

American Odyssey: The 20th Century and Beyond, Gary B. Nash, NY: Glencore, 2004. [10-12]

[612-615]

A Woman's Place

Back Into the Labor Force

Spock's theories helped reinforce the concept of motherhood as a profession in itself and strengthened the old idea that a woman's place was in the home. "No job is more exacting, more necessary, or more rewarding than that of housewife and mother," stated an article in the Atlantic in 1950. Statistics indicated that American women agreed. The median age of marriage for women fell from 21.5 in 1940 to 20.1 in 1956. By 1950 nearly 60 percent of all women between the ages of 18 and 24 were married.

Mother and Homemaker

In the 1950s women were discouraged from attending college. A high-school textbook on family living counseled young women that "Men are not interested in college degrees, but in the warmth and humanness of the girls they marry." Many women who did graduate from college concentrated their studies in such fields as home economics or child development. A survey found that most college women believed "it is natural for a woman to be satisfied with her husband's success and not crave personal achievement."

The suburban lifestyle strengthened the distinctions between male and female roles. Fathers often left home early in the morning to commute to jobs in the city. When they returned home in the evening, the children had been fed, bathed, and dressed for bed. Most mothers assumed responsibility for the daily routine of child rearing in addition to cooking, cleaning, shopping, washing clothes, and participating in school and community activities. John Cheever, who set many of his novels and short stories in the suburbs of New York, described one such woman:

She gets up at seven and turns the radio on. After she is dressed, she rouses the children and cooks the breakfast. Our son has to be walked to the school bus at eight o'clock. When Ethel returns from this trip, Carol's hair has to be braided. I leave the house at eight-thirty, but I know that every move that Ethel makes for the rest of the day will be determined by the housework, the cooking, the shopping, and the demands of the children. I know that on Tuesdays and Thursdays she will be at the A& P between eleven and noon, that on every clear afternoon she will be on a certain bench in a playground from three until five, that she cleans the house on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and polishes the silver when it rains. When I return at six, she is usually cleaning the vegetables or making some other preparation for dinner. Then when the children have been fed and bathed, when the dinner is ready, when the table in the living room is set with food and china, she stands in the middle of the room as if she has lost or forgotten something, and this moment of reflection is so deep that she will not hear me if I speak to her, or the children if they call. Then it is over. She lights the four white candles in their silver sticks, and we sit down to a supper of corned-beef hash or some other modest fare.

-- John Cheever, "The Season of Divorce" from The Stories of John Cheever

Popular culture reinforced the image of women as cute and perky rather than intelligent or career-minded. Actresses such as Doris Day, Debbie Reynolds, and Sandra Dee became role models for white women of the 1950s. Each portrayed the sweet, funny, innocent, wholesome, blond girl-next-door in popular box-office hits of the decade. Television situation comedies (sitcoms) emphasized the role of woman as wife and mother. In such shows as Father Knows Best and Leave It to Beaver, Dad dispensed wisdom and advice while apron-clad Mom tended to domestic matters. In programs such as Our Miss Brooks and Private Secretary, the main character was an unmarried career woman whose goal in life was simply to find a husband.

The educational system often encouraged schoolgirls of the 1950s to follow in their

mothers' footsteps. While boys studied woodworking, auto mechanics, or courses preparing them for college, girls learned typing, cooking, and etiquette. However, a Gallup Poll in 1962 showed that 90 percent of the mothers surveyed hoped that their daughters would not lead the same lives as they had.

Women Question Their Role in Society

Despite the apparent happiness of the middle-class American woman, something was amiss. Many of these women did not feel the complete fulfillment that devotion to their homes and families was supposed to provide. Yet many considered women who were dissatisfied with this role to be either mentally disordered, unfeminine, or both. For example, psychiatrist Helene Deutsch declared that truly feminine women related to the outside world only through identification with their husbands and children.

In 1957 Smith College graduates of the class of 1942 answered an alumnae questionnaire prepared by Betty Friedan that raised the issue of a woman's role in society. Years of such research and interviews with women led to Friedan's landmark book, *The Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963. Friedan described the situation:

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

-- Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 1963

Friedan had finally identified the "problem that had no name." While many American women were happy with their roles as housewives and mothers, many others felt social pressures had relegated them to roles as lifelong domestics.

Women in the Workforce

At the end of World War II, the government and industries urged women to "go back home" and "give your job to a vet." Women, who were largely excluded from important jobs in the corporate world, were also squeezed out of the manufacturing jobs they had held during the war.

Whether by pressure or by choice, many women who had taken on nontraditional jobs during the war returned to the familiar roles of full-time homemakers and mothers. For women in the lower economic ranks, however, staying at home was not an option. Millions of such women continued to enter the job market while still maintaining their roles as housewives and mothers. During the 1950s the rate of female employment increased 4 times faster than that of males. The number of working wives nearly doubled from 17 percent in 1940 to 32 percent in 1960. The number of working mothers leaped from 1.5 million to 6.6 million. By 1960 nearly 40 percent of women with children between the ages of 6 and 17 had jobs outside the home.

Married women over 35 represented the greatest increase in female employment in the 1950s. Many of these women had worked outside the home before having a family. They then had stayed home to raise their children, who were now either married or off to school. These women filled the millions of clerical and secretarial positions created in the postwar period that the relatively small number of young single women who were entering the job market could not fill.

When surveyed about why they worked, married women no longer talked about professional advancement. Many women said they wanted to help pay for the children's education or the mortgage or a second car or a vacation -- in other words, to get a piece of the American dream. In households where the husband earned between \$7,000 and \$10,000 a year, the rate of women's employment increased from 7 percent in 1950 to 25 percent in 1960. The 1960 United States census indicated that the number of households earning \$15,000 or more would be cut in half if women's earnings were

excluded. Women thus faced a dilemma. Economic pressures to maintain a comfortable lifestyle forced them into the workplace, while social pressures led them to believe their proper place was at home.

Most women's jobs, however, were low-paying and were either temporary, part-time, or held no opportunity for advancement. In areas such as insurance and banking, for example, women made up 50 percent or more of the workforce, but they held 20 percent or less of higher-level managerial positions. Many women in these industries worked as bank tellers or secretaries. High-level positions were reserved for men.

Stereotyped images of women's roles erected barriers to equal treatment. After World War II, the salary gap between full-time male and full-time female wage earners widened. In 1955 women earned 64 percent of average male wages; in 1963 they earned only 60 percent as much as men. A 1959 study concluded that women could not expect a professional career. Men simply would not take their professional goals seriously.

Women were not alone in their plight. Despite the prosperity of postwar society, many Americans -- victims of racial prejudice and discrimination, neglect, and cultural differences--were denied full participation in the American dream.

Section Assessment

Main Idea. 1. Use a diagram like this one to show the pros and cons of suburban life.

Vocabulary. 2. Define: suburbia, baby boom.

Checking Facts. 3. How and why did baby-boom kids enjoy privileges not available to their parents? 4. What role did religion play in the 1950s?

Critical Thinking. 5. Recognizing Bias. In 1955 women earned only 64 percent of the average wages men earned. What bias does this statistic reflect?

(photo) Housework In the 1950s, hanging the laundry outside to dry was common. What did Dr. Spock think was the most rewarding profession?

(photo) Betty Friedan After the publication of *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan organized the National Organization for Women. What was Friedan's book about?

(photo) Women at Work Women run folding machines at this plant in Chicago. How much faster did the rate of female employment increase than that of males in the 1950s?

(graph) Women in the Workplace, 1940-1960. The number of women in the workplace steadily increased from 1940 to 1960. How many women worked in 1940? in 1960?

(graph) Married Women Who Work. 1940-1960. The percentage of married women who work also steadily increased. What percentage of married women worked in 1940? In 1960?

[724-731]

The Revival of Feminism

NOVEMBER 1964: WOMEN SPEAK OUT AGAINST OPPRESSION

Guide to Reading

Main Idea. The women's movement that took shape in the 1960s sought to redefine the role of women at home, in school, at work, and in professional and personal relationships.

Vocabulary. women's liberation, feminist

Read to Find Out... the issues and goals of the women's movement in the 1960s; how actions by Congress and the Courts advanced women's rights and why some people opposed these actions.

During the summer of 1964, Casey Hayden and Mary King shared with other student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) members *THE DANGERS OF WORKING FOR CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE SOUTH*.

Tear gas, water from fire hoses, snarling dogs, and police clubs did not distinguish between women or men, but hit both with equal force. Hayden and King, both white women, learned about bravery by seeing their African American "sisters" beaten so badly they could only whisper the word freedom. They learned about commitment from

Fannie Lou Hamer, who was evicted from her home when she tried to register to vote, but who never gave up.

Hayden and King also gained insight from working for SNCC that summer. They concluded that as white, middle-class women, they too were second-class citizens.

In the early 1960s nearly half the students sitting in at the lunch counters and riding the freedom buses were women. Yet few women had leadership roles within SNCC itself. Ironically, "women's work" was to type memos, make sandwiches, take minutes at meetings, and perform other menial tasks, but not to make decisions. Finally, Hayden and King wrote an unsigned memo protesting the men's attitude:

Assumptions of male superiority [among SNCC men] are as widespread and deep-rooted and every much as crippling to the woman as the assumptions of white supremacy are to the Negro... [We need to] stop the discrimination and start the slow process of changing values and ideas so that all of us gradually come to understand that this is no more a man's world than it is a white world.

-- SNCC Position Paper, 1964;

The response to the memo was laughter and scorn. The next fall the two women tried again, this time in a signed memo addressed to other SNCC women. "Perhaps we can start to talk with each other more openly than in the past," they wrote, "and create a community of support for each other." The time was not right for such an appeal, though. Then, a few months later, the pressures of black separatism pushed whites of both sexes out of SNCC.

Hayden and King concluded that the fight for women's liberation -- freedom from the limits of traditionally female roles -- was a separate fight. The women's experience in the civil rights movement provided them with some strategies, but equality for women would require its own organization and its own movement.

Origins of the Women's Movement

Women Express Growing Discontent

The women's movement that sprang up in the 1960s had multiple origins, which perhaps accounts for how quickly it swept the country. One wing of the women's movement, founded on the experiences of women like Hayden and King, grew out of the civil rights struggle. Another got its start with Betty Friedan, who first identified the "problem that had no name." In addition, President Kennedy in 1961 appointed a Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, chaired at first by Eleanor Roosevelt and later by Esther Peterson.

Although the movement began primarily among white, middle-class women, by the 1970s it had spread across all racial, social, and economic lines. The movement did not achieve all its legislative goals. Nevertheless, it accomplished major changes in the status of women at home, in school, at work, and in professional and personal relationships.

The Early History

In the 1800s the struggle for women's rights was a parallel movement to the antislavery crusade and involved many of the same people. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, for example, were reformers who were active in both struggles. For a time, achieving both objectives seemed possible. An 1838 issue of the abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator* stated, "As our object is universal emancipation, to redeem women as well as men from a servile to an equal condition -- we shall go for the rights of women to their utmost extent." The Women, however, eventually split with the abolitionist men, who worried that the issue of women's equality might weaken support for the fight against slavery.

Women gained the right to vote only after a long struggle. As late as 1910 only Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and Idaho had given women full voting rights. Then in 1919 Congress finally passed the Nineteenth Amendment, guaranteeing these rights to all women. The amendment was ratified the following year. After the voting rights victory,

little happened in the women's movement. Although more and more women joined the labor force, most of them were steered into low-paying categories of so-called women's work, such as clerical, teaching, and factory jobs.

Such was the situation when Betty Friedan published her landmark book *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. The book ridiculed the notions that women were only suited for low-paying jobs and that achievement for women could be measured only by their success as wives and mothers. Her ideas struck a chord with many women across the country, and they began to consider alternatives to marriage, childbearing, and homemaking. Yet at the same time, the book inspired strong opposition among many women who rejected Friedan's ideas as an attack on traditional roles.

The Woman's Dilemma

Minority women faced a special problem in that they encountered both sexual and racial discrimination. They experienced sexual discrimination by white and African American men and racial discrimination by whites, men, and other women. In describing that period, author Toni Morrison says African American women "look at white women and see the enemy, for they know that racism is not confined to white men and that there are more white women than men in this country."

Many African American, Hispanic American, Native American, and Asian American women chose to delay their fight for equality in one sphere while they struggled for recognition in the other. Many women chose to seek full civil liberties for their ethnic group as their first objective. Equality between men and women would have to come later.

Women's Issues in the 1960s

Women Demand Equal Rights

When the President's Commission on the Status of Women issued its report in October 1963, relatively few people noticed. The civil rights struggle at home and the Vietnam War abroad claimed much more public attention. As a follow-up to the commission, however, a permanent Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women was formed, and 32 states set up their own commissions. These actions produced a strong network for the future of feminists, or activists for women's equal rights. The commission's report identified many of the issues that would occupy feminists over the next decades. It presented statistics on how women fared in employment, in education, and in government.

Economic Rights

In 1960 women made up one-third of the nation's workforce. Most of their jobs, however, offered less pay and prestige than the positions held by men. For example, women made up only 5 percent of the nation's managers and administrators and 12 percent of all professional and technical workers.

On average, for every dollar that a man earned on a job in the 1960s, a woman with the same job earned only 59 cents. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 required employers to pay women the same as men for the same work. This act did not, however, address the discrimination women faced in actually getting jobs.

More important gains came through the inclusion of women in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of sex as well as of race.

Still, women would need to receive equal education and training, or laws alone would never be able to ensure them equal job opportunities. In 1960 women made up only 37 percent of the nation's undergraduate college students and received just 10 percent of the doctoral degrees conferred.

Political Rights

By the early 1960s women had been voting for 40 years, but they had achieved little success in obtaining political office, either elected or appointed. In 1963, for example, 351 women served in state legislatures, holding only 5 percent of the total legislative

seats. Thirteen women held seats in Congress, down from a record number of 19 in 1961. The chart on page 726 gives information about the number of women holding high office in the United States and in other nations.

Reproductive Rights

At the same time that women were growing more aware of the limits on their economic and political freedoms, many also began demanding more personal freedoms. The right to control their own sexuality and reproductivity became a rallying cry of many feminists.

In 1960 the Food and Drug Administration approved the sale of the birth control pill, ushering in a period of new sexual freedom. Married and unmarried women became more knowledgeable about their own health and their bodies. Many women felt that the pill gave them the freedom to be sexually active without the risk of pregnancy. The pill gave these women more opportunity to make their own decisions about their bodies.

Meanwhile, many women had been making these decisions another way -- through abortion. Because abortions were illegal, finding a qualified physician who was willing to perform the procedure was difficult and costly. Many who could not afford to have a safe abortion resorted to procedures performed by unqualified people. Many women suffered injury, sterility, or death because of unsafe abortions.

Some women took this risk because they did not want to be mothers; others chose abortion because they felt they were too poor or otherwise unfit to care for a baby. Still others were terrified of being pregnant and unmarried, a condition that carried a heavy social stigma at the time.

The push for reform of existing abortion laws came first from some doctors and lawyers, who were acutely aware of the dangers of illegal abortions. Many feminists soon joined them. Many other people, however, believed that abortions should not be allowed. By the time of the 1972 Democratic party convention, abortion had become an explosive political issue. Although feminists were not successful in including a plank on abortion in the 1972 Democratic platform, the issue has refused to fade and is still bitterly contested today.

Social and Gender Relationships

As women reexamined their roles in society, old ways of relating to family members, husbands, friends, bosses, and fellow workers all came under question. Women postponed marriages as they prepared themselves for careers, and the divorce rate climbed as more and more women chose to exercise their options rather than remain in unsatisfactory marriages.

Many men willingly examined and adjusted their attitudes in response to the evolving consciousness of women. For other men, understanding their changing roles proved frustrating; many found it difficult to get beyond the most trivial issues. "It's getting so you don't know what to do when you come to a door," one man complained. "Open it and a women's libber comes through, you get a dirty look. Don't open it and you feel like an unmannered slob who just kicked his grandmother in the shins."

Women's Responses to the Issues

Feminists and Antifeminists Organize

Two types of women's rights organizations had sprung up in the United States by the mid-1960s, and both were made up primarily of white, middle-class, college-educated women. The organizations differed in the age groups they represented and in their organizational structures. Both groups, however, frequently worked together on legislative and political issues, exchanging ideas and strategies.

The Founding of NOW

It started as a statement scribbled on Betty Friedan's luncheon napkin. It became a large and powerful national organization that has helped elect politicians, that has helped correct inequality in women's employment, and that wields considerable lobbying power to day in the halls of government in Washington, D.C.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) began in 1966 at a conference on the status of women. The women were concerned that complaints of sex discrimination before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) were not being given serious consideration. Whereas cases of racial discrimination were filed by organizations or government agencies, cases of sex discrimination were filed by individuals and, therefore, received less attention. Conference participants, therefore, decided to form a civil rights organization for women.

During lunch the following day, 28 women and men each contributed \$5 for expenses, and Friedan scribbled on a paper napkin the name of the new organization and its purpose. The statement of purpose was accepted virtually unchanged 4 months later at the first formal meeting of the organization, which named Friedan president. The statement of purpose read:

To take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, assuming all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.

-- NOW, Statement of Purpose, 1966

Eight years later NOW's membership had soared to 40,000 people in 1,000 chapters. By 1995 its membership had reached 250,000, and the organization had an approximate annual budget of \$7 million. At its first national conference, NOW outlined its goals: passage of a constitutional amendment guaranteeing equal rights for all, enforcement of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, maternity leave benefits, better child care, equal and unsegregated education, equal job training opportunities, and abortion rights.

NOW's success has helped inspire the creation of several other women's organizations. The National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), founded in 1971, worked to put women in public office and also supported political candidates of both sexes who were sympathetic to feminist issues. In 1974 the Women's Campaign Fund began to raise money for female candidates. Two women achieved important political breakthroughs that year. Ella Grasso was elected governor of Connecticut, the first woman to head a state in her own right, not as a successor to her husband. Voters in San Jose, California, elected Janet Gray Hayes as mayor, the first woman to head a large city.

Minority women also formed separate organizations. These included the North American Indian Women's Association in 1970, a conference of Mexican American women in 1971, the Conference of Puerto Rican Women in 1972, and the National Black Feminist Organization in 1972.

The growing momentum of the women's movement was evident by July 1972, when *Ms.*, a feminist magazine, published its first issue. A preview edition of 300,000 copies completely sold out in eight days. The magazine took up issues that up until then had never found their way into the pages of more traditional women's magazines such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Cosmopolitan*. *Ms.* also helped popularize the title "Ms." as an alternative to "Miss" or "Mrs." when a woman's marital status was unknown or irrelevant. Women's studies courses appeared at universities, and several men's colleges began opening their doors to women. By 1980 women made up 51 percent of all college undergraduates and received 30 percent of all doctorates.

Radical Feminism

Because to many women in the United States equality of the sexes was a revolutionary idea, NOW was by definition a radical organization. To some women, however, it was not radical enough. These more radical women were mostly white and well educated but generally younger than their counterparts in NOW. Many of them had learned about social reform through their civil rights and student protest activities.

The younger feminists lacked the national network of NOW but excelled in grassroots organization. The women practiced participatory democracy -- every woman had a voice in discussions and a chance to develop her own skills and talents.

Small, informal discussion groups met regularly at participants' homes for "consciousness-raising" sessions. Women talked openly about their experiences in childhood, school, families, marriages, and careers. They analyzed issues of common concern to all women and tried to identify those for which political changes seemed most attainable.

The radical feminists tended to favor more dramatic protests than their NOW sisters. They ridiculed the 1968 Miss America contest by crowning a sheep as the winner. In one widely reported episode, they threw girdles, bras, hair curlers, false eyelashes, and other symbols of what they called feminine enslavement into a "freedom trash can." Such events resulted in a great deal of media attention and often produced negative reaction from the public.

The Opposition

Not all women embraced the new ideas of women's liberation with equal enthusiasm. A great many women accepted certain feminist ideas but rejected others. Some disagreed with the radical feminists' methods. Some were adamantly opposed to the movement's general support of a woman's right to abortion. Still other women viewed feminism as an attack on traditional values, which included the subordination of women to men and the importance of a full-time commitment to family.

Among the most prominent of the antifeminists was author and attorney Phyllis Schlafly. Schlafly had long been active in Illinois and national politics where she was a strong voice for conservative causes. As the feminist movement gained strength, Schlafly directed her energies against it. In her 1977 book, *The Power of the Positive Woman*, she argued that a woman's most important and satisfying role was in the home and that the primary duty of women was to uphold the traditional values of the church, family, and country. Schlafly asserted that feminist organizations did not represent the views of all women. Her leadership offered a powerful choice for many women.

Responses of Congress and the Courts

Strides and Conflicts

Despite the opposition of the antifeminists, the accumulated effect of the women's movement began to be visible in the responses of Congress and the courts. In 1970 the Labor Department issued an order calling for all federal contracts to require the employment of a certain percentage of women. In 1972 the Education Amendments Act outlawed sex discrimination in education. On the local level, that meant that school boards had to rewrite policies that limited cooking classes to girls and shop classes to boys. It also obliged schools to increase their support of girls' athletics. The United States armed forces relaxed some restrictions against women in 1973 and in 1976 opened up the military academies of Annapolis and West Point to women.

In the 1970s, however, two legislative and court issues divided American society into opposing camps. These were the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and the Supreme Court's decision on abortion. These two issues galvanized the opposition -- which until that time had been somewhat dispersed -- and gave it a new focus and sense of purpose.

The Fight for ERA

The idea of a constitutional amendment specifically addressing the issue of women's equality was not a new one. The National Woman's party had first proposed an Equal Rights Amendment in 1923 and reintroduced it in every subsequent session of Congress.

As late as 1962, the President's Commission on the Status of Women did not favor the passage of the amendment. This view was shared by many women's groups, including the League of Women Voters, who were concerned that passage of the ERA would cancel legal protections women already enjoyed. In the late 1960s, however, the courts began to strike down these protective laws because they were in conflict with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As a result, the League withdrew its objection

to the amendment.

The proposed amendment was a simple one. It read: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Two other brief clauses provided Congress with enforcement power and established that the amendment would go into effect two years after ratification.

The proponents of the amendment felt that in 1970 the time was right for its passage. That year the amendment flew through the House of Representatives on a voice vote of 350 to 15. Two years later, it carried the Senate by a vote of 84 to 8. To become law, however, the amendment needed to be ratified, or approved, by three-fourths of the state legislatures within the next seven years.

Thirty states quickly approved the amendment by 1973; then the drive for ratification stalled. NOW, which had assumed leadership of the drive for ratification, was taken by surprise.

The feminists had underestimated the opposition to the amendment and the ability of conservative women's groups to organize grass-roots opposition. Although opinion polls showed that the majority of Americans favored the concept of equality between men and women, the same polls also indicated that an even larger percentage of the population did not wish to change men's and women's social and family roles. For these concerned people, the ERA seemed too radical a change. They vowed to kill the amendment.

The Defeat of ERA

Schlafly and her supporters charged that passage of the ERA would lead directly to women in combat in wartime, the breakdown of the family, government funding of abortion, and elimination of separate public bathrooms for men and women. The "Stop ERA" forces dramatized their concerns in California by presenting state senators with live mice and asking, "Do you want to be a man or a mouse?" In Illinois they handed out apple pies in the state legislature as symbols of traditional homemaking values, and they brought in baby girls bearing signs that read Don't Draft Me.

As the original ratification period ran out, supporters of ERA managed to obtain a 3-year extension from Congress. They failed, however, to add a single state during that period, and by the 1982 deadline, they were still 3 short of the 38 state approvals required. The amendment was never added to the Constitution.

Roe v. Wade

In 1973 the Supreme Court announced its decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which established a woman's right to have an abortion. Even before the Court's historic pronouncement, several states had modified their laws to permit abortion under specific conditions. Many feminists, however, wanted all abortion limits repealed on the grounds that women should have absolute control over their own bodies. Many other people, however, including some feminists, were against abortion. These people believed that life begins at conception and that abortion at any time during pregnancy constitutes murder. Therefore, they opposed abortion on moral grounds.

The Supreme Court's decision set forth the manner in which states could limit the right to abortion. The decision established that no limitations could be imposed by the states during the first trimester, or first three months, of pregnancy. State law could legalize abortions during the second trimester in situations that were potentially dangerous to a woman's health. The state could choose to restrict abortion during the third trimester to protect the life of an unborn child capable of sustaining life outside the womb.

A Shift in Focus

In the process of moving through the Supreme Court, the abortion issue shifted in focus from the rights of the mother to the rights of the unborn child. Rather than settling the issue of abortion, however, the Supreme Court decision intensified controversy.

The political and moral battle between the "prochoice" supporters (those favoring the individual's right to abortion) and the "pro-life" forces (those opposed to abortion) dominated many political contests. The debate has continued no less passionately in the 2000s.

Section Assessment

Main Idea. 1. Use a diagram like this one to show some of the economic, political, and social inequities that helped spark the women's movement of the 1960s.

Vocabulary. 2. Define: women's liberation, feminist.

Checking Facts. 3. What were some major issues facing women in the 1960s? 4. Why did the ERA provoke such controversy?

Critical Thinking. 5. Expressing Problems. Clearly How did the decision in Roe v. Wade clarify the focus of the women's movement?

(photo) Second-Class Citizens. Casey Hayden checks students' credentials.

(photo) Women's Roles Until the women's movement of the 1960s, it was believed that women's fulfillment came only through the roles of wife and mother. What person challenged that belief?

(graph) Women in the Labor Force, 1950 and 1998. Women in Education. Statistics reveal that women have made strides in the areas of work, schooling, and politics-although obstacles to equal opportunity still exist. What story do the graphs and charts above tell you about the progress of women in the last half of this century?

(photo) Hot Buttons NOW quickly became a leader in the fight for women's rights. What kinds of issues does NOW deal with?

(photo) Momentum Grows Bella Abzug, left, represented New York in Congress and helped found the National Women's Political Caucus. Gloria Steinem, right, helped Abzug establish the caucus; she also founded Ms. magazine. How did NWPC help the women's movement make progress?

(photo) Women's Issues Ms. magazine articles addressed issues important to feminists. What were some traditional women's magazines in 1972?

(photo) Opposing Sides. Pro-ERA activists and anti-ERA activists such as Phyllis Schlafly, with loudspeaker above, felt strongly about their positions. What did the ERA propose?

(photo) An Issue Divided Much of today's women's rights debate focuses on the issue of abortion. Why do some people oppose abortion?

[732]

Social Studies Skill

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

Learning the Skill

Interviews allow you to gather information about interesting people such as Betty Friedan, the founder and first president of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Friedan (pictured right) became a leader in the struggle for women's rights. In 1970 Friedan made the following assessment of the barriers facing women.

We are beginning to know that no woman can achieve a real breakthrough alone, as long as sex discrimination exists in employment, under the law, in education, in mores, and in denigration of the image of women.

Even those of us who have managed to achieve a precarious success in a given field still walk as freaks in a "man's world" since every profession -- politics, the church, teaching -- is still structured as a man's world.

-- Betty Friedan, *Voices of the New Feminism*, 1970

To interview Betty Friedan or anyone else, you would want to follow these steps.

- a. Make an appointment. Contact the person, and explain why you want the interview, what kinds of things you hope to learn, and how you will use the information. Discuss where and when you will conduct the interview, and ask if you may use a tape recorder.
- b. Gather background information. Find out about the early life, education, career, and

other accomplishments of the person you will interview. Familiarize yourself with books or articles the interviewee has published. Then do research on the topics you will discuss.

c. Prepare questions. Group questions into subject categories, beginning each category with general questions and moving toward more specific questions.

Formulate each question carefully, phrasing it in a way that encourages a well-developed answer. If the answer could be simply yes or no, rephrase the question.

d. Conduct the interview. Introduce yourself and restate the purpose of the interview. Ask questions and record responses accurately. Ask follow-up questions to fill gaps in information.

e. Transcribe the interview. Convert your written or tape-recorded notes into a transcript, a written record of the interview presented in a question-and-answer format.

Practicing the Skill

If you were to interview Betty Friedan, you might consider the following:

1. What kind of background information might you gather?
2. What are some broad categories of questions you might ask based on the quotation to the left?
3. What are some specific questions you might ask, based on the quotation?
4. What would you do if you ran out of prepared questions and there was a lull in the interview?
5. What might you do with information gathered in an interview with Friedan?

Applying the Skill

The women's movement probably included some women you know -- your mother, aunts, grandmothers, neighbors. Interview one or more women of three different generations. Ask about their experiences as women in the United States. Ask about their attitudes toward feminist issues, past and present. As you transcribe the interviews, be aware of any common themes or surprising differences. You may want to summarize your findings or create a comparison chart.

(photo) A Powerful Leader Betty Friedan, founder of NOW, has been very influential in the women's liberation movement.

[916-917]

Equality for Minorities

Race and Gender Issues

The population changes added new twists in a long-standing debate over affirmative action -- programs created through a series of executive orders and laws designed to aid racial minorities and women in their quest for equality. Many people argued that these programs unfairly discriminated against whites, who in several states like California were becoming a minority themselves.

Origins of Affirmative Action

Affirmative action programs had their roots in the 1960s when President Kennedy encouraged government contractors to "take affirmative action" to treat all job applicants without discrimination based on their race, gender, ethnicity, or religion. After Kennedy's death, President Johnson issued an executive order that required employers to search aggressively for minority job applicants by such methods as placing ads in minority newspapers or advertising jobs in minority neighborhoods.

President Nixon built on this precedent by ordering craft unions to admit members of racial minorities so that they could receive training. In a groundbreaking action, he tightened hiring rules by requiring federal contractors to show evidence of "affirmative action" to meet the goal of increased minority employment. This plan, known as the Philadelphia Plan, set the stage for subsequent regulations and court rulings that expanded the scope of the original version to include not only racial minorities but women as well.

Affirmative action, as defined by these regulations and court cases, entailed creating

outreach programs, preparing minority high school students for college admissions, and in some cases establishing quotas that defined how many female or minority openings were available in schools or companies. By the 1990s, the effects of affirmative action, coupled with other civil rights legislation, were beginning to be felt.

Gains in Equality

African Americans profited, but slowly, after affirmative action was implemented. In November 1999 Hugh Price, the president of the National Urban League, summed up the situation facing African Americans. "There are two headlines," said Price. "Things have never been better," he explained, pointing to a growing African American middle class and historic lows in the unemployment and poverty rates for African Americans. He then added, "But, on the downside, there are gaps that persist," citing inequalities in academic achievement, income, and financial assets.

Women also experienced progress. By 1999 women all but matched men in terms of educational attainment, with 23.1 percent of women completing 4 or more years of college compared to 27.5 percent for men. In the 1990s, women accounted for nearly 50 percent of the labor force, with expanded employment opportunities in occupations predominated by men, such as corporate management and the military. The number of women in high-paying managerial and professional jobs, such as law or medicine, rose from 11 million in 1985 to 16.5 million in 1995. Close to 6.5 million owned businesses, which collectively employed more people than all the Fortune 500 companies combined. Despite these gains, women's pay still lagged behind that of men, though the "income gap" narrowed somewhat in the 1990s.

The Future of Affirmative Action

As the United States entered the 2000s, many people questioned the success -- and even the legality -- of affirmative action. Proponents of affirmative action said that these policies broadened the pool for jobs and college admissions to include a wide range of qualified people. Opponents argued that affirmative action policies favored less-qualified women and minority applicants over better-qualified white males. Both proponents and opponents, however, seemed to be united on one point: They felt that establishing quotas was unfair.

The debate over affirmative action took place in individual states. In 1995 California's state university system voted to stop considering race and gender in student admissions. The following year Californians voted in favor of the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI), also known as Proposition 209, which ended affirmative action policies in all of the state's public agencies. Two years later, Washington followed California's example and passed Initiative 200. In February 2000, Florida Governor Jeb Bush and the state's independently elected cabinet voted to voluntarily ban affirmative action in both college admissions and state contracts.

The United States Supreme Court moved to narrow the scope of many affirmative action programs by declaring that they must "serve a compelling government interest... and be narrowly tailored to their goals." In 1996 the Supreme Court ruling in *Texas et al. v. Hopwood et al.* limited affirmative action when it agreed to let stand a lower-court decision that barred the University of Texas from considering race in its admission policies.