

Conducting Your Literature Review (Concise Guides to Conducting Behavioral, Health, and Social Science Research)

The history of women in the United States encompasses the lived experiences and contributions of women throughout American history.

The earliest women living in what is now the United States were Native Americans. During the 19th century, women were primarily restricted to domestic roles in keeping with Protestant values. The campaign for women's suffrage in the United States culminated with the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920. During World War II, many women filled roles vacated by men fighting overseas. Beginning in the 1960s, the second-wave feminist movement changed cultural perceptions of women, although it was unsuccessful in passing the Equal Rights Amendment. In the 21st century, women have achieved greater representation in prominent roles in American life.

The study of women's history has been a major scholarly and popular field, with many scholarly books and articles, museum exhibits, and courses in schools and universities. The roles of women were long ignored in textbooks and popular histories. By the 1960s, women were being presented more often. An early feminist approach underscored their victimization and inferior status at the hands of men. In the 21st century, writers have emphasized the distinctive strengths displayed inside the community of women, with special concern for minorities among women.

Colonial era [edit]

A stamp honoring Virginia Dare , who in 1587 became the first English child born in what became the United States

The experiences of women during the colonial era varied from colony to colony, but there were some overall patterns. Most of the British settlers were from England and Wales, with smaller numbers from Scotland and Ireland. Groups of families settled together in New England, while families tended to settle independently in the Southern colonies. The American colonies absorbed several thousands of Dutch and Swedish settlers. After 1700, most immigrants to Colonial America arrived as indentured servants—“young unmarried men and women seeking a new life in a much richer environment.[1] After the 1660s, a steady flow of black slaves arrived, chiefly from the Caribbean. Food supplies were much more abundant than in Europe, and there was an abundance of fertile land that needed farm families. However, the disease environment was hostile in the malaria-ridden South, where a large portion of the arrivals died within five years. The American-born children were immune from the fatal forms of malaria.[2]

Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón's unsuccessful American colony in 1526–1527 (San Miguel de Gualdape) involved about 600 colonizers, including women;[3] only about 150 returned home alive.[4][5]

The first English people to arrive in America were the members of the Roanoke Colony who came to North Carolina in July 1587, with 17 women, 91 men, and 9 boys as the founding colonists. On August 18, 1587, Virginia Dare was born in

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the colony; she was the first English child born in the territory of the United States. Her mother was Eleanor Dare, the daughter of John White, governor of the Roanoke colony.[6] It is not known what happened to the members of the Roanoke colony; however, it is likely that they were attacked by Native Americans, and those not killed were assimilated into the local tribes.[7]

Women's work in the 17th century, carrying a communal latrine

Virginia [edit]

Jamestown, the first English settlement in America, was established in 1607 in what is now Virginia.[8] In 1608 the first English women (two of them, Mistress Forrest and her maid Anne Burras[9][10][11]) arrived in Jamestown.[12][13] Burras became the first English woman to marry in the New World, and her daughter Virginia Laydon was the first child of English colonists to be born in Jamestown.[14]

The first Africans since those in Lucas Vã;zquez de Ayllã³nâ€™s unsuccessful colony in 1526â€“1527 (San Miguel de Gualdape) were brought to Jamestown in 1619;[5] they consisted of about twenty people, including at least one woman.[15][16] They were captives originally from the Kingdom of Ndongo in modern Angola, who had been part of a larger group heading to Mexico, and were taken after an attack on their Portuguese slave ship by English privateers. Their arrival is seen as a beginning of the history of slavery in Virginia and also as a starting point for African-American history, given that they were the first such group in mainland British America.[17]

Also in 1619, 90 young single women from England went to Jamestown to become wives of the men there, with the women being auctioned off for 150 pounds of tobacco each (to be paid to the shipping company), as that was the cost of each woman's travel to America.[18] Such voyagers were often called "tobacco brides". There were many such voyages to America for this purpose (the 1619 voyage being the first), with the tobacco brides promised free passage and trousseaus for their trouble.[19]

New England [edit]

In New England, the Puritan settlers from England brought their strong religious values and highly organized social

structure with them. They believed a woman should dedicate herself to rearing God-fearing children to the best of her ability.

There were ethnic differences in the treatment of women. Among Puritan settlers in New England, wives almost never worked in the fields with their husbands. In German communities in Pennsylvania, however, many women worked in fields and stables. German and Dutch immigrants granted women more control over property, which was not permitted in the local English law. Unlike English colonial wives, German and Dutch wives owned their own clothes and other items and were also given the ability to write wills disposing of the property brought into the marriage. The New England regional economy grew rapidly in the 17th century, thanks to heavy immigration, high birth rates, low death rates, and an abundance of inexpensive farmland.[20] The population grew from 3000 in 1630 to 14,000 in 1640, 33,000 in 1660, 68,000 in 1680, and 91,000 in 1700. Between 1630 and 1643, about 20,000 Puritans arrived, settling mostly near Boston; after 1643 fewer than fifty immigrants a year arrived. The average size of a completed family 1660â€"1700 was 7.1 children; the birth rate was 49 babies per year per 1000 people, and the death rate was about 22 deaths per year per 1000 people. About 27 percent of the population comprised men between 16 and 60 years old.[21]

The benefits of economic growth were widely distributed, with even farm laborers better off at the end of the colonial period. The growing population led to shortages of good farm land on which young families could establish themselves; one result was to delay marriage, and another was to move to new lands further west. In the towns and cities, there was strong entrepreneurship, and a steady increase in the specialization of labor. Wages for men went up steadily before 1775; new occupations were opening for women, including weaving, teaching, and tailoring. The region bordered New France, which used Indian warriors to attack outlying villages. Women were sometimes captured. In the numerous French and Indian Wars the British government poured money in to purchase supplies, build roads and pay colonial soldiers. The coastal ports began to specialize in fishing, international trade and shipbuildingâ€"and after 1780 in whaling. Combined with a growing urban markets for farm products, these factors allowed the economy to flourish despite the lack of technological innovation.[22]

Schooling [edit]

Tax-supported schooling for girls began as early as 1767 in New England. It was optional and some towns proved reluctant. Northampton, Massachusetts, for example, was a late adopter because it had many rich families who dominated the political and social structures and they did not want to pay taxes to aid poor families. Northampton assessed

taxes on all households, rather than only on those with children, and used the funds to support a grammar school to prepare boys for college. Not until after 1800 did Northampton educate girls with public money. In contrast, the town of Sutton, Massachusetts, was diverse in terms of social leadership and religion at an early point in its history. Sutton paid for its schools by means of taxes on households with children only, thereby creating an active constituency in favor of universal education for both boys and girls.[23]

Historians point out that reading and writing were different skills in the colonial era. School taught both, but in places without schools reading was mainly taught to boys and also a few privileged girls. Men handled worldly affairs and needed to read and write. Girls only needed to read (especially religious materials). This educational disparity between reading and writing explains why the colonial women often could read, but could not write so they used an "X" to sign their names.[24]

Hispanic women played a central role in traditional family life in the Spanish colonies of New Mexico; their descendants comprise a large element in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. Gutierrez finds a high level of illegitimacy, especially among the Indians who were used as slaves. He finds, "Aristocrats maintained mistresses and/or sexually exploited to their slaves but rarely admitted to fathering illegitimate children." [25]

Colonial personalities and activities [edit]

Pocahontas [edit]

The American Indian woman has been seen as a symbolic paradox. Depending on the perspective, she has been viewed as either the "civilized princess" or the "destructive squaw". A highly favorable image has surrounded Pocahontas, the daughter of the Native American chief Powhatan in Virginia.[26] John Smith himself said she saved him from being clubbed to death by her father in 1607, though there is some doubt as to whether this is what really happened.[27][28] She was taken hostage by the colonists in 1612, when she was seventeen. She converted to Christianity and married planter John Rolfe in 1614. It was the first recorded interracial marriage in American history.[29] This marriage brought a peace between the colonists and the Indians. She and Rolfe sailed to England in 1616, where she was presented at the court of King James I; she died soon after. Townsend argues that Pocahontas was not a powerful princess, but just one of many of the chief's daughters. She was assertive, youthful, and athletic; she returns Rolfe's love while also observing the Algonquin practice of constructing alliances through marriage, and she accepts

Christianity as complementing her Algonquin religious worldview.[30] Many leading families in Virginia to this day proudly claim her as an ancestor. Pocahontas quickly became part of early American folklore, reflecting myth, culture, romanticism, colonialism, and historical events as well as narratives of intermarriage, heroic women, and gender and sexuality as metaphors for national, religious, and racial differences.[31]

Cecily Jordan Farrar [edit]

Cecily Jordan Farrar was an early woman settler of colonial Jamestown. She came to the colony as a child aboard the Swan in 1610. Arriving in the middle of the first Anglo-Powhatan war, she established herself as one of the few female ancient planters. She married Samuel Jordan sometime before 1620. After Samuel's death in 1623, Cecily established herself as one of the heads of household at Jordan's Journey. In the same year, Cecily became the defendant in the first breach of promise lawsuit in English North America when she chose the marriage proposal of William Farrar over that of Grivell Pooley (see Cecily Jordan v. Greville Pooley dispute).[32]: 156 [33]: 107-108 [34]

Dramatization of Cecily Jordan rejecting Greville Pooley's claims

Mayflower [edit]

On November 21, 1620, the Mayflower arrived in what is today Provincetown, Massachusetts, bringing the Puritan pilgrims.[35] There were 102 people aboard - 18 married women traveling with their husbands, seven unmarried women traveling with their parents, three young unmarried women, one girl, and 73 men.[36] Three fourths of the women died in the first few months; while the men were building housing and drinking fresh water the women were confined to the damp and crowded quarters of the ship.[37] By the time of the first Thanksgiving in autumn 1621, there were only four women from the Mayflower left alive.[37][38]

Anne Hutchinson [edit]

In the 1630s, Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643) began to hold religious meetings in her home, which attracted the attendance not only of women but of prominent men, including affluent young civil officials.[39][40] Hutchinson's charisma indeed was so great that it became a threat to the ability of the clergy to govern; this was especially clear when some of her male supporters refused to join the militia in pursuit of Pequot natives. The authorities, led by

Reverend John Winthrop (who was also the colony's governor), first attacked her indirectly by banishing her brother-in-law, a minister who shared her views. Hutchinson herself was summoned to trial late in 1637 and also banished, but allowed to remain under house arrest until the end of winter. In March 1638, she was again brought before the court and formally excommunicated; she and her children soon joined her husband, who had prepared a home for them in the new colony of Rhode Island, which had been founded less than two years earlier by other dissidents exiled from Massachusetts.[41] At nearly 47, In 1660, Mary Dyer, a Quaker who had been among Hutchinson's followers, was hanged in Massachusetts for repeatedly returning to Massachusetts and proselytizing for Quakerism.[42]

Enslaved People [edit]

In 1655, Elizabeth Key Grinstead, who was enslaved in Virginia, won her freedom in a lawsuit based on her father's status as a free Englishman (her mother was a slave and her father was her mother's owner), helped by the fact that her father had baptized her as Christian in the Church of England.[43] However, in 1662 the Virginia House of Burgesses passed a law stating that any child born in the colony would follow the status of its mother, slave or free.[43] This was an overturn of a longheld principle of English Common Law, whereby a child's status followed that of the father; it enabled white men who raped enslaved women to hide the mixed-race children born as a result and removed their responsibility to acknowledge, support, or emancipate those children.[43] When Europeans began to arrive in the New World, many indigenous people converted. As a result, religion was less useful as a way to differentiate and skin color became more important. Many elite men had children with enslaved people. Pregnancy out of wedlock was encouraged among nonwhite women as the children would become workers/enslaved. The number of births out of wedlock in Latin America was much higher than in Europe. On the other hand, unmarried white women who had mixed-race children were treated worse than those who had white children. Despite the expectation of men to father mixed-raced children with nonwhite women, rape of a woman by a black man could lead to castration and European women who married indigenous men lost their "European" status. As more white women moved to the new colonies, interracial sex became less common since Europeans became concerned with "racial survival".[44]

Witches [edit]

Witchcraft trial at Salem Village (1876 illustration).

In the small Puritan community of Salem Village, Massachusetts, the Salem witch trials began in 1692. They began when

a group of girls gathered in the evenings in the home of Reverend Parris to listen to stories told by one of his slaves, Tituba. They played fortune-telling games, which were strictly forbidden by the Puritans. The girls began acting strangely, leading the Puritan community to suspect that the girls were victims of witchcraft. The girls named three townswomen as witches — Tituba, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osbourne; Tituba confessed to having seen the devil and also stated that there was a coven of witches in the Salem Village area. The other two women insisted they were innocent, but had a formal legal trial where they were found guilty of practicing witchcraft.[45]

The affected girls accused other townspeople of torturing them with witchcraft, and some on trial also named others as witches. By the end of the trials in 1693, 24 people had died, some in jail but 19 by hanging, and one by being pressed to death. Some of the accused confessed to being witches, but none of those were hanged, only those who maintained their innocence; those who were hanged include 13 women and 6 men.[46]

Salem was the beginning, but it was quickly followed by witchcraft scares in 24 other Puritan communities, with 120 more accused witches. Outside Salem, the episodes were short and not dramatic, and usually involved only one or two people. Most were older women, often widowed or single, with a history of bickering and disputes with neighbors. In October 1692, the governor of Massachusetts halted court proceedings, restricted new arrests, and then dissolved the Court of Oyer and Terminer, thereby ending the witch hunts.[47][48]

Housewives [edit]

"Housewife" (called a "Goodwife" in New England) refers to the married women's economic and cultural roles. Under legal rules of "coverture," a wife had no separate legal identity; everything she did was under her authority of her husband. He controlled all the money, including any dowry or inheritance she might have brought to the marriage. She had certain legal rights to a share of the family property when the husband died. She was in charge of feeding, cleaning and medical care for everyone in the household, as well as supervising the servants.[49] The housewife's domain, depending upon wealth, would also include "cellars, pantries, brew houses, milk houses, wash houses and butteries".[50] She was responsible for home manufacturing of clothing, candles, and foodstuffs. At harvest time she helped the menfolk gather the crops. She typically kept a vegetable garden, and cared for the poultry and milked the cows. The husband handled the other livestock and the dogs.[51] Mothers were responsible for the spiritual and civic well being of her children. Good housewives raised good children who would become upstanding citizens in the community.[52] Legal statutes and societal norms allowed for husbands to exert physical power over their wives, which

could result in violence. A few housewives were able to file for divorces.[53]

Writers [edit]

In 1650, Anne Dudley Bradstreet became America's first published poet, with the publication of her book of poetry entitled *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung up in America*.^[54] It was also published in London that same year, making Bradstreet the first female poet ever published in both England and the New World. Bradstreet linked sexual and cultural reproduction and posited the nuclear family as the place where individual and community identities are formed; she located education within a familial rather than an institutional setting.^[55] The earliest known work of literature by an African American and by a slave, Lucy Terry's poem "Bars Fight," was composed in 1746^[56] and was first published in 1855 in Josiah Holland's *History of Western Massachusetts*^[57] The poem describes a violent incident that occurred between settlers and Native Americans in Deerfield, Massachusetts in 1746.^[58] Former slave Phillis Wheatley became a literary sensation in 1770 after she wrote a poem on the death of the evangelical preacher George Whitefield.^[59] In 1773, 39 of Phillis Wheatley's poems were published in London as a book entitled *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*.^[60] This was the first published book by an African American.^[60]

One voter [edit]

In 1756, Lydia Chapin Taft of Uxbridge, Massachusetts became the only colonial woman known to vote, casting a vote in the local town hall meeting in place of her deceased husband.^[61] From 1775 until 1807, the state constitution in New Jersey permitted all persons worth fifty pounds who resided in the state for one year to vote; free black people and single women therefore had the vote until 1807, but not married women, as their property ownership was invariably limited.^[62]

Great Awakening [edit]

In the 1740s evangelists ignited a religious revival^{â€}called the First Great Awakening^{â€}which energized Protestants up and down the 13 colonies. It was characterized by ecstatic emotionalism and egalitarianism, which split several denominations into old and new factions.^[63] They expanded their membership among the white farmers; women were especially active in the Methodist and Baptist churches that were springing up everywhere. Although the women were rarely allowed to preach, they had a voice and a vote in church affairs, and were especially interested in close

monitoring of the moral behavior of church members.[64] The Awakening led many women to be introspective; some kept diaries or wrote memoirs. The autobiography of Hannah Heaton (1721â€"94), a farm wife of North Haven, Connecticut, tells of her experiences in the Great Awakening, her encounters with Satan, her intellectual and spiritual development, and life on the farm.[65]

The evangelicals worked hard to convert the slaves to Christianity and were especially successful among black women, who played the role of religious specialists in Africa and again in America. Slave women exercised wide-ranging spiritual leadership among Africans in America in healing and medicine, church discipline, and revivalistic enthusiasm.[66]

American Revolution [edit]

The coming of the Revolution [edit]

Using the colonies of Virginia and Maryland as a case study, Mellen argues that women in the mid-18th century had a significant role in the world of print and the public sphere. The voice of women was spread through books, newspapers, and popular almanacs. Some women writers sought equal treatment under the law and became involved in public debates even before the Stamp Act controversy of 1765.[67]

A powerful coercive tool the Americans used to protest British policies after 1765 was the boycott of imported British consumer goods. Women played an active role in encouraging patriotic boycotts and monitoring compliance. They refused to purchase imports, while emphasizing the virtues of avoiding luxury by using homespun clothing and other locally made products.[68][69]

The impact of the Revolution [edit]

The first Martha Washington postage stamp, issue of 1902.

The Revolution had a deep effect on the philosophical underpinnings of American society. One aspect that was drastically changed by the democratic ideals of the Revolution was the roles of women.[70]

The idea of republican motherhood was born in this period and reflects the importance of Republicanism as the dominant American ideology. Republicanism assumed that a successful republic rested upon the virtue of its citizens. Thus, women had the essential role of instilling their children with values conducive to a healthy republic. During this period, the wife's relationship with her husband also became more liberal, as love and affection instead of obedience and subservience began to characterize the ideal marital relationship. In addition, many women contributed to the war effort through fundraising and running family businesses in the absence of husbands.

Whatever gains they had made, however, women still found themselves subordinated, legally and socially, to their husbands, disenfranchised and with only the role of mother open to them. Deborah Sampson was the only woman historians know of who fought disguised as a man in the Revolutionary War. In 1782, she disguised herself as a man and joined the 4th Massachusetts Regiment. When her gender was finally discovered she was given an honorable discharge.[71] Many women were attached to the Army to help their husbands, and to handle cooking and cleaning. In 1776, Margaret Corbin fired her husband's cannon after he was killed; she was herself severely wounded in the battle. She received a pension from Congress in recognition of her service, making her the first American woman ever to receive a government pension. At the battle of Monmouth in 1778, Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley fired her husband's cannon after he was wounded in battle. Her story morphed into the "Molly Pitcher" legend.[72][73]

In March 1776, Abigail Adams wrote to her husband John Adams, a leader in the Continental Congress, recommending "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." Her husband wrote back, "As to your extraordinary code of laws, I cannot but laugh...Depend upon it, we know better than to repeal our masculine systems." [74]

Zagarri argues the Revolution created an ongoing debate on the rights of woman and created an environment favorable to women's participation in politics. She asserts that for a brief decade, a "comprehensive transformation in women's rights, roles, and responsibilities seemed not only possible but perhaps inevitable." [75] women took a small but visible role in the public sphere after 1783. First Lady Martha Washington sponsored social events in the national capital. The socializing became known as "the Republican Court" and provided elite women with an opportunity to play backstage political role.[76] This reached a climax in the Petticoat affair of 1830, in which the wives of President Andrew Jackson's cabinet members humiliated the wife of the Secretary of War, leading to a political crisis for the president.[77]

However the opening of possibilities also engendered a backlash that actually set back the cause of women's rights and led to a greater rigidity that marginalized women from political life.[78]

Quakers [edit]

Quakers were strong in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and had developed equalitarian views of the role of women. They believed that all human beings, regardless of sex, had the same Inner light.[79] Quakers were represented among the Founding Fathers by John Dickinson and Thomas Mifflin, although Mifflin was expelled by the Society of Friends because of his leadership role in the Continental Army.

Sacagawea [edit]

The best known Indian woman after Pocahontas was Sacagawea (1788â€"1812), who accompanied the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804â€"1806) overland expedition to the Pacific coast and back. The two captains hired her husband, a fur trapper, as an interpreter, with the understanding that she would come along to interpret the Shoshone language, which she did. Sacagawea was only about 16 and delivered a son on the trip. Her role has been greatly exaggerated, in large part because writers wanted to use her as an Indian endorsement of Manifest Destiny.[80]

Midwestern pioneers [edit]

Clear-cut gender norms prevailed among the farm families who settled in the Midwestern region between 1800 and 1840. Men were the breadwinners who considered the profitability of farming in a particular location â€" or "market-minded agrarianism" â€" and worked hard to provide for their families. They had an almost exclusive voice regarding public matters, such as voting and handling the money. During the migration westward, women's diaries show little interest in and financial problems, but great concern with the threat of separation from family and friends. Furthermore, women experienced a physical toll because they were expected to have babies, supervise the domestic chores, care for the sick, and take control of the garden crops and poultry. Outside the German American community, women rarely did fieldwork on the farm. The women set up neighborhood social organizations, often revolving around church membership, or quilting parties. They exchanged information and tips on child-rearing, and helped each other in childbirth.[81]

Reform movements [edit]

Many women in the 19th century were involved in reform movements, particularly abolitionism.[82]

In 1831, Maria W. Stewart (who was African-American) began to write essays and make speeches against slavery, promoting educational and economic self-sufficiency for African Americans. The first woman of any color to speak on political issues in public, Stewart gave her last public speech in 1833 before retiring from public speaking to work in women's organizations.[83]

Although her career was short, it set the stage for the African-American women speakers who followed; Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman, among others.[83] Since more direct participation in the public arena was fraught with difficulties and danger, many women assisted the movement by boycotting slave-produced goods and organizing fairs and food sales to raise money for the cause.[83]

To take one example of the danger, Pennsylvania Hall was the site in 1838 of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, and as 3,000 white and black women gathered to hear prominent abolitionists such as Maria Weston Chapman, the speakers' voices were drowned out by the mob which had gathered outside.[83] When the women emerged, arms linked in solidarity, they were stoned and insulted.[83] The mob returned the following day and burned the hall, which had been inaugurated only three days earlier, to the ground.[83]

Furthermore, the Grimké sisters from South Carolina (Angelina and Sarah Grimké), received much abuse and ridicule for their abolitionist activity, which consisted of traveling throughout the North, lecturing about their first-hand experiences with slavery on their family plantation.[84]

Even so, many women's anti-slavery societies were active before the Civil War, the first one having been created in 1832 by free black women from Salem, Massachusetts[85] Fiery abolitionist Abby Kelley Foster was an ultra-abolitionist, who also led Lucy Stone, and Susan B. Anthony into the anti-slavery movement.

Education [edit]

In 1821, Emma Willard founded the Troy Female Seminary in Troy, New York, which was the first American educational institution to offer young women a pre-college education equal to that given to young men.[86] Students at this private secondary school for girls were taught academic subjects that usually were reserved for males. Subjects

included algebra, anatomy, natural philosophy and geography.[87]

Mary Lyon (1797â€"1849) founded the first woman's college, Mount Holyoke College in western Massachusetts in 1837

Mary Lyon (1797â€"1849) founded Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in 1837. It was the first college opened for women and is now Mount Holyoke College, one of the Seven Sisters. Lyon was a deeply religious Congregationalist who, although not a minister, preached revivals at her school. She greatly admired colonial theologian Jonathan Edwards for his theology and his ideals of self-restraint, self-denial, and disinterested benevolence.[88] Georgia Female College, now Wesleyan College opened in 1839 as the first Southern college for women.[89][90]

Oberlin College opened in 1833 as Oberlin Collegiate Institute, in the heavily Yankee northeastern corner of Ohio. In 1837, it became the first coeducational college by admitting four women. Soon women were fully integrated into the college, and comprised from a third to a half of the student body. The religious founders, especially evangelical theologian Charles Grandison Finney, saw women as inherently morally superior to men. Indeed, many alumnae, inspired by this sense of superiority and their personal duty to fulfill God's mission engaged in missionary work. Historians have typically presented coeducation at Oberlin as an enlightened societal development presaging the future evolution of the ideal of equality for women in higher education[91]

The enrollment of women in higher education grew steadily after the Civil War. In 1870, 8,300 women comprised 21% of all college students. In 1930, 480,000 women comprised 44% of the student body.[92]

College women

enrollment Women's colleges Coed-colleges % of all

students 1870 6,500 2,600 21% 1890 16,800 39,500 36% 1910 34,100 106,500 40% 1930 82,100 398,700 44% Source:[92]

Asylums and health [edit]

Women were heavily involved with the rights of people confined in institutions. Dorothea Dix (1802â€"1887) was especially well known. She investigated the conditions of many jails, mental hospitals, and almshouses, and presented

her findings to state legislatures, leading to reforms and the building of 30 new asylums. In the Civil War she became the Union's Superintendent of Female Nurses.[93] Many women worked at prison reform,[94] and health reform.[95]

Feminism [edit]

Judith Sargent Murray published the early and influential essay *On the Equality of the Sexes* in 1790, blaming poor standards in female education as the root of women's problems.[96] However, scandals surrounding the personal lives of English contemporaries Catharine Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft pushed feminist authorship into private correspondence from the 1790s through the early decades of the nineteenth century.[97] Feminist essays from John Neal, particularly those in *Blackwood's Magazine* and *The Yankee* in the 1820s, filled an intellectual gap between Murray and the leaders of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention,[98] which is generally considered the beginning of the first wave of feminism.[99] As a male writer insulated from many common forms of attack against female feminist thinkers, Neal's advocacy was crucial to bringing feminism back into the American mainstream.[100]

The 1848 Convention was inspired by the fact that in 1840, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton met Lucretia Mott at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, the conference refused to seat Mott and other women delegates from America because of their gender.[101] Stanton, the young bride of an antislavery agent, and Mott, a Quaker preacher and veteran of reform, talked then of calling a convention to address the condition of women.[101]

An estimated three hundred women and men attended the Convention, including notables Lucretia Mott and Frederick Douglass.[101] At the conclusion, 68 women and 32 men signed the "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions", which was written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the M'Clintock family.[101]

The style and format of the "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" was that of the "Declaration of Independence;" for example the "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" stated, "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men and women are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights." [102] The Declaration further stated, "The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man towards woman." [102]

The declaration went on to specify female grievances in regard to the laws denying married women ownership of wages, money, and property (all of which they were required to turn over to their husbands; laws requiring this, in effect

throughout America, were called coverture laws), women's lack of access to education and professional careers, and the lowly status accorded women in most churches.[102] Furthermore, the Declaration declared that women should have the right to vote.[102] 2 weeks later, some of the participants in the Seneca Falls Convention organized the Rochester Women's Rights Convention in Rochester, New York. This convention elected Abigail Bush as its president, making it the first public meeting composed of both men and women in the U.S. to choose a woman as its presiding officer.[103] It was followed by other state and local conventions in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York.[104] The first National Woman's Rights Convention was held in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1850.[104] Women's rights conventions were held regularly from 1850 until the start of the Civil War.[105]

Medicine [edit]

In 1849, Elizabeth Blackwell (1821â€"1910), graduated from Geneva Medical College in New York at the head of her class and thus became the first female doctor in America. In 1857, she and her sister Emily, and their colleague Marie Elisabeth Zakrzewska (1829â€"1902), founded the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women and Children, the first American hospital run by women and the first dedicated to serving women and children.[106][107]

Harriet Tubman.

Industry [edit]

The rapid growth of textile manufacturing in New England 1815â€"1860 caused a shortage of workers. Recruiters were hired by mill agents to enlist young women. Between 1830 and 1850, thousands of unmarried farm women moved from rural areas, where there was no paid employment, to the nearby mill villages. Farmers' daughters worked to aid their families financially, save for marriage, and widen their horizons. As the textile industry grew, immigration also grew. By the 1850s the mill owners replaced all the Yankee girls with immigrants, especially Irish and French Canadians.[108]

Abolitionists [edit]

Women continued to be active in reform movements in the second half of the 19th century. In 1851, former slave Sojourner Truth gave a famous speech, called "Ain't I a Woman?â€•, at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio.[109] In

this speech she condemned the attitude that women were too weak to have equal rights with men, noting the hardships she herself had endured as a slave.[109] In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote the abolitionist book Uncle Tom's Cabin.[110] Begun as a serial for the Washington anti-slavery weekly, the National Era, the book focused public interest on the issue of slavery, and was deeply controversial for its strong anti-slavery stance at the time it was written.[110] In writing the book, Stowe drew on her personal experience: she was familiar with slavery, the antislavery movement, and the Underground Railroad because Kentucky, across the Ohio River from Cincinnati, Ohio, where Stowe had lived, was a slave state.[110] Uncle Tom's Cabin was a best-seller, selling 10,000 copies in the United States in its first week; 300,000 in the first year; and in Great Britain, 1.5 million copies in one year.[111] Following publication of the book, Harriet Beecher Stowe became a celebrity, speaking against slavery both in America and Europe.[110] She wrote A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1853, extensively documenting the realities on which the book was based, to refute critics who tried to argue that it was inauthentic; and published a second anti-slavery novel, Dred, in 1856.[110] Later, when she visited President Abraham Lincoln, the family's oral tradition states that he greeted her as "the little lady who made this big war." [110] Campaigners for other social changes, such as Caroline Norton who campaigned for women's rights, respected and drew upon Stowe's work.[110]

In the years before the Civil War, Harriet Tubman, a runaway slave herself, freed more than 70 slaves over the course of 13 secret rescue missions to the South.[112] In June 1863, Harriet Tubman became the first woman to plan and execute an armed expedition in United States history. Acting as an advisory to Colonel James Montgomery and his 300 soldiers, Tubman led them in a raid in South Carolina from Port Royal to the interior, some twenty-five miles up the Combahee River, where they freed approximately 800 slaves.[113]

Civil War [edit]

Civil War North [edit]

During the American Civil War (1861–1865) Dorothea Dix served as the Union's Superintendent of Female Nurses throughout the war, and was in charge of all female nurses working in army hospitals, which was over 3,000 nurses.[114] Women provided casualty care and nursing to Union and Confederate troops at field hospitals and on the Union Hospital Ship Red Rover.[115] Dr. Mary Edwards Walker served as assistant surgeon with General Burnside's Union forces in 1862 and with an Ohio regiment in East Tennessee the following year. Imprisoned in Richmond as a spy, she was eventually released and returned to serve as a hospital surgeon at a women's prisoner-of-war hospital in

Louisville, Kentucky.[116] After the war, President Andrew Johnson awarded her the Medal of Honor, making her the only woman ever to receive the United States' highest military honor.[116] The number of female soldiers who served in disguise was perhaps 400 to 750.[117]

Confederacy [edit]

At the start southern women gave zealous support for their menfolk going off to war. They saw the men as protectors and invested heavily in the romantic idea of men fighting to defend the honor of their country, family, and way of life.[118] Mothers and wives were able to keep in contact with their loved ones who had chosen to enlist by writing them letters. African American women, on the other hand, had experienced the breakup of families for generations and were once again dealing with this issue at the outbreak of war.[119]

Richmond bread riot, 1863

By summer 1861, the Union naval blockade virtually shut down the export of cotton and the import of manufactured goods. Food that formerly came overland was cut off.

Women had charge of making do. They cut back on purchases, brought out old spinning wheels and enlarged their gardens with peas and peanuts to provide clothing and food. They used ersatz substitutes when possible, but there was no real coffee and it was hard to develop a taste for the okra or chicory substitutes used. The households were severely hurt by inflation in the cost of everyday items and the shortages of food, fodder for the animals, and medical supplies for the wounded.[120][121] The Georgia legislature imposed cotton quotas, making it a crime to grow an excess. But food shortages only worsened, especially in the towns.[122]

The overall decline in food supplies, made worse by the collapsing transportation system, led to serious shortages and high prices in urban areas. When bacon reached a dollar a pound in 1863, the poor women of Richmond, Atlanta and many other cities began to riot; they broke into shops and warehouses to seize food. The women expressed their anger at ineffective state relief efforts, speculators, merchants and planters. As wives and widows of soldiers they were hurt by the inadequate welfare system.[123][124][125]

Postwar South [edit]

About 250,000 Southern soldiers never came home, or 30% of all white men aged 18 to 40 in 1860. Widows who were overwhelmed often abandoned the farm and merged into the households of relatives, or even became refugees living in camps with high rates of disease and death.[126] In the Old South, being an "old maid" was something of an embarrassment to the woman and her family. Now it became almost a norm.[127] Some women welcomed the freedom of not having to marry. Divorce, while never fully accepted, became more common. The concept of the "New Woman" emergedâ€"she was self-sufficient, independent, and stood in sharp contrast to the "Southern Belle" of antebellum lore.[128]

The work patterns of elite white women changed radically after the Civil War, depending on their stage in the life cycle. Women over age 50 changed least, insisting that they needed servants and continuing their traditional managerial roles. The next generation, comprising the young wives and mothers during the Civil War, depended much less on black servants, and displayed greater flexibility toward household work. The youngest generation, which matured during the war and Reconstruction, did many of their own domestic chores. Some sought paid jobs outside the household, especially in teaching, which allowed an escape from domestic chores and obligatory marriage.[129]

Settling the Great Plains [edit]

The arrival of the railroads in the 1870s open up the Great Plains for settlement, for now it was possible to ship wheat and other crops at low cost to the urban markets in the East, and Europe. Immigrants poured in, especially from Germany and Scandinavia. On the plains, very few single men attempted to operate a farm or ranch by themselves; they clearly understood the need for a hard-working wife, and numerous children, to handle the many chores, including child-rearing, feeding and clothing the family, managing the housework, feeding the hired hands, and, especially after the 1930s, handling the paperwork and financial details.[130] During the early years of settlement in the late 19th century, farm women played an integral role in assuring family survival by working outdoors. After a generation or so, women increasingly left the fields, thus redefining their roles within the family. New conveniences such as sewing and washing machines encouraged women to turn to domestic roles. The scientific housekeeping movement, promoted across the land by the farm magazines and (after 1914) by government extension agents, as well as county fairs which featured achievements in home cookery and canning, advice columns for women in the farm papers, and home economics courses in the schools.[131]

Grange in session, 1873

Although the eastern image of farm life in the prairies emphasized the isolation of the lonely farmer and farm wife, supposedly with few neighbors within range. In reality, they created a rich social life for themselves. They often sponsored activities that combined work, food, and entertainment such as barn raisings, corn huskings, quilting bees,[132] Grange meetings, church activities, and school functions. The womenfolk organized shared meals and potluck events, as well as extended visits between families.[133] The Grange was a nationwide farmers' organization; it reserved high offices for women, gave them a voice in public affairs, and promoted equality and suffrage.[134]

Suffrage [edit]

The women's suffrage movement began with the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention; many of the activists became politically aware during the abolitionist movement. The movement reorganized after the Civil War, gaining experienced campaigners, many of whom had worked for prohibition in the Women's Christian Temperance Union. By the end of the 19th century a few western states had granted women full voting rights,[135] though women had made significant legal victories, gaining rights in areas such as property and child custody.[136]

In 1866, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the American Equal Rights Association, an organization for white and black women and men dedicated to the goal of suffrage for all.[137] In 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment was passed, this was the first Amendment to ever specify the voting population as "male".[137] In 1869, the women's rights movement split into two factions as a result of disagreements over the Fourteenth and soon-to-be-passed Fifteenth Amendments, with the two factions not reuniting until 1890.[137] Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the more radical, New York-based National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA).[137] Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, and Julia Ward Howe organized the more conservative American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), which was centered in Boston.[137] In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment enfranchised black men.[137] NWSA refused to work for its ratification, arguing, instead, that it be "scrapped" in favor of a Sixteenth Amendment providing universal suffrage.[137] Frederick Douglass broke with Stanton and Anthony over NWSA's position.[137]

In 1869, Wyoming became the first territory or state in America to grant women suffrage.[138] In 1870, Louisa Ann Swain became the first woman in the United States to vote in a general election. She cast her ballot on September 6, 1870, in Laramie, Wyoming.[139][140]

From 1870 to 1875 several women, including Virginia Louisa Minor, Victoria Woodhull, and Myra Bradwell, attempted to

use the Fourteenth Amendment in the courts to secure the vote (Minor and Woodhull) or the right to practice law (Bradwell), but they were all unsuccessful.[137] In 1872, Susan B. Anthony was arrested and brought to trial in Rochester, New York, for attempting to vote for Ulysses S. Grant in the presidential election; she was convicted and fined \$100 and the costs of her prosecution but refused to pay.[137][141] At the same time, Sojourner Truth appeared at a polling booth in Battle Creek, Michigan, demanding a ballot; she was turned away.[137] Also in 1872, Victoria Woodhull became the first woman to run for President, although she could not vote and only received a few votes, losing to Ulysses S. Grant.[142] She was nominated to run by the Equal Rights Party, and advocated the 8-hour work day, graduated income tax, social welfare programs, and profit sharing, among other positions.[143] Victoria Woodhull was an activist for women's rights and advocated for "Free Love" which focused on the right to marriage, divorce and child birth. The double standards of men and their will was strong to keep women powerless. In addition, to resisting full equality between race and gender. It was an era of battling for what one believed and should be entitled to. Victoria Woodhull fought for her universal rights and took advantage of the amendments in her favor. Tensions were high during 1872, it was a pivotal year in Reconstruction politics and the death of radical republicanism in national politics. As nominees of The Equal Rights Party, Woodhull and Fredrick Douglas, provided a provocative campaign as they deliberately challenged the fear of miscegenation and gender bias. They restored hope and universal rights for everyone regardless of gender and race as well as offered to reunite divided reformers. Although Woodhull did not win election, her election demanded new political views and equal rights for everyone.[144] In 1874, The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was founded by Annie Wittenmyer to work for the prohibition of alcohol; with Frances Willard at its head (starting in 1876), the WCTU also became an important force in the fight for women's suffrage.[137] In 1878, a woman suffrage amendment was first introduced in the United States Congress, but it did not pass.[137][145]

Domesticity [edit]

Kristin Hoganson's essay "Cosmopolitan Domesticity: Importing the American Dream, 1865-1920" sets out how bourgeois American women, in their capacity as homemakers, participated in international relations.[146] After the Civil War, there was a boom in interior design writing, with many advocating the adoption of foreign styles throughout the household. Interior design in middle-class houses was seen at this time as an important means of self-expression, shown by the fact that a popular design manual commented that "We judge her [a woman's] temperament, her habits, her inclinations, by the interior of her home".[146] Pre-war, foreign styles were usually limited to the European fashions, but in the second half of the century, objects were being imported from further afield. Women wanted to show their status through the extravagant interior design of their homes, but as Kristin

Hoganson points out, "their decision to do so through exhibiting imported objects and replicating distant styles illuminates something beyond local jostling".[146] The increasingly expansionist nature of U.S. foreign policy post-civil war contributed to the level of interest in cosmopolitan interior design, as it led to an increased geographical awareness amongst the middle classes of America through travel writings, photographs, missionary exhibits, etc. Moreover, it wasn't just tourists who were bringing foreign goods and ideas back to America; it was also via missionaries, professionals, businessmen, servicemen and government agents.[146]

Cult of Domesticity [edit]

The "Cult of Domesticity" was a new ideal of womanhood that emerged at this time.[147] This ideal rose from the reality that a 19th-century middle-class family did not have to make what it needed in order to survive, as previous families had to, and therefore men could now work in jobs that produced goods or services while their wives and children stayed at home.[147] The ideal woman became one who stayed at home and taught children how to be proper citizens.[147] American Cookery written in 1796 by Amelia Simmons, was the first published cookbook written by an American.[148] It was popular and was published in many editions.

The culture of honor in the antebellum South was linked to women's social status and Southern evangelicalism. There were no sharp gender lines such that women strictly inhabited the realm of evangelicalism while men upheld honor. Women felt subject to notions of honor related to patriarchy, sexuality, class identity, and virtue. The different sex roles inhabited by Southern men and women affected masculine and feminine honor, as is the moral authority women held over men.[149]

Jobs and professions [edit]

Many young women worked as servants or in shops and factories until marriage, then typically became full-time housewives. However black, Irish and Swedish adult women often worked as servants. After 1860, as the larger cities opened department stores, middle-class women did most of the shopping; increasingly they were served by young middle-class women clerks.[150] Typically, most young women quit their jobs when they married. In some ethnic groups, However, married women were encouraged to work, especially among African-Americans, and Irish Catholics. When the husband operated a small shop or restaurant, wives and other family members could find employment there. Widows and deserted wives often operated boarding houses.[151]

Career women were few. The teaching profession had once been heavily male, but as schooling expanded many women took on teaching careers.[152] If they remained unmarried they could have a prestigious, poorly paying lifetime career.[153] At the end of the period nursing schools opened up new opportunities for women, but medical schools remained nearly all male.

Business opportunities were very rare, unless it was a matter of a widow taking over her late husband's small business. However the rapid acceptance of the sewing machine made housewives more productive and opened up new careers for women running their own small millinery and dressmaking shops.[154]

American women achieved several firsts in the professions in the second half of the 1800s. In 1866, Lucy Hobbs Taylor became the first American woman to receive a dentistry degree.[155] In 1878, Mary L. Page became the first woman in America to earn a degree in architecture when she graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.[156] In 1879, Belva Lockwood became the first woman allowed to argue before the Supreme Court; the first case in which she did so was the 1880 case Kaiser v. Stickney.[157] Arabella Mansfield had previously become America's first female lawyer when she was admitted to the bar in 1869.[158] In 1891, Marie Owens, born in Canada, was hired in Chicago as America's first female police officer.[159] Due to women's greater involvement in law and law enforcement, in 1871 the first state laws specifically making wife beating illegal were passed, though proliferation of laws to all states and adequate enforcement of those laws lagged very far behind.[160] One of the first female photojournalists, Sadie Kneller Miller used her initials, SKM, as a byline, which hid her gender. She covered sports, disasters, diseases, and was recognized as the first female war correspondent.[161]

Missionaries [edit]

By the 1860s Most of the large Protestant denominations developed missionary roles for women beyond that of the wife of a male missionary.[162][163][164][165][166]

Mother Cabrini

European Catholic women in their role as religious sisters worked in the immigrant enclaves of American cities. Mother Cabrini (1850â€”1917) founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Italy in 1880; she moved to New York in 1889. The orphanages, schools and hospitals built by her order provided major support to the Italian

immigrants. She was canonized as a saint in 1946.[167]

Settlement houses [edit]

In 1889, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr established the first settlement house in America (a settlement house is a center in an underprivileged area that provides community services), in what was then a dilapidated mansion in one of the poorest immigrant slums of Chicago on the corner of Halstead and Polk streets.[168] This settlement house, called Hull House, provided numerous activities and services including health and child care, clubs for both children and adults, an art gallery, kitchen, gymnasium, music school, theater, library, employment bureau, and a labor museum.[168] By 1910, 400 settlement houses had been established in America; the majority of settlement house workers were women.[169]

Nursing [edit]

During the Spanish-American War (1898) thousands of US soldiers sick with typhoid, malaria, and yellow fever overwhelmed the capabilities of the Army Medical Department, so Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee suggested to the Army Surgeon General that the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) be appointed to select professionally qualified nurses to serve under contract to the US Army.[115] Before the war ended, 1,500 civilian contract nurses were assigned to Army hospitals in the US, Hawaii (not a state at that time), Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines, as well as to the hospital ship Relief.[115] Twenty nurses died.[115] The Army appointed Dr. McGee as Acting Assistant Surgeon General, making her the first woman ever to hold the position.[115] The Army was impressed by the performance of its contract nurses and had Dr. McGee write legislation creating a permanent corps of Army nurses.[115]

Progressive era: 1900-1940 [edit]

Across the nation, middle-class women organized on behalf of social reforms during the Progressive Era. They were especially concerned with Prohibition, suffrage, school issues, and public health. Focusing on the General Federation of Women's Clubs, a national network of middle-class women who formed local clubs, historian Paige Meltzer puts the women's clubs in the context of the Progressive Movement, arguing that its policies:

built on Progressive-era strategies of municipal housekeeping. During the Progressive era, female activists used

traditional constructions of womanhood, which imagined all women as mothers and homemakers, to justify their entrance into community affairs: as "municipal housekeepers," they would clean up politics, cities, and see after the health and wellbeing of their neighbors. Donning the mantle of motherhood, female activists methodically investigated their community's needs and used their "maternal" expertise to lobby, create, and secure a place for themselves in an emerging state welfare bureaucracy, best illustrated perhaps by clubwoman Julia Lathrop's leadership in the Children's Bureau. As part of this tradition of maternal activism, the Progressive-era General Federation supported a range of causes from the pure food and drug administration to public health care for mothers and children to a ban on child labor, each of which looked to the state to help implement their vision of social justice.[170]

Jane Addams [edit]

One representative woman of the Progressive Era was Jane Addams (1860â€"1935). She was a pioneer social worker, leader of community activists at Hull House in Chicago, public philosopher, sociologist, author, and spokesperson for suffrage and world peace. Alongside presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, she was the most prominent reformer of the Progressive Era.[171] She helped turn the nation's attention to issues of concern to mothers, such as the needs of children, public health, and world peace. She said that if women were to be responsible for cleaning up their communities and making them better places to live, they needed the vote to be effective in doing so. Addams became a role model for middle-class women who volunteered to uplift their communities. In 1931, she became the first American woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.[172] Some critics in the 1960s portrayed her as an unoriginal racist determined to civilize helpless immigrants while other biographers in the 1990s tended to regard her more favorably.[173][174]

French Canadians [edit]

French Canadian women saw New England as a place of opportunity and possibility where they could create economic alternatives for themselves distinct from the expectations of their subsistence farms in Quebec. By the early 20th century some saw temporary migration to the United States to work as a rite of passage and a time of self-discovery and self-reliance. Most moved permanently to the United States, using the inexpensive railroad system to visit Quebec from time to time. When these women did marry, they had fewer children with longer intervals between children than their Canadian counterparts. Some women never married, and oral accounts suggest that self-reliance and economic independence were important reasons for choosing work over marriage and motherhood. These women conformed to

traditional gender ideals in order to retain their 'Canadienne' cultural identity, but they also redefined these roles in ways that provided them increased independence in their roles as wives and mothers.[175][176]

Midwest [edit]

Most young urban women took jobs before marriage, then quit. Before the growth of high schools after 1900, most women left school after the eighth grade aged around fifteen. Ciani (2005) shows that type of work they did reflected their ethnicity and marital status. African-American mothers often chose day labor, usually as domestic servants, because of the flexibility it afforded. Most mothers receiving pensions were white and sought work only when necessary.[177]

Across the region, middle-class society women shaped numerous new and expanded charitable and professional associations, and promoted mother's pensions, and expanded forms of social welfare. Many of the Protestant homemakers were active in the temperance and suffrage movements as well. In Detroit, the Federation of Women's Clubs (DFWC) promoted a very wide range of activities for civic-minded middle-class women who conformed to traditional gender roles. The Federation argued that safety and health issues were of greatest concern to mothers and could only be solved by improving municipal conditions outside the home. The Federation pressured Detroit officials to upgrade schools, water supplies and sanitation facilities, and to require safe food handling, and traffic safety. However, the membership was divided on going beyond these issues or collaborating with ethnic or groups or labor unions. Its refusal to stretch traditional gender boundaries, gave it a conservative reputation in the working-class. Before the 1930s, the women's affiliates of labor unions were too small and weak to fill the gap.[178]

South [edit]

Rebecca Latimer Felton, the first woman in the U.S. Senate

Rebecca Latimer Felton (1835–1930) was the most prominent woman leader in Georgia. Born into a wealthy plantation family, she married an active politician, managed his career, and became a political expert. An outspoken feminist, she became a leader of the prohibition and woman's suffrage movements, endorsed lynching (white Southerners should "lynch a thousand [black men] a week if it becomes necessary" to prevent the rape of white women), fought for reform of prisons, and filled leadership roles in many reform organizations. In 1922, she was appointed to the U.S. Senate. She was sworn in on November 21, 1922, and served one day; she was the first woman to serve in the Senate.[179]

Although middle class urban women were well-organized supporters of suffrage, the rural areas of the South were hostile. The state legislatures ignored efforts to let women vote in local elections. Georgia not only refused to ratify the Federal 19th Amendment, but took pride in being the first to reject it. The Amendment passed nationally and Georgia women gained the right to vote in 1920.[180] However, black women, as well as black men, continued to face substantial barriers designed to prevent black Americans from voting until the passage of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 enforced their constitutional rights.

The woman's reform movement flourished in cities; however the South was still heavily rural before 1945. In Dallas, Texas, women reformers did much to establish the fundamental elements of the social structure of the city, focusing their energies on families, schools, and churches during the city's pioneer days. Many of the organizations which created a modern urban scene were founded and led by middle-class women. Through voluntary organizations and club work, they connected their city to national cultural and social trends. By the 1880s women in temperance and suffrage movements shifted the boundaries between private and public life in Dallas by pushing their way into politics in the name of social issues.[181]

During 1913-19, advocates of woman suffrage in Dallas drew on the educational and advertising techniques of the national parties and the lobbying tactics of the women's club movement. They also tapped into popular culture, successfully using popular symbolism and traditional ideals to adapt community festivals and social gatherings to the task of political persuasion. The Dallas Equal Suffrage Association developed a suffrage campaign based on social values and community standards. Community and social occasions served as recruiting opportunities for the suffrage cause, blunting its radical implications with the familiarity of customary events and dressing it in the values of traditional female behavior, especially propriety.[182]

Black female reformers usually operated separately. Juanita Craft was a leader in the Texas civil rights movement through the Dallas NAACP. She focused on working with black youths, organizing them as the vanguard in protests against segregation practices in Texas.[183]

West [edit]

The Progressive movement was especially strong in California, where it aimed to purify society of its corruption, and one way was to enfranchise supposedly "pure" women as voters in 1911, nine years before the 19th Amendment

enfranchised women nationally in 1920. Women's clubs flourished and turned a spotlight on issues such as public schools, dirt and pollution, and public health. California women were leaders in the temperance movement, moral reform, conservation, public schools, recreation, and other issues. The women did not often run for officeâ€”that was seen as entangling their purity in the inevitable backroom deals routine in politics.[184]

Health issues [edit]

Bristow shows there was a gendered response of health caregivers to the 1918 flu pandemic that killed over 500,000 Americans. Male doctors were unable to cure the patients, and they felt like failures. Women nurses also saw their patients die, but they took pride in their success in fulfilling their professional role of caring for, ministering, comforting, and easing the last hours of their patients, and helping the families of the patients cope as well.[185]

Birth control [edit]

Margaret Sanger

In March 1873, the United States Congress passed the Comstock Act, which made it illegal to distribute birth control information or contraceptives through the U.S. postal system.[186] Margaret Sanger was an influential campaigner for birth control rights in the 1910s. She originally worked as a visiting nurse in the New York City's tenements and wrote about sex education and women's health.[187] In 1914, Sanger's articles in "The Woman Radical" brought her a federal indictment for violating the Comstock Act (which since 1873 had banned the mailing of birth control devices and information on birth control devices, sexually transmitted diseases, human sexuality, and abortion[188]). Sanger and her sister Ethel Byrne, also a nurse, opened the first birth control clinic in the United States in 1916, modeled after those Sanger had seen in the Netherlands. The police quickly closed it down but the publicity surrounding Sanger's activities had made birth control a matter of public debate.[187][189] In 1936, Margaret Sanger helped bring the case *United States v. One Package* to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The decision in that case allowed physicians in New York, Connecticut, and Vermont to legally mail birth control devices and information to married people. For unmarried people, the dissemination of birth control did not become legal until the 1972 Supreme Court decision *Eisenstadt v. Baird*. [190]

Suffrage [edit]

Suffragists calling themselves the Silent Sentinels picketing in front of the White House.

The campaign for women's suffrage picked up speed in the 1910s as the established women's groups won in the western states and moved east, leaving the conservative South for last. Parades were favorite publicity devices.[191] In 1916, Jeannette Rankin, a Republican from Montana, was elected to Congress and became the first woman to serve in any high federal office. A lifelong pacifist, she was one of fifty members of Congress who voted against entry into World War I in 1917, and the only member of Congress who voted against declaring war on Japan after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.[192] Alice Paul was the leader of a small militant faction that courted arrest to publicized the injustice of denying women the vote. After 1920, Paul spent a half century as leader of the National Woman's Party, which fought for her Equal Rights Amendment to secure constitutional equality for women. It never passed, but she won a large degree of success with the inclusion of women as a group protected against discrimination by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. She insisted that her National Woman's Party focus exclusively on the legal status of all women and resisted calls to address issues like birth control.[193]

International activity [edit]

Women's support for international missionary activity peaked in the 1900 to 1930 era. The Great Depression caused a dramatic cut back in funding for missions. Mainstream denominations generally transition to support for locally -controlled missions.

Black women Increase their role in international women's conferences and their independent travels abroad. Leaders including Ida B. Wells, Hallie Quinn Brown, and Mary Church Terrell addressed issues of American race and gender discrimination when they traveled abroad. The International Council of Women of the Darker Races brought together women of color to eliminate language, cultural, and regional barriers.[194][195]

Peace movement [edit]

Jane Addams was a noted peace activist who founded the Woman's Peace Party in 1915; it was the American branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, of which Addams was the first president in 1915. Addams received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931.[196]

World War I [edit]

World War I was a total war, and the nation moved to mobilize its women for material and psychological support of the war effort in and out of the home. All the states organized women's committees. Representative was the women's state committee in North Carolina. Motivated by the public service ideals of the Progressive Movement, it registered women for many volunteer services, promoted increased food production, and the elimination of wasteful cooking practices, helped maintain social services, worked to bolster moral well-being of white and black soldiers, improved public health and public schools, encouraged black participation in its programs, and helped with the devastating Spanish flu epidemic that struck worldwide in late 1918, with very high fatalities. The committee was generally successful in reaching middle-class white and black women, but it was handicapped by the condescension of male lawmakers, limited funding, and tepid responses from women on the farms and working-class districts.[197]

Women served in the military as nurses, and in support roles. Tens of thousands were employed in the United States, and thousands more in France.[198] The Army Nurse Corps (all female until 1955[199]) was founded in 1901, and the Navy Nurse Corps (all female until 1964[200]) was founded in 1908, and nurses in both served overseas at military hospitals during the war.[115] During the course of the war, 21,480 Army nurses served in military hospitals in the United States and overseas and eighteen African-American Army nurses served stateside caring for German prisoners of war (POWs) and African-American soldiers.[115] More than 1,476 Navy nurses served in military hospitals stateside and overseas.[115] More than 400 military nurses died in the line of duty during World War I; the vast majority of these women died from a highly contagious form of influenza known as the "Spanish Flu," which swept through crowded military camps and hospitals and ports of embarkation.[115] In 1917, women were first able to join the Navy for jobs other than nurse; they were able to become yeomen, electricians (radio operators), and any other ratings necessary to the naval district operations.[198] 13,000 women enlisted, and the majority became yeomen and were designated as yeoman (F) for female yeoman.[198][201]

The Army employed 450 female telephone operators who served overseas, beginning in March 1918 and continuing until the war ended.[202] These women, who retained their civilian status and were not officially considered veterans until 1978, were the members of the Signal Corps Female Telephone Operators Unit 25, better known as the "Hello Girls".[202] They were required to be fluent in both French and English,[202] and assisted the French and British, both allies of America, in communicating with each other.[202] Over 300 women served in the Marines during World War One, performing duties within the United States so that the male Marines could fight overseas.[203] After the war ended in 1918,

American women were no longer allowed to serve in the military, except as nurses, until 1942.[204] However, in 1920 a provision of the Army Reorganization Act granted military nurses the status of officers with "relative rank" from second lieutenant to major (but not full rights and privileges).[115]

19th amendment [edit]

Like most major nations, the United States gave women the right to vote at the end of the war. The 19th Amendment to the Constitution, giving American white women the right to vote, passed in 1920.[205] It came up before the House of Representatives in 1918 with the two-thirds votes needed for passage barely within reach; Representative Frederick Hicks of New York had been at the bedside of his dying wife but left at her urging to support the cause.[205] He provided the final, crucial vote, and then returned home for her funeral.[205] However, the Senate failed to pass the amendment that year.[205] The amendment was approved by Congress next year on June 4, 1919, and the states started ratifying. In 1920, Tennessee was the 36th to do so, meeting the 3/4s (of then 48 states) required for enactment; the remaining states ratified later.[205]

The amendment passed the Tennessee Senate easily.[205] However, as it moved on to the House, vigorous opposition came from people in the liquor industry, who thought that if women got the vote, they would use it to pass Prohibition.[205] The House ratified by one vote. It officially became part of the Constitution when it was certified as law on August 26, 1920; August 26 later became known as Women's Equality Day.[205][206] Suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt calculated that the campaign for women's right to vote had involved 56 referendum campaigns directed at male voters, plus 480 campaigns to get Legislatures to submit suffrage amendments to voters, 47 campaigns to get constitutional conventions to write woman suffrage into state constitutions; 277 campaigns to get State party conventions to include woman suffrage planks, 30 campaigns to get presidential party campaigns to include woman suffrage planks in party platforms and 19 campaigns with 19 successive Congresses.[205]

Black women in 1920s [edit]

Black women who had moved to northern cities could vote starting in 1920, and they played a new role in urban politics. In Chicago, the issue of black women voters was a competition between the middle-class women's clubs, and the black preachers. Prominent women activists in Chicago included Ida B. Wells and Ada S. McKinley, Who attracted a national audience, as well as Ella Berry, Ida Dempsey and Jennie Lawrence. By 1930, blacks comprised upwards of 1/5 of

the Republican vote, and had a growing role in primary elections. For example, the Colored Women's Republican Club of Illinois Show their power in the 1928 primary, when their favorite Ruth Hanna McCormick outpolled former governor Charles S. Deneen three to one in the black wards and won the nomination for U.S. Senate. Year after year the white Republican leadership held out the hope of anti-lynching legislation, even though lynching had largely disappeared in most of the South by 1920, and in any case the votes were not there to pass it in Congress. Loyalty to the Republicans as the "party of Lincoln" persisted until the New Deal Coalition offered more opportunities for patronage and welfare in the mid-1930s. There was a class division as well, as the middle class black women reformers spoken language of utopian promise that did not ring true to the poor uneducated maids and laundry workers, who listened every Sunday to the promises of salvation from their preachers.[207]

Black women in business [edit]

C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company, Indianapolis, 1911

Most of the African-Americans in business were men, however women played a major role especially in the area of beauty. Standards of beauty were different for whites and blacks, and the black community developed its own standards, with an emphasis on hair care. Beauticians could work out of their own homes, and did not need storefronts. As a result, black beauticians were numerous in the rural South, despite the absence of cities and towns. They pioneered the use of cosmetics, at a time when rural white women in the South avoided them. As Blain Roberts has shown, beauticians offered their clients a space to feel pampered and beautiful in the context of their own community because, "Inside black beauty shops, rituals of beautification converged with rituals of socialization." Beauty contests emerged in the 1920s, and in the white community they were linked to agricultural county fairs. By contrast in the black community, beauty contests were developed out of the homecoming ceremonies at their high schools and colleges.[208][209] The most famous entrepreneur was Madame C.J. Walker (1867-1919); she built a national franchise business called Madame C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company based on her invention of the first successful hair straightening process.[210]

Feminism in 1920s [edit]

The first wave of feminism petered out in the 1920s. After gaining suffrage, the political activities of women generally subsided or were absorbed in the main political parties. In the 1920s they paid special attention to such

issues as world peace and child welfare.[211]

The achievement of suffrage led to feminists refocusing their efforts towards other goals. Groups such as the National Women's Party (NWP) continued the political fight.. Led by Alice Paul, the group proposing the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923 and working to remove laws that used sex to discriminate against women.[212] But many women shifted their focus from politics to challenge traditional definitions of womanhood. Carrie Chapman Catt and others established The League of Women Voters to help women carry out their new responsibilities as voters.[213]

Roaring Twenties [edit]

Clara Bow , a famous movie actress and "It Girl" of the 1920s, represented the new freedom to flaunt sexuality.

A generational gap began to form between the "new" women of the 1920s and older women. Prior to the 19th Amendment, feminists commonly thought that women could not pursue both a career and a family successfully, believing that one would inherently inhibit the development of the other. This mentality began to change in the 1920s as more women began to desire not only successful careers of their own but also families.[214] The "new" woman was less invested in social service than the Progressive generations, and in tune with the capitalistic spirit of the era, she was eager to compete and to find personal fulfilment.[215]

The 1920s saw significant change in the lives of working women. World War I had temporarily allowed women to enter into industries such as chemical, automobile, and iron and steel manufacturing, which were once deemed inappropriate work for women.[216] Black women, who had been historically closed out of factory jobs, began to find a place in industry during World War I by accepting lower wages and replacing the lost immigrant labor and in heavy work. Yet, like other women during World War I, their success was only temporary; most black women were also pushed out of their factory jobs after the war. In 1920, seventy-five percent of the black female labor force consisted of agricultural laborers, domestic servants, and laundry workers. The booming economy of the 1920s meant more opportunities even for the lower classes. Many young girls from working-class backgrounds did not need to help support their families as prior generations did and were often encouraged to seek work or receive vocational training which would result in social mobility.[217]

Young women, especially, began staking claim to their own bodies and took part in a sexual liberation of their

generation. Many of the ideas that fueled this change in sexual thought were already floating around New York intellectual circles prior to World War I, with the writings of Sigmund Freud, Havelock Ellis, and Ellen Key. There, thinkers outed that sex was not only central to the human experience but that women were sexual beings with human impulses and desires just like men and restraining these impulses was self-destructive. By the 1920s, these ideas had permeated the mainstream.[218]

The 1920s saw the emergence of the co-ed, as women began attending large state colleges and universities. Women entered into the mainstream middle-class experience, but took on a gendered role within society. Women typically took classes such as home economics, "Husband and Wife", "Motherhood" and "The Family as an Economic Unit". In an increasingly conservative post-war era, it was common for a young woman to attend college with the intention of finding a suitable husband. Fueled by ideas of sexual liberation, dating underwent major changes on college campuses. With the advent of the automobile, courtship occurred in a much more private setting. "Petting", sexual relations without intercourse, became the social norm for college students.[219]

Despite women's increased knowledge of pleasure and sex, the decade of unfettered capitalism that was the 1920s gave birth to the "feminine mystique". With this formulation, all women wanted to marry, all good women stayed at home with their children, cooking and cleaning, and the best women did the aforementioned and in addition, exercised their purchasing power freely and as frequently as possible in order to better their families and their homes.[220]

Flappers [edit]

The "new woman" was in fashion throughout the twenties; this meant a woman who rejected the pieties (and often the politics) of the older generation, smoked and drank in public, had casual sex, and embraced consumer culture.[221] Also called "flappers", these women wore short skirts (at first just to the ankles, eventually up to the knees) and bobbed hair in a short cut "like a boy's, but longer.[222] Just as the flapper rejected the long hair popular in earlier years, she also discarded Victorian fashions, especially the corset, which accentuated women's curves.[223] Flappers preferred to be slender, although it sometimes meant dieting or binding their breasts and wearing restrictive undergarments to appear thin, flat-chested, and long-limbed.[223] Cultivating a flapper image and adhering to modern beauty standards also involved purchasing and applying cosmetics, which had not often been done previously by women other than prostitutes.[223] These women further pushed the boundaries of what was considered proper for a woman by their public activities; swearing, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol (illegal from 1920 until 1933), dancing, and

dating.[223]

Firsts [edit]

Women achieved many groundbreaking firsts in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1921, Edith Wharton became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, for her novel "The Age of Innocence".[224] In 1925, Nellie Tayloe Ross became the first woman elected as a governor in the United States, for the state of Wyoming.[225] Also in 1925, the World Exposition of Women's Progress (the first women's world's fair) opened in Chicago.[225] In 1926, Gertrude Ederle, born in New York, became the first woman to swim across the English channel, arriving in almost two hours less time than any of the men who had swum across before her.[226] In 1928, women competed for the first time in Olympic field events.[225] By 1928, women earned 39% of all college degrees in America, up from 19% at the turn of the 20th century.[225]

Italian American resistance [edit]

The American scene in the 1920s featured a widespread expansion of women's roles, starting with the vote in 1920, and including new standards of education, employment and control of their own sexuality. "Flappers" raised the hemline and lowered the old restrictions in women's fashion. The Italian-American media disapproved. It demanded the holding of the line regarding traditional gender roles in which men controlled their families. Many traditional patriarchal values prevailed among Southern European male immigrants, although some practices like dowry were left behind in Europe. The community spokesman were shocked that the image of a woman with a secret ballot. They ridiculed flappers and proclaimed that feminism was immoral. They idealized an old male model of Italian womanhood. Mussolini was popular, and when he expanded the electorate to include some women voting at the local level, the Italian American editorialists went along, arguing that the true Italian woman was, above all, a mother and a wife and, therefore, would be reliable as a voter on local matters. Feminist organizations in Italy were ignored, as the editors purposely associated emancipation with Americanism and transformed the debate over women's rights into a defense of the Italian-American community to set its own boundaries and rules.[227]

Great Depression of 1930s [edit]

In 1932, Hattie Caraway of Arkansas became the first woman elected to the Senate.[228] Furthermore, in 1932 Amelia

Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic, taking her journey on the 5th anniversary of Lindbergh's solo Atlantic flight .[229] She was awarded the National Geographic Society's gold medal from President Herbert Hoover, and Congress awarded her the Distinguished Flying Cross.[229] Later in 1932 she became the first woman to fly solo nonstop coast to coast, and set the women's nonstop transcontinental speed record, flying 2,447.8 miles in 19 hours 5 minutes.[229] In 1935, she became the first person to solo the 2,408-mile distance across the Pacific between Honolulu and Oakland, California; this was also the first flight where a civilian aircraft carried a two-way radio.[229] Later in 1935, she became the first person to fly solo from Los Angeles to Mexico City.[229] Still later in 1935, she became the first person to fly solo nonstop from Mexico City to Newark.[229] In 1937, Amelia Earhart began a flight around the world but vanished during it; her remains, effects, and plane have never been found.[229] The first woman to fly solo around the world and return home safely was the American amateur pilot Jerrie Mock, who did so in 1964.[230] In 1933, Frances Perkins was appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt as his Secretary of Labor, making her the first woman to hold a job in a Presidential cabinet.[231]

However, women also faced many challenges during this time. A National Education Association survey showed that between 1930 and 1931, 63% of cities dismissed female teachers as soon as they became married, and 77% did not hire married women as teachers.[232] Also, a survey of 1,500 cities from 1930 to 1931 found that three-quarters of those cities did not employ married women for any jobs.[233] In January 1932, Congress passed the Federal Economy Act which stipulated that no two persons in the family could be working in government service at the same time; three-fourths of employees discharged as a result of this Act were women.[232] However, during the Great Depression white women's unemployment rate was actually lower than that for men, because women were paid less and because men would not take what they considered to be "women's jobs" such as clerical work or domestic service.[233] Yet as a result of rising unemployment, white women's movement into professional and technical work slowed.[233]

Birth control activism was an important cause in the 1930s. In 1936, Margaret Sanger helped bring the case of "United States v. One Package" to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.[188] The decision in that case allowed physicians to legally mail birth control devices and information; however, it applied only to New York, Connecticut, and Vermont; birth control did not become legal for married couples throughout the United States until the 1965 Supreme Court decision Griswold v. Connecticut, and did not become legal for unmarried couples throughout the United States until the 1972 Supreme Court decision Eisenstadt v. Baird.[188][234][235][236] In 1937, The American Medical Association officially recognized birth control as an integral part of medical practice and education,[237] and North Carolina became the first state to recognize birth control as a public health measure and to provide contraceptive services to

indigent mothers through its public health program.[234]

In 1939, black singer Marian Anderson sang on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, which was considered a milestone in the civil rights movement.[238] She had originally wanted to sing at Washington D.C.'s largest venue, Constitution Hall, but The Daughters of the American Revolution barred her from performing there because of her race.[238] Due to this, Eleanor Roosevelt, who was then the First Lady, resigned from the organization.[238] This stands as one of the first actions taken by someone in the White House to address the era's racial inequality.[238] Anderson performed at the White House three years prior in 1936, making her the first African-American performer to do so.[238]

New Deal [edit]

Women received symbolic recognition under the New Deal (1933â€"43) but there was no effort to deal with their special needs. In relief programs, they were eligible for jobs only if they were the breadwinner in the family. Nevertheless, relief agencies did find jobs for women. The WPA employed about 500,000. The largest number, 295,000, worked on sewing projects, producing 300 million items of clothing and mattresses for people on relief and for public institutions such as orphanages. Many other women worked in school lunch programs.[239][240][241]

Roosevelt appointed more women to office than any previous president, headed by the first woman to the cabinet, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins. His wife Eleanor played a highly visible role in support of relief programs. In 1941, Eleanor became co-head of the Office of Civil Defense, the major civil defense agency. She tried to involve women at the local level, but she feuded with her counterpart Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia, and had little impact on policy.[242] Historian Alan Brinkley states:

Nor did the New Deal make much more than a symbolic effort to address problems of gender equality...New Deal programs (even those designed by New Deal women) continued most mostly to reflect traditional assumptions about women's roles and made few gestures toward the aspirations of women who sought economic independence and professional opportunities. The interest in individual and group rights that became so central to the postwar liberalism... was faint, and at times almost invisible, within the New Deal itself.[243]

Since 1941 [edit]

World War II [edit]

A female welder at the Richmond Shipyards, Richmond, California, in 1943. Women factory workers embodied the " Rosie the Riveter " model.

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, 12 million women were already working (making up one quarter of the workforce), and by the end of the war, the number was up to 18 million (one third of the workforce).[244] Eventually 3 million women worked in war plants, but the majority of women who worked during World War II worked in traditionally female occupations, like the service sector.[244] During this time, Government propaganda calling on women to enter the workforce during the emergency popularized the "Rosie the Riveter" image of women assuming male roles.[244]

Standlee (2010) argues that during the war the traditional gender division of labor changed somewhat, as the "home" or domestic female sphere expanded to include the "home front". Meanwhile, the public sphere—the male domain—was redefined as the international stage of military action.[245]

Employment [edit]

Wartime mobilization drastically changed the sexual divisions of labor for women, as young-able bodied men were sent overseas and war time manufacturing production increased. Throughout the war, according to Susan Hartmann (1982), an estimated 6.5 million women entered the labor force. Women, many of whom were married, took a variety of paid jobs in a multitude of vocational jobs, many of which were previously exclusive to men. The greatest wartime gain in female employment was in the manufacturing industry, where more than 2.5 million additional women represented an increase of 140 percent by 1944.[246] This was catalyzed by the "Rosie the Riveter" phenomenon.

The composition of the marital status of women who went to work changed considerably over the course of the war. One in every ten married women entered the labor force during the war, and they represented more than three million of the new female workers, while 2.89 million were single and the rest widowed or divorced. For the first time in the nation's history there were more married women than single women in the female labor force. In 1944, thirty-seven percent of all adult women were reported in the labor force, but nearly fifty percent of all women were actually employed at some time during that year at the height of wartime production.[246] In the same year the unemployment

rate hit an all-time historical low of 1.2%.[247]

According to Hartmann (1982), the women who sought employment, based on various surveys and public opinion reports at the time suggests that financial reasoning was the justification for entering the labor force; however, patriotic motives made up another large portion of women's desires to enter. Women whose husbands were at war were more than twice as likely to seek jobs.[246]

Fundamentally, women were thought to be taking work defined as "men's work;" however, the work women did was typically catered to specific skill sets management thought women could handle. Management would also advertise women's work as an extension of domesticity.[248] For example, in a Sperry Corporation recruitment pamphlet the company stated, "Note the similarity between squeezing orange juice and the operation of a small drill press." A Ford Motor Company at Willow Run bomber plant publication proclaimed, "The ladies have shown they can operate drill presses as well as egg beaters." One manager was even stated saying, "Why should men, who from childhood on never so much as sewed on buttons be expected to handle delicate instruments better than women who have plied embroidery needles, knitting needles and darning needs all their lives?"[249] In these instances, women were thought of and hired to do jobs management thought they could perform based on sex-typing.

Following the war, many women left their jobs voluntarily. One Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (formally Twin Cities Ordnance Plant) worker in New Brighton, Minnesota confessed, "I will gladly get back into the apron. I did not go into war work with the idea of working all my life. It was just to help out during the war."[250] Other women were laid off by employers to make way for returning veterans who did not lose their seniority due to the war.

By the end of the war, many men who entered into the service did not return. This left women to take up sole responsibility of the household and provide economically for the family.

Black women [edit]

Before the war most black women had been farm laborers in the South or domestics in Southern towns or Northern cities.[251] Working with the federal Fair Employment Practices Committee, the NAACP, and CIO unions, these black women fought a "Double V campaign" â€"fighting against the Axis abroad and against restrictive hiring practices at home. Their efforts redefined citizenship, equating their patriotism with war work, and seeking equal employment

opportunities, government entitlements, and better working conditions as conditions appropriate for full citizens.[252] In the South, black women worked in segregated jobs; in the West and most of the North, they were integrated. However, wildcat strikes erupted in Detroit, Baltimore, and Evansville, Indiana where white migrants from the South refused to work alongside black women.[253][254]

Nursing [edit]

Nursing became a highly prestigious occupation for young women. A majority of female civilian nurses volunteered for the Army Nurse Corps or the Navy Nurse Corps. These women automatically became officers.[255] Teenaged girls enlisted in the Cadet Nurse Corps. To cope with the growing shortage on the homefront, thousands of retired nurses volunteered to help out in local hospitals.[256][257]

Volunteer activities [edit]

Women staffed millions of jobs in community service roles, such as nursing, the USO, and the Red Cross.[258] Unorganized women were encouraged to collect and turn in materials that were needed by the war effort. Women collected fats rendered during cooking, children formed balls of aluminum foil they peeled from chewing gum wrappers and also created rubber band balls, which they contributed to the war effort. Hundreds of thousands of men joined civil defense units to prepare for disasters, such as enemy bombing.

The Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) mobilized 1,000 civilian women to fly new warplanes from the factories to airfields located on the east coast of the U.S. This was historically significant because flying a warplane had always been a male role. No American women flew warplanes in combat.[259]

Baby boom [edit]

Marriage and motherhood came back as prosperity empowered couples who had postponed marriage. The birth rate started shooting up in 1941, paused in 1944â€"45 as 12 million men were in uniform, then continued to soar until reaching a peak in the late 1950s. This was the "Baby Boom."

In a New Deal-like move, the federal government set up the "

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