol, and later also tobacco and other drugs.

- (v) Local chapters were called "Unions" and were largely autonomous, but closely linked to the state unions and national headquarters. There were clear channels of authority and communication and the WCTU quickly became the largest woman's organization in the United States
- (vi) The crusade against alcohol was a protest by women, in part, of their lack of civil rights. Women could not vote. In most states women could not have control of their property or custody of their children in case of divorce.
- (vii) In 1879, Frances Willard became president of the WCTU and turned to organizing political means in addition to moral persuasion to achieve total abstinence. Willard's personal motto was "do everything." The WCTU adopted this as a policy which came to mean that all reform was inter-connected and that social problems could not be separated. The use of alcohol and other drugs was a symptom of the larger problems in society.

d) National American Woman Suffrage Association 1890

- (i) NAWSA was an American organization created in 1890 by the merger of the two major rival women's rights organizations—the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association—after 21 years of independent operation.
- (ii) NAWSA was initially headed by past executives of the two merged groups, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and Susan B. Anthony.
- (iii) The strategy of the newly formed organization was to push for the ratification of enough state suffrage amendments to force Congress to approve a federal amendment.
- (iv) From 1900 to 1904 NAWSA instigated what was known as the "society plan" to recruit college-educated, privileged, and politically influential members and to broaden its educational efforts.
- (v) Despite the failure from 1896 to 1910 of a single new state to ratify a state suffrage amendment, much of the organizational groundwork had been laid.
- (vi) After a split led by Alice Paul and her formation of the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, NAWSA adopted the "Winning Plan" in an attempt to tap the energy and enthusiasm of the organization for a final push toward a federal amendment.

- (vii) Led by Carrie Chapman Catt, the organization coupled its drive for full woman suffrage with support of World War I and persuaded President Woodrow Wilson to throw his support behind what was to become the Nineteenth Amendment.
  - (viii) Ratified by Congress in June 1919 and 36 states during 1919–20, the amendment was added to the U.S. Constitution on August 26, 1920, marking an end to a 72-year struggle.
- e) Alice Paul and the Congressional Union 1913
- (i) A more radical organization of suffragists which initially functioned under the NAWSA, the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage was founded in 1913 by Alice Paul.
  - (ii) Paul was an educated New Jersey Quaker in her twenties at the time the organization was founded. Other prominent members of the organization included Lucy Burns, Mary Beard, Dora Lewis, and Crystal Eastman.
  - (iii) The Union's mandate was exclusively focused on the federal amendment. The women succeeded in lobbying western politicians to reintroduce the Susan B. Anthony amendment, which was eventually ratified in 1920.
  - (iv) The organization attracted young radicals and upset the national leadership, with their controversial methods of direct action and creative demonstration.
  - (v) The Union famously picketed the white house, resulting in many arrests of their members. The methods of protest came under frequent criticism from the more conservative NAWSA, who were wary of violent, British-style militancy within their umbrella organization.
  - (vi) Additionally, the Union's adamant focus on constitutional reform was difficult to reconcile with the NAWSA reliance on state rights in their southern strategy.
  - (vii) NAWSA's conflict eventually lead to the congressional Union group disbanding from the NAWSA to form the Woman's Party in 1916.
  - (viii) After separating form the NAWSA that the Woman's Party's methods of protest became increasingly aggressive, in emulation of British suffrage strategies.
  - (ix) Upwards of 200 women who were members of the Party were arrested during White House demonstrations, nearly half of whom were jailed.

(x) Lucy Burns led the imprisoned women on a hunger strike in 1917, which led to the forcible feeding that eventually gained the women public sympathy when their experience was reported in the press.

f) 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment

- (i) Progressive Era saw the culmination of the struggle for women's suffrage
- (ii) The women's movement was handicapped by rivalry between the NWSA and the AWSA, but also Victorian attitudes about the role of women, and by applications of Darwinian theory
- (iii) Feminists attempted to turn ideas of women's moral superiority to their advantage in the struggle for voting rights
- (iv) In doing so, however, they surrendered the principle of equality
- (v) 1890, the two major women's groups combined to form the National American Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA)
- (vi) The growth of progressivism contributed to the cause of suffrage
- (vii) After winning the right to vote in several states, NAWSA focused its attention on the national level with the Congressional Union
- (viii) Both the efforts of the National American Women's Suffrage Association and the Women's Congressional Union worked together to support the Susan B. Anthony Amendment.
- (ix) 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was granted and ratified in 1920

2. WWII and Gender Equality

a) Employment opportunities for women during WWII

- (i) With so many men being sent overseas for war, industry and jobs needed bodies to make sure the effort at home still moved forward
- (ii) Millions of women entered the work force during the war, and more married women than ever worked outside of the home
- (iii) Despite initial reluctance by employers and unions, women made inroads into traditionally male domains
- (iv) Black women bore a double burden of race and gender, but the demand for labor created opportunities for them

- (v) In addition to prejudice in the workplace, working women faced housework as well
- (vi) War also affected women who did not take jobs
- (vii) Wartime mobility caused problems for the women who faced new, sometimes difficult, surrounds without traditional support networks
- (viii) War brides often followed their husbands to training camps, where they faced problems comparable to those of women who moved to work in defense industries; in addition, they faced the fear and emotional uncertainties of newlyweds, compounded by separation from husbands who were risking their lives overseas

b) Rosie the Riveter

- (i) National Propaganda representative to recruit women to join the workforce in industries not often open to women before
- (ii) Most recognizable image from WWII, often used to represent movements of women empowerment

3. 1960's and Gender Equality

a) Ms.

- (i) *Ms.* was launched as a "one-shot" sample insert in *New York* magazine in December 1971, and few realized it would become the landmark institution in both women's rights and American journalism.
- (ii) The founding of *Ms.*, helped to shape contemporary feminism.
- (iii) *Ms.* was a brazen act of independence in the 1970s. At the time, the fledgling feminist movement was often denigrated or dismissed in the mainstream media. Most magazines for women were limited to advice about saving marriages, raising babies, or using the right cosmetics.
- (iv) The first regular issue hit the newsstands in July 1972 and its 300,000 "one-shot" test copies sold out nationwide in eight days. It generated 26,000 subscription orders and over 20,000 reader letters within weeks.
- (v) *Ms.* was the first national magazine to make feminist voices audible, feminist journalism tenable, and a feminist worldview available to the public.

b) National Organization for Women

- (i) The National Organization for Women (NOW) was an American activist organization founded in 1966 that works to promote equal rights for women.
- (ii) The National Organization for Women was established by a small group of feminists who were dedicated to actively challenging sex discrimination in all areas of American society but particularly in employment.
- (iii) The organization is composed of both men and women, and in the late 20th century it had some 250,000 members.
- (iv) Among the issues that NOW addresses by means of lobbying and litigation are child care, pregnancy leave, and abortion and pension rights.
- (v) However, its major concern during the 1970s was passage of a national Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution.
- (vi) NOW has also campaigned for such issues as passage of state equal rights amendments and comparable-worth legislation and has met with greater success on the state level.

c) Campaigning in the 1970's

- (i) Feminist leaders were inspired by the Civil Rights movement, through which many of them had gained civic organizing experience.
- (ii) Meanwhile, the women's anti-war movement was joined by a new generation of more radical young women protesting not only the Vietnam war, but also gender hierarchy.
- (iii) On college campuses, women joined in the leftist student movement, but their efforts to incorporate women's rights into the New Left were ignored or met with condescension from the male student leaders. As a result, women split off from the movements that marginalized them in order to form their own movement.
- (iv) At the same time, the FBI viewed the women's movement as potentially violent and linked to other "extremist" movements.
- (v) The women's movement used different means to strive for equality: lobbying Congress to change laws; publicizing issues like domestic violence through the media; and reaching out to ordinary women to both expand the movement and raise their awareness of how feminism could help them.

- (vi) Activists took an aggressive approach to their protests. Protests against sexism in the media ranged from putting stickers saying "Sexist" on offensive advertisements to holding sit-ins at local media outlets, all the way to sabotage of newspaper offices.
- (vii) This approach sometimes crossed the line into offensiveness, as at the 1968 demonstration outside the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City, where activists protested objectification of women by waving derogatory signs causing alienation to more conservative women.
- (viii) In local communities, women explored topics such as family life, education, sex, and work from their personal perspectives. As they shared their stories, they began to understand themselves in relation to the "patriarchal" society they lived in.
- (ix) Meanwhile, the women's movement was producing a huge number of journals in local communities across the country.
- (x) At the same time, the movement used class action lawsuits, formal complaints, protests, and hearings to create legal change. By the late 1970s, they had made tangible, far reaching gains, including the outlawing of gender discrimination in education, college sports, and obtaining financial credit

d) National Women's Political Caucus 1971

- (i) The National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), was a nonpartisan American political organization formed in 1971 to identify, recruit, train, endorse, and support women seeking public office.
- (ii) The organization endeavors to improve the status of women by amplifying the voice of women in government.
- (iii) To help women candidates run successful campaigns, the NWPC holds workshops that offer information about fund-raising, developing a platform, motivating volunteers, and obtaining media coverage.
- (iv) Since 1976 it also has worked to further the appointment of women to public offices, especially to important policy-making posts.
- (v) To achieve this goal, the NWPC, worked with other women's groups, reviewed the qualifications of hundreds of women and submits selected names and credentials to new administrations for consideration.

e) Equal Rights Amendment 1972

- (i) "Equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."
- (ii) The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), was first proposed in Congress by the National Women's Party in 1923. Feminists of the late 1960s and early 1970s saw ratification of the amendment as the only clear-cut way to eliminate all legal gender-based discrimination in the United States.
- (iii) The House approved the measure in 1970, and the Senate did likewise in 1972. The fight was then taken to the states. ERA-supporters had the early momentum. Public opinion polls showed strong favorable support. Thirty of the necessary thirty-eight states ratified the amendment by 1973.
- (iv) However, a highly organized, determined opposition that suggested that ratification of the ERA would lead to the complete unraveling of traditional American society rose.
- (v) The leader of the Stop The ERA was a career woman named Phyllis Schlafly.
- (vi) They worried protective laws like sexual assault and alimony would be swept away. The tendency for the mother to receive child custody in a divorce case would be eliminated. The all-male military draft would become immediately unconstitutional.
- (vii) After 1973, the number of ratifying states slowed to a trickle. By 1982, the year of expiration, only 35 states had voted in favor of the ERA
- (viii) The fight over the Equal Rights Amendment did not pit women against men – it pitted two ideologies against each other.

f) Roe V. Wade

- (i) Roe, a Texas resident, sought to terminate her pregnancy by abortion. Texas law prohibited abortions except to save the pregnant woman's life. After granting certiorari, the Court heard arguments twice.
- (ii) The first time the case was heard, Roe's attorney Sarah Weddington, could not locate the constitutional hook of her argument for justice Potter Stewart. However, her opponent Jay Floyd, misfired from the start.
- (iii) The second time the case was heard, Weddington was able to have a more poignant argument.



- (iv) The question was does the Constitution embrace a woman's right to abortion.
- (v) The Decision: The Court held that a woman's right to an abortion fell within the right to privacy protected by the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. As a result, the laws of 46 states were affected by the Court's ruling.