

US Women

Separate Spheres (1)
Abigail Adams (2)
Law of Coverture (3)

Social Reform (4)
abolitionism (5)
temperance (6)

First Factory Work (7)
Lowell (8)
Mother Jones (9)

Overland Trail (10)
“Go West Young Woman” (11)
Oregon Trail (12)

Voting Suffrage (13)
Seneca Falls (14)
Elizabeth Cady Stanton (15)
Lucretia Mott (16)
Nineteenth Amendment (17)

“No” to Great War (18)
Mother’s Day (19)
Jeanette Rankin (20)

Flappers Roar (21)
“new freedom” (22)
(Margaret) Sanger (23)
Victoria Woodhull (24)

Rosie’s at War (25)
Six million (26)
“The Riveter” (27)

Baby Boom Suburbs (28)
Levittown (29)
birthrate soars (30)

Fighting for Rights (31)
ERA (32)
The Feminine Mystique (33)
Fannie Lou Hamer (34)

Hit a Glass Ceiling? (35)
equal pay (36)
Title IX (37)
VAWA [Violence Against Women Act] (38)
Dolores Huerta (39)
Oprah Winfrey (40)
Hillary Clinton (41)

Notes

1) **Separate Spheres** was the middle class ideal that men and women should have different roles in society (i.e., gender roles). Women were supposed to take care of the home and domestic matters such as child care and cooking while men were to concern themselves with the world outside the home, especially work and political life. Although many women had to work outside the home for financial reasons, especially women of color, the cultural ideal of separate gender roles for men and women had a huge effect on the everyday lives of both sexes. “A women’s place” was said to be “in the home”. The notion that the proper realm of women was the domestic and that of men the public, was the justification for denying women the right to vote. Separate spheres continues to influence family and cultural life at present, even as women have taken much more active roles in the worlds of work and politics.

2) **Abigail Adams**: Many people are familiar with John Adams, leading colonial patriot and second American President, but few know much about his wife Abigail, who was a strong intellectual personality in her own right and an early crusader for women’s rights.

3) The **Law of Coverture** was a colonial law which stated that, upon marriage, a woman was, in effect, the property of her husband. All family wealth was considered to be the property of the male head of household.

4) **Social Reform**: In the early nineteenth century, there was a major wave of social reform. Many groups emerged in response to pressing problems

in American society such as slavery, alcoholism and poor education. Women were very active in the social reform movement as a whole.

5) **Abolitionism** was the movement to ban slavery in the years before the Civil War. Women played a major role in this effort to “abolish”, or outlaw, slavery.

6) **Temperance** was the movement to get people to drink less alcohol. Alcoholism was a major problem in early America, and women, often victimized by alcoholic husbands, were at the forefront of the movement to reduce drinking.

7) **First Factory Work**: Large numbers of women began to work outside the home in the textile (clothing) factories of New England during the 1820’s.

8) **Lowell**: Well positioned along waterways that could be used for power, Lowell, Massachusetts was home to more than a thousand textile mills. They were the first factories to hire large numbers of women. The Lowell factories developed a special system to care for young women when they were not at work. This became known as the Lowell System and included dormitories and extensive monitoring to enforce “proper behavior”. Such strict control of young female workers made the public more willing to accept the idea of women leaving the home to enter the work force.

9) **Mother Jones**: Mary Harris (Mother Jones) was a labor union leader in the late nineteenth century and an outspoken advocate of socialism. She co-founded the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies) a powerful union which stood for worker solidarity against the ownership class. While many unions excluded women, blacks and immigrants, the IWW welcomed everyone.

10) **Overland Trail**: Before the Civil War, many American families migrated west in search of farmland, gold, or a new start. Women participated in the great adventure, moving slowly across the country in covered wagons on the overland trails. The journey was slow and sometimes perilous.

11) **“Go West Young Woman”**: The famous call, “Go West Young Man” does not credit the many women who were also — and equally — pioneers. One out of seven Western migrants were women. The ride across the Great Plains was very demanding on men, women and

children, sometimes taking up to six months by ox drawn wagon.

12) The Oregon Trail was one of the most important routes West. Stretching over 2,000 miles, it opened the rich land of the Pacific Northwest for settlement by American pioneers.

13) Voting Suffrage: Suffrage means voting, or the right to vote. Before 1920 (and the Nineteenth Amendment) women were not allowed to vote. As early as the 1830's, however, women organized a suffrage movement that began their long struggle for the right to vote. The women's suffrage movement grew out of abolitionism, which was among the first social movements that enabled women to speak out publicly on a political issue.

14) Seneca Falls: Women's suffragists met in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848 and issued the "Declaration of Sentiments," a strong statement of their right to vote modeled on the language of the Declaration of Independence. Although it would take another seventy-two years before women could vote, the Seneca Falls gathering was an important step toward building nationwide awareness and organizing the suffragist movement.

15) Elizabeth Cady Stanton: Cady Stanton was a suffragist leader who fought tirelessly for the right to vote. She was a remarkably independent woman, insisting, for example, that the traditional wedding vows be altered for her wedding. The words pledging a wife to "obey" her husband were removed.

16) Lucretia Mott: Mott was a Quaker minister, a leading nineteenth century abolitionist and an advocate for women's rights. Along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mott organized the Seneca Falls Convention, a high point in the struggle for women's suffrage.

17) Nineteenth Amendment: Ratified in 1920, the 19th Amendment states: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex".

18) "No" to Great War: Although, by 1917, most women joined the general public supporting US involvement in World War I, several outspoken women argued forcefully against American intervention. They believed the issues at stake were specifically European, and not valid reasons to shed American blood.

19) Mother's Day: Mother's Day was conceived as a holiday in which women would dedicate themselves to the cause of world peace. Julia Ward Howe, best known for writing the "Battle Hymn of the Republic", the Union anthem during the Civil War, published a Mother's Day Peace Proclamation in 1870. Having seen the devastation that war could bring firsthand, she began to shape a movement for peace, culminating in her campaign for the Mother's Day of Peace.

20) Jeanette Rankin was the first woman elected to the House of Representatives, the lower house of Congress. Rankin voted against U.S. entry into both World War I and World War II.

21) Flappers Roar: "Flapper" was the name given to a woman in the 1920's who lived a new, more liberated lifestyle. Although most women were not flappers, the new style was colorful and bold, so flappers got a lot of attention. The stereotypical flapper was an adventurous woman who liked to party in the "Roaring '20's".

22) "new freedom": In the 1920's there was more room for women to express themselves in non-traditional ways. Flappers dressed fashionably in shorter skirts (which rose from six inches above the ground to the knee) and wore their hair in short bobs. Fashion, music and dance became more adventurous. Young women were also more active sexually, and were allowed, for the first time, in bars (illegal during Prohibition, but commonplace).

23) Margaret Sanger: Birth control was illegal before the 1920's. More than anyone, Margaret Sanger fought to make it legal and accessible. Sanger coined the term "birth control" and founded the American Birth Control League (which later became Planned Parenthood).

24) Victoria Woodhull: Woodhull was a women's suffragist and advocate of "free love." She felt women should not be trapped in loveless marriages, as many were due to rigidly restrictive marriage laws and the stigma associated with divorce. She and her sister became the first female brokers on Wall Street and became wealthy as owners of their own stock investment firm. Woodhull gained notoriety in 1872 when she ran for President as a candidate of the Equal Rights Party (nearly fifty years before women had the right to vote).

25) Rosie's at War: Rosie the Riveter was a fictional character created for a government advertising campaign that persuaded millions of women to join the work force during World War II.

26) Six Million: Approximately six million women entered the labor force during World War II. They were needed in factories because so many men were away fighting, and because, with war production booming, there was tremendous demand for new workers. Both World Wars provided opportunities for many African American women to move from the rural South to the urban North in search of industrial jobs (which previously barred blacks) and greater freedom.

27) The Riveter: Just as women were told that it was their patriotic duty to enter the work force, after the War, they were told that it was their responsibility to give up their jobs for the men coming back from battle.

28) Baby Boom Suburbs: After World War II, as soldiers came home and economic prosperity returned, there was a sharp rise in the birth rate. This became known as the “Baby Boom.” Much of the population shifted to the areas surrounding cities, aided by a growing infrastructure of highways connecting the new suburbs to urban work environments.

29) Levittown: was one of the first large suburbs. Built near New York City, and later imitated throughout the country, Levittown was one of the first planned suburbs, featuring row after row of nearly identical houses made from standardized, interchangeable parts. Suburban life brought new roles for women and their families.

30) birth rate soars: The national birth rate (number of births per 1000 people) dropped during the troubled years of the Depression, and declined further during World War II as so many men were overseas. After the war, marriage and birth rates soared to record levels. A Baby Boom is generally defined as a national birth rate of 2% or higher. In 1946 the birth rate was 5.72% and the following year it was 2.42%. Over seventy-five million Americans are part of the “Baby Boom” generation.

31) Fighting for Rights: In the 1960’s, women organized to fight for economic and social equality. The National Organization for Women (NOW) was one of many groups formed to ensure equal opportunities for women.

32) ERA: Women’s rights organizations proposed a Constitutional amendment to guarantee the rights of women, just as there was a Fourteenth Amendment to provide equal protection for African-Americans after the Civil War. The proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) stated: “Equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged by the United States

or by any State on account of sex.” The ERA did not pass, but it generated serious discussion about the status of women in American society.

33) The Feminine Mystique: Betty Friedan was a leader of the women’s rights movement in the 1960’s. In her most influential book, The Feminine Mystique, Friedan argued that a suburban life spent caring for a family was not necessarily satisfying for modern women, who wanted to develop their own personalities independent of husbands and children.

34) Fannie Lou Hamer: Hamer was a Civil Rights activist and leading member of the Mississippi Chapter of SNCC, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. She led voter registration drives and was a target of racist terror in Mississippi. At the 1964 Democratic Party Convention, Hamer’s effort to be seated as a member of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which challenged the all-white and anti-Civil Rights mainstream state party organization, was thwarted by the Party establishment.

35) Hit a Glass Ceiling: The term “glass ceiling” suggests that, although women are supposed to have equal access to the highest corporate positions, there is a cultural barrier that prevents women from rising to the top. The term suggests that the “ceiling” is the result of gender-based discrimination.

36) Equal Pay: Studies comparing the earnings of men and women have shown that, in most professional fields, the salaries of working women lag far behind men in the same positions.

37) Title IX is a federal law requiring equal funding of men and women’s educational and athletic programs in all public schools and colleges. The law contributed to the explosive growth of women’s sports in recent decades.

38) VAWA: The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 strengthened protections for the victims of domestic violence. It committed federal funds to investigate and prosecute domestic violence, toughened pre-trial detention of the accused, and allowed civil prosecution when criminal action was not pursued.

39) Dolores Huerta: Huerta was the first Vice President of the United Farm Workers. Together with Cesar Chavez and other union organizers, Huerta was responsible for signing collective bargaining agreements to protect the rights of over 70,000 migrant farm workers. She directed the



union's Grape Boycott, a successful non-violent action which brought national awareness to the plight of migrant farm laborers.

40) Oprah Winfrey: Talk show host and media star Oprah Winfrey is one of the most powerful, contemporary influences on American opinion, and according to some, the most influential women in the world.

41) Hillary Clinton: Clinton contended for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 2008 and ran a close second to Barack Obama. She is known for having served as First Lady during Bill Clinton's two presidential administrations, as a two-term Senator from New York, and as a Democratic candidate for President in 2016.

Songwriters-spiritchild, Erica Quitzow & Lance Fialkoff; Beat, Keyboards, Bass-spiritchild; Vocals-Erica Quitzow; Declamation-Candice Myer~Young Love Studio, Brooklyn, NY © 2012. All Rights Reserved. Musical Media for Education (MME)