

Milestones and Key Figures in Women's History



Life in Colonial America



1607-1789

Anne Hutchinson



- Challenged Puritan religious authorities in Massachusetts Bay
- Banned by Puritan authorities for:
 - Challenging religious doctrine
 - Challenging gender roles
 - Challenging clerical authority
 - Claiming to have had revelations from God

Legal Status of Colonial Women



- Women usually lost control of their property when they married
- Married women had no separate legal identity apart from their husband
- **Could NOT:**
 - Hold political office
 - Serve as clergy
 - Vote
 - Serve as jurors

Legal Status of Colonial Women



- Single women and widows did have the legal right to own property
- Women serving as indentured servants had to remain unmarried until the period of their indenture was over

The Chesapeake Colonies



- **Scarcity of women, especially in the 17th century**
 - High mortality rate among men
 - Led to a higher status for women in the Chesapeake colonies than those of the New England colonies

The Early Republic



1789-1815

Abigail Adams



- An early proponent of women's rights
- A famous letter to John demonstrates that some colonial women hoped to benefit from republican ideals of equality and individual rights

“. . . 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. . . . Remember, men would be tyrants if they could.” --Abigail Adams

The Cult of Domesticity / Republican Motherhood



- The term *cult of domesticity* refers to the idealization of women in their roles as wives and mothers
- The term *republican mother* suggested that women would be responsible for rearing their children to be virtuous citizens of the new American republic
 - By emphasizing family and religious values, women could have a positive moral influence on the American political character

The Cult of Domesticity / Republican Motherhood



- Middle-Class Americans viewed the home as a refuge from the world rather than a productive economic unit.
- Catherine Beecher supported the Cult of Domesticity.
 - “The mother writes the character of the future man; the sister bends the fibers that hereafter are the forest tree; the wife sways the heart, whose energies may turn for good or evil the destinies of a nation. Let the women of a country be virtuous and intelligent, and the men will certainly be the same.”

Women in Antebellum America,



1815-1860

The Lowell System



- Plan developed in the early 19th century to promote and expand textile manufacturing
- During the first half of the 19th century, textile mills in Lowell relied heavily on a labor force of women and children
- During the 1820s and 1830s, the majority of workers in the textile mills of Massachusetts were young unmarried women from rural New England who sought to earn money of their own
- Prior to the Civil War, Irish immigrants began to replace New England farm girls in the textile mills

The Seneca Falls Convention



- Organized and led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott
- Called for Women's rights in
 - Suffrage
 - Right to retain property after marriage
 - Equal educational opportunities
 - Divorce and custody rights
- The *Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions* demanded greater rights.
 - ✦ “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal.”

Characteristics of the Women's Movement



- Led by middle-class women
- Promoted a broad-based platform of legal and educational rights
- Close links with the antislavery and temperance movements
- Held conventions in the Northeast and Midwest but not in the South
- Supported all of the following goals
 - Right of women to vote
 - Abolition of slavery
 - Passage of temperance laws
 - Right of married women to own property

Sarah Moore Grimke



- One of the first women to publicly support abolition and women's suffrage
- “I ask no favors for my sex. I surrender not our claim to equality. All I ask of our brethren is that they will take their feet off our necks.”

Reformers and Suffragettes



1865-1920

Jane Adams



- Best known for founding Hull House in Chicago
- Hull House and other settlement houses became centers of women's activism and reform efforts to help the urban poor.
- Settlement house workers engaged in all of the following:
 - Teaching classes on cooking and dressmaking
 - Publishing reports on deplorable housing conditions
 - Offering literacy and language classes for immigrants
 - Establishing day nurseries for working mothers

The Fight For Suffrage



- Frontier life tended to promote the acceptance of greater equality for women
- The only states with complete women's suffrage before 1900 were located west of the Mississippi
 - Wyoming (1869) was the first to grant women the full right to vote
- The Nineteenth Amendment (1920) guaranteed women the right to vote.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)



- Carry Nation was one of the best known and most outspoken leaders of the WCTU
- The WCTU successfully convinced women that they had a moral responsibility to improve society by working for prohibition

Women and the Progressive Reforms



- Dorothea Dix worked tirelessly on behalf of the mentally ill
- Ida B. Wells-Barnett was an African American civil rights advocate and an early women's rights advocate.
 - Noted for her opposition to lynching
- Women reformers were also actively involved in the following Progressive Era reforms:
 - Passage of child labor legislation at the state level
 - Campaigns to limit the working hours of women and children

Women and the Workplace



- **During the late 19th and early 20th centuries:**
 - the majority of female workers employed outside the home were young and unmarried
 - Women were most likely to work outside their homes as one of the following:
 - ✦ Domestic servant
 - ✦ Garment worker
 - ✦ Teacher
 - ✦ Cigar maker
 - Women were least likely to work outside their homes as
 - ✦ Physicians
 - ✦ Lawyers

Boom and Bust



1920-1940

Flappers



- Symbolized the new freedom by challenging traditional American attitudes about women
 - Favored bobbed hair
 - Smoked cigarettes
 - Wore the new one-piece bathing suits
- In reality, few women lived the flapper lifestyle
 - Look was fashionable among college coeds, office workers and store clerks

Women and the Workforce



- Although new jobs became available in offices and stores, the percentage of single women in the labor force actually declined between 1920 and 1930
- Women did not receive equal pay and continued to face discrimination in the professions
- Most married women did not seek employment outside the home

Margaret Sanger



- Outspoken reformer who openly championed birth control for women

Decline of the Feminist Movement



- Reasons for the decline in the organized feminist movement during the 1920s
 - Passage of the Nineteenth Amendment granting women the right to vote
 - Changing manners and morality symbolized by the flappers
 - Dissension among women's groups concerning goals
 - The decline of the Progressive Era reform movement

Eleanor Roosevelt



- Strong supporter of women's rights during the period of the New Deal

Women in the Workplace



1941-1960

World War II



- World War stimulated a widespread movement of women into factory work
- Married women entered the workforce in large numbers
- “Rosie the Riveter” was a nickname given to women who worked in America’s factories during WWII

The 1950s



- Following World War II, women were encouraged to give up their factory jobs and return home, where they would devote themselves to being wives and mothers

The Modern Women's Rights Movement



Betty Friedan



- Wrote *The Feminine Mystique*
- Was the first president of the National Organization for Women (NOW)
- One of the founders of NOW
 - An organization founded in 1966 to challenge sex discrimination in the workplace
 - Feminism tended to be a movement of middle class women
- Best known for her criticism of traditional gender roles

The Feminine Mystique



- “The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women. It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night—she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question—’Is this all?’ “

The Expansion of Women's Rights since 1963



- All of the following contributed to the expansion of women's rights since 1963
 - The Equal Opportunity Act of 1974
 - The Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*
 - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - Affirmative action regulations

The Equal Rights Amendment



- Did not pass
 - ERA is not an amendment
- Phyllis Schlafly led a campaign to block ratification of the ERA

Female Vice-Presidential Candidates



- Geraldine Ferraro was the first woman nominated for vice president by a major political party
 - Running mate of Democrat Walter Mondale in 1984
- Sarah Palin was the first woman nominated for vice president by the Republican Party
 - Running mate of John McCain in 2008