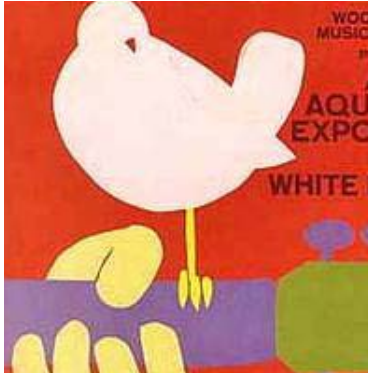


WAS THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION



ACTUALLY? REVOLUTIONARY?

EXPLORING AMERICA'S HISTORY THROUGH COMPELLING QUESTIONS



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QUESTION SEVENTEEN

WAS THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

ACTUALLY REVOLUTIONARY?

EXPLORING AMERICA'S HISTORY THROUGH COMPELLING QUESTIONS

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

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- 3 CAN WE END POVERTY?
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QUESTION SEVENTEEN

WAS THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION ACTUALLY REVOLUTIONARY?

Throughout the nation's history, Americans have seen their nation swing from excitement about change to an embrace of traditional ways of life. In the late 1800s, muckrakers, progressives and waves of new immigrants brought about major changes. Then in the 1920s, people reacted with laws restricting immigration, promoting traditional Christian ideas, and banning social evils like alcohol.

After World War II, the nation experienced a swing away from this conservatism toward what could be its most liberal time ever. This Social Revolution coincided with changes in divorce law, the legalization of abortion, the expansion of government, new experimentation with drugs, abandonment of sexual rules, the advent of rock and roll, and the entire Civil Rights Movement. It was an exciting time to live.

All this change was unsettling for some Americans. They responded in the 1970s and 1980s by pulling the nation back from its liberal binge and promoting a more conservative mindset once again. Christian leaders got involved in politics and promoted candidates that put the brakes on the rush of change. In 1980, Americans elected Ronald Reagan, a champion of conservatism.

By definition, a revolution is a change that cannot be undone, and it could be argued that the Social Revolution was not revolutionary at all. After all, it was followed by the Conservative Revolution. However, many of the new ideas ushered in during the 1960s have endured. Government programs to provide healthcare to the elderly and poor, to pay for the arts, and to protect the environment remain. Social norms about sex, marriage and divorce did not go back to the way they were before.

This leads us to the question to consider as we study this time in America's story. Was the Social Revolution actually revolutionary?

1 F I R S T Q U E S T I O N

CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

WAS THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION ACTUALLY REVOLUTIONARY?

INTRODUCTION

The 1950s is a decade remembered nostalgically by most of the Americans old enough to have lived through it. The economy was roaring. Conveniences that had been toys for the upper classes such as fancy refrigerators, range-top ovens, dishwashers, and convertible automobiles became middle-class staples.

Homes became affordable to many apartment dwellers for the first time and thousands of young families moved into newly build suburbs with backyard barbeques, lawns, community swimming pools and new shopping malls. The huge youth market had a music all its own called rock and roll, complete with parent-detested icons such as Elvis Presley. Disneyland, the happiest place on Earth, opened in 1955.

The pressures of the Cold War were papered over with rosy images of bliss on newly purchased television sets. Happy housewives and successful businessmen fathers tended to their dutiful children in saccharine sitcoms while cowboys in white slew cowboys in black in the pursuit of simplified justice.

Of course, not everything was as rosy as it seems at first glance. Beneath the pristine exterior, a small group of critics and nonconformists pointed out the flaws in a suburbia they believed had no soul, a government they believed was growing dangerously powerful, a lifestyle they believed was fundamentally repressed, and a society that continued to be racially segregated.

Nevertheless, the memory of the 1950s as happy days persists. Perhaps when measured against the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the Second World War of the 1940s, the 1950s were indeed a wonderful time.

It was a time when Americans loved sameness. Instilled with the fear of communism, they sought to fit in rather than stand out. America could keep them safe if they simply enjoyed its bounty. In their effort to find material comfort, to live the life they saw on television, to work and play just like their neighbors, Americans sacrificed individuality for conformity.

What do you think? Can we be happy if we're all the same?

2

S E C O N D Q U E S T I O N WAS THE COUNTERCULTURE A N T I - A M E R I C A N ?

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INTRODUCTION

The Greatest Generation had grown up as children and teenagers in the hardscrabble years of the Great Depression. As young adults they had fought and defeated Hitler and Imperial Japan. Then, after returning to normal life from the war, they set out to build a prosperous and stable life for their children.

These children, the Baby Boomers entered their teenage years in the early 1960s, and in sheer numbers they represented a larger force than any prior generation in the history of the country. But to their parents' dismay, they could not have been more different.

Some of these Baby Boomer teenagers led a social rebellion that helped to define the decade. Never more than a small minority, the counterculture proved to be hugely influential as it offered an alternative to the bland homogeneity of American middle-class life, patriarchal family structures, self-discipline, unquestioning patriotism, and the acquisition of property that had characterized their childhood in the 1950s.

These hippies rejected the conventions of traditional society. Men sported beards and grew their hair long. Both men and women wore clothing from non-Western cultures, defied their parents, rejected social etiquettes and manners, and turned to music as an expression of their sense of self. Casual sex between unmarried men and women was acceptable. Drug use, especially of marijuana and psychedelic drugs like LSD and peyote, was common. They protested America's war in Vietnam and preached a doctrine of personal freedom.

For their parents, the generation who had fought and won World War II, the counterculture was terrifying. These teenagers who they had so carefully raised had turned their back on everything they held dear. The counterculture, as many saw it, was anti-American. They didn't want money. They didn't follow the rules. They were throwing away and turning their backs on America itself.

What do you think? Was the counterculture anti-American?

3

T H I R D Q U E S T I O N CAN WE END POVERTY?

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INTRODUCTION

The price of living in a capitalist society is that there will always be economic winners and losers. While we have the opportunity to become rich, we know that there will also always be poverty. But is this true? Why can't a wealthy nation like ours, rich with natural resources, a stable government, and innovated people find a way to end poverty?

In the 1960s, President Lyndon Johnson set out to do just that. After stepping into the presidency when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, Johnson described for Americans a Great Society. In this society, there would be no poverty. People would be able to pay for healthcare, have safe food, safe cars, safe homes, access to great art and music, and people from all over the world would be able to come to the United States to join and participate in this utopian nation.

For some it seemed too idealistic, but the 1960s was a time of change and Americans were eager for idealism. Johnson was able to convince Congress to enact his plans, and won the presidency himself in a tremendous landslide victory in 1964.

Of course, there is still poverty today, over half a century later, so we know that Johnson did not succeed in ending poverty. But perhaps that was not the fault of his programs and ideas, but rather other circumstances at the time.

What do you think? Can we end poverty?

4

F O U R T H Q U E S T I O N CAN WE SAVE THE EARTH?

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INTRODUCTION

In their zeal to fix the nation's problems during the 1960s, reformers found a new topic of concern: the environment. Today, caring about our carbon footprint is normal and separating our rubbish and recycling into multiple trashcans is normal, but this was not always the case. Certainly earlier conservationists like Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir had talked about preserving America's wildlands, but those steps were tiny compared to the massive efforts underway today.

Observing Earth Day and talking about saving the whales are things students today grew up with, but where did they come from? When did Americans start to care about saving the Earth? And, what did they think they were saving the Earth from? Why did they care at that time?

Spurred on by their newfound love for nature, the young people of the counterculture took up environmentalism. They found allies in the White House and Congress as part of Johnson's Great Society, and Saving the Earth became part of the national conversation. The environmental movement grew up, just like the hippies that helped launch it, which brings us to an interesting, and more present question: can we save the Earth? Hopefully, by understanding how the environmental movement started and changed over time, we can understand something about our ecological future.

5

F I F T H Q U E S T I O N CAN MEN AND WOMEN BE EQUAL?

**WAS THE SOCIAL
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INTRODUCTION

A shift toward more equality between men and women has been underway since the nation's founding. Sometimes progress has leapt forward, and sometimes seems to have come to a near standstill. The 1960s and 1970s were one of these periods of rapid change for women. In the 1800s and early 1900s, the women's movements focused primarily on overturning legal obstacles to gender equality, such as voting rights and property rights. In contrast, the second wave of feminism in the 1960 and 1970s, inspired and galvanized by the Civil Rights Movement of the same era, broadened the debate of women's rights to encompass a wider range of issues, including sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, and legal and traditional inequalities.

We could look back over the shift toward more equality between men and women in American history and reasonably predict that the change will continue and that women and men will someday be treated equally in law, politics, work, sports, and society at large. But we must be careful not to assume that the past is destiny.

What do you think? Can men and women be equal?

A LONG HISTORY OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In this question, we are focusing on the women's rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s, but there is a danger that this might give the impression that women were not interested in gaining equality before this time. In fact, women have been working to earn equal rights for America's entire history.

When the Declaration of Independence was being drafted, for example, **Abigail Adams**, the wife of John Adams the great agitator for independence, wrote and asked that the Founding Fathers "**remember the ladies.**" Alas, her request fell on deaf ears, and political and economic power remained firmly in the hands of men. In the early 1800s, women organized around religious, abolitionist and temperance movements and at the **Seneca Falls Convention** in 1848, formally launched the women's suffrage movement. When the Civil War ended in 1865, women thought that they might be included in the 15th Amendment. To their dismay, supporters of suffrage for African Americans left women out, fearing that too few men would support the amendment if they were included. It was not until 1920, with the ratification of the **19th Amendment** that women finally won the right to vote.

Women were not only concerned with voting. The **Cult of Domesticity** – the idea that women belonged at home with children while men worked – emerged along with the Industrial Revolution in the early 1800s. The myth of the happy housewife persisted and was glorified in television sitcoms in the 1950s. But, just as social reform movements made 19th Century women more aware of their lack of power and encouraged them to form the first women's rights movement, the civil rights movements of the 1960s inspired many white and middle-class women to create their own organized movement for greater rights. Unlike the counterculture or the anti-war movements that were dominated by young people, many of the feminist activists were older, married women who found the traditional roles of mother and housewife unfulfilling.

It was a group of women writers who ignited the movement. In 1963, **Betty Friedan** published **The Feminine Mystique** in which she contested the post-World War II belief that it was women's destiny to marry and bear children. The perfect nuclear family image depicted and strongly marketed at the time, she wrote, did not reflect happiness and was rather degrading for women. Friedan's book was a best-seller and began to raise the consciousness of many women who agreed that homemaking in the suburbs sapped them of their individualism and left them unsatisfied.

It was at this time that the word **sexism** entered the American vocabulary, as women became categorized as a target group for discrimination. Single and married women adopted the title Ms for both married and unmarried women as an alternative to Miss or Mrs to avoid changing their identities based upon their relationships with men. In 1972, **Gloria Steinem** founded a feminist magazine of that name.



Abigail Adams: Wife of the second president. She is remembered as an early champion for women's rights.



"Remember the Ladies!" Quote from one of Abigail Adams' letters to John Adams during the debate over the Declaration of Independence in which she urged him to consider women's rights in the establishment of the nation.



Seneca Falls Convention: The first major meeting of women's rights advocates in America, which occurred in New York in 1848.



19th Amendment: Constitutional amendment ratified in 1920 granting women the right to vote.



Cult of Domesticity: Idea popularized in the early 1800s with the onset of the Industrial Revolution that certain tasks and issues were appropriate for women. These did not include work outside the home or politics. This has also been called the Women's Sphere.



Betty Friedan: Feminist in the 1960s who wrote *The Feminine Mystique* criticizing the traditional role of women. Her book launched the feminist movement of the 1970s. She founded NOW.



The Feminine Mystique: Book by Betty Friedan critical of the role of women in society. The book helped spark the feminist movement of the 1970s.



Sexism: Prejudice or discrimination against a person because of his or her gender. It was a word that first became common during the feminist movement of the 1970s.



Gloria Steinem: Feminist who founded *Ms Magazine* in 1972.

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Authors such as the feminist **Germaine Greer** impelled many women to confront social, political, and economic barriers. In 1960, women comprised less than 40% of the nation's undergraduate college classes, and far fewer women were candidates for advanced degrees. Despite voting for four decades, there were only 19 women serving in Congress in 1961. For every dollar that was earned by an American male, each working American female earned 59¢. By raising a collective consciousness, these women writers helped launch a movement. Historians have since called this period of change **second wave feminism**.



Germaine Greer: Australian professor who wrote about the traditional role of women in society. Instead of celebrating motherhood and femininity, she portrayed these roles as traps women were forced into.



Second Wave Feminism: A time period in the 1970s when women were actively promoting their rights.

The time period included the Roe v. Wade case, legalization of birth control, as well as failed push to pass the Equal Rights Amendment.

Primary Source: Photograph

Betty Friedan ignited the modern feminist movement with the publication of her book *The Feminine Mystique*

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Feminist activists demanded equal pay for equal work and pressured the government to support and enforce legislation that prohibited gender discrimination. While the **Equal Pay Act of 1964** had promised women that they would earn the same pay as men for the same work, the first major legislation that protected women in all of public life was the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**. The Civil Rights Act is usually remembered as the law that ended Jim Crow segregation in the South, but it also protects women from the same discrimination. Ironically, protection for women had been included at the suggestion of a conservative Virginia congressman in an attempt to prevent the act's passage. He believed that while White men might accept that



Equal Pay Act of 1964: Law passed in 1964 which promised women the same pay men received for the same work.



Civil Rights Act of 1964: Law passed in 1964 that was designed to provide equal rights for African Americans (and all races) in public places. It also included protection for women.

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African Americans needed and deserved protection from discrimination, the idea that women deserved equality with men would be far too radical for any of his male colleagues to contemplate. However, this strategy backfired and the measure was signed into law, granting protection to both ethnic minorities and women.

In 1966, two years after the Civil Rights Act's passage, 28 women, including the author Betty Friedan, formed the **National Organization for Women (NOW)**. They wanted to preserve their newly won rights and NOW served as the de facto leader of the new feminist movement. Friedan, the organization's first president proclaimed that NOW's goal would be to make possible women's participation in all aspects of American life and to gain for them all the rights enjoyed by men. Among the specific goals was the passage of an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution that would guarantee the protections women had won in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Through the 1960s, 1970s and beyond, NOW set the agenda for the women's movement by organizing protests, lobbying for legislative action and fighting in court.

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

In 1963, a government commission released a detailed report describing discrimination against women in every aspect of American life and outlining plans to achieve equality. Specific recommendations for women in the workplace included fair hiring practices, paid **maternity leave**, and affordable childcare. The Equal Pay Act that Congress passed a year later made progress on some of these fronts, but the law provided no way of enforcing equal pay for men and women performing equal work. In addition, it did not cover domestic workers, agricultural workers, executives, administrators, or professionals.

What activists really wanted, was an amendment to the Constitution that would guarantee gender equality. An **Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)** was not a new idea. In fact, **Alice Paul**, who had worked so hard to pass the 19th Amendment and win suffrage for women as leader of the National Women's Party, had first introduced it to Congress in 1923. Paul continued to work for passage of the ERA until her death in 1977.

Changing the Constitution is not easy, which is a good thing since it promotes stability in government and helps make sure bad ideas stay out. First, Congress must pass the amendment with a two-thirds majority in both the House and Senate. Then, it must be ratified by three-fourths of the state legislatures. Since such majorities in both Congress and of the states must approve an amendment, there is very little chance that a proposal supported by just one political party or region of the country would ever be ratified. NOW and the other women's rights organizations began a hard push for the ERA in 1970.



National Organization for Women (NOW): Organization founded by Betty Friedan to promote women's rights.



Maternity Leave: Paid time off from work for women in order to care for newborn children.



Equal Rights Amendment (ERA): Constitutional amendment that would guarantee equal treatment under the law for women. It was passed by Congress and multiple states in the 1970s, but never ratified by enough states to become law.



Alice Paul: Advocate for women's suffrage in the early 1900s. She founded the National Women's Party and used more aggressive tactics to publicize the movement. In her later life she promoted the Equal Rights Amendment.

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Leaders such as Gloria Steinem addressed Congress and provided argument after argument in support of the ERA. The House approved the measure in 1970, and the Senate did likewise in 1972. Supporters seemed to have momentum and public opinion polls showed strong support. By 1973, 30 of the necessary 38 states ratified the amendment.

Then the tide turned. A highly organized, determined opposition emerged that suggested that ratification of the ERA would lead to the complete unraveling of traditional American society. The leader of the STOP ERA campaign was a career woman named **Phyllis Schlafly**. Schlafly frustrated activists like Friedan, Steinem and Paul by glorifying the traditional roles of American women. She heckled feminists by opening her speaking engagements with quips such as, "I'd like to thank my husband for letting me be here tonight." Schlafly argued that the ERA would bring undesirable changes to American women.



Phyllis Schlafly: Women who worked against ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. She argued that the law would result in undesirable changes for women.



Primary Source: Photograph

Phyllis Schlafly at a rally in opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. Her highly organized campaign stalled support for the amendment and it was never ratified.

In the end, the fight over the Equal Rights Amendment did not pit women against men. Instead, it pitted women against each other fighting about how much they wanted the genders to be equal, and how much they believed men and women were and should be different. Schlafly pointed out that protective laws like sexual assault and alimony would be swept away. The tendency of courts to award custody of children to mothers in divorce cases would be eliminated. The all-male military draft would become immediately unconstitutional. Those opposed to the ERA even suggested that single-sex restrooms might be banished by future courts. While many women were in favor of equality when they saw obvious ways in which men were favored in society, they were less inclined to support it when they thought about the ways laws advantaged them.

STOP ERA campaigned to prevent more state legislatures from ratifying the amendment. Advocates baked apple pies for the Illinois legislature while they debated the amendment. They hung “Don’t draft me” signs on baby girls at protest marches. The strategy worked. After 1973, the number of ratifying states slowed to a trickle. By 1982, only 35 states had voted in favor of the ERA, three states shy of the necessary total.

Despite early gains by the feminist movement, Schlafly’s campaign and the general rise in social conservatism in the 1970s and 1980s led Americans of both genders to turn away from a constitutional guarantee of gender equality. Feminist groups continue to believe that the ERA campaign in the 1970s was a tragically lost opportunity to advance women’s rights and some still yearn to make it reality. When Hillary Clinton ran for president in 2016, she championed a renewed push for passage of the ERA. The idea of amending the Constitution to guarantee gender equality is a century old and perhaps someday the ERA will become law. But for now, while the 15th Amendment guarantees equality between races, nowhere in the Constitution can a guarantee of equality for women be found.

RADICAL FEMINISM

Second wave feminism was initiated by thoughtful writers and propelled forward by activists who focused on basic economic inequality and legal rights. More radical feminists, like their colleagues in other movements, were dissatisfied with merely redressing these issues and devised their own brand of consciousness-raising events and symbolic attacks on oppression.

The most famous of these was an event staged in September 1968, by New York Radical Women. Protesting stereotypical notions of femininity and rejecting traditional gender expectations, the group demonstrated at the **Miss America Pageant** in Atlantic City, New Jersey, to bring attention to society’s exploitation of women, which they believed was on display at the pageant. The protestors crowned a sheep Miss America and then tossed instruments of what they believed was women’s oppression, including high-heeled shoes, curlers, girdles, and bras, into a “freedom trash can.” News accounts famously, and incorrectly, described the protest as a “**bra burning**.” In fact, no one burned any bras.

Despite the flashy nature of such protests, real change for women came through hard-won legislation and legal battles.

BIRTH CONTROL

For thousands of years, the impact of sex had been different for men and women. For women, sex could result in pregnancy and motherhood. This biological fact was part of what defined the roles of men and women in American society. There were times when women were allowed to work outside the home, but the possibility of motherhood presented restrictions. For example, in the early 1900s, women could serve as school teachers, but



Miss America Pageant: Beauty contest that became the target of feminist protesters in the 1970s who argued that it, and other contests like it, promoted the objectification of women. They crowned a sheep in protest.



Bra Burning: Form of protest popularized by feminists in the 1960s and 1970s who wanted to demonstrate their rejection of traditional gender rules.

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they would lose their jobs if they were married. Society believed that a married woman belonged at home taking care of her husband and children.

In the early 1900s, one woman believed the status quo needed to change. **Margaret Sanger** was a pioneer in the struggle for a woman's right to **birth control**. She famously said that, "no woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body. No woman can call herself free until she can choose consciously whether she will or will not be a mother." In an era when it was illegal to discuss the topic, she was arrested or charged with lawlessness many times for both her publications and her New York City clinics. Additionally, organized religions such as the Roman Catholic Church stood firm on their principles that artificial contraceptives were sinful. Despite Sanger's effort, and the fact that women won the right to vote in 1919, birth control in any form, remained illegal in most states, even for married couples.

In the 1950s, philanthropist Katherine McCormick provided the funding for biologists to develop a **birth control pill**, a drug that women could take that would prevent pregnancy. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the birth control pill for general use in 1960. For the first time, women could control the possibility of pregnancy on their own without relying on their partners. Within five years of the pill's approval, some six million women were using it.

Despite the pill's obvious popularity, as a form of contraception it remained illegal in many states. In a landmark decision, **Griswold v. Connecticut** in 1965, the Supreme Court ruled such laws unconstitutional. Setting a precedent, the Court determined that a fundamental right to privacy exists between the lines of the Constitution. Laws prohibiting contraceptive choice violated this sacred right. The ban of prohibitive laws was extended to unmarried couples in **Eisenstadt v. Baird** in 1972, and a federal judge imparted the right to purchase contraceptives to unmarried minors in 1974.

Equality, many feminists of the 1960s and 1970s believed, extended beyond the workplace, but to the bedroom as well and women's rights movements heralded the availability of birth control as a method of granting women liberation. After all, if women were going to have the same rights as men in the workplace, they should be able to enjoy sex without fear of pregnancy just as much as men.

The new contraceptive technology had a major impact on American life. Being able to avoid pregnancy meant that women could be sexually active and remain unmarried. In earlier times, sex usually led to pregnancy and then quickly to marriage. Birth control therefore, indirectly prolonging the age at which many women first married. This allowed women to invest in education and become more career-oriented, and after the pill was legalized, there was a sharp increase in college attendance and graduation rates for women.



Margaret Sanger: Champion of birth control in the early 1900s.



Birth Control: Any form of contraception. The term was coined by Margaret Sanger.



Birth Control Pill: Oral form of contraception first approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1960. The widespread availability of this form of contraception helped fuel the sexual revolution in the 1960s.



Griswold v. Connecticut: 1965 Supreme Court case legalizing birth control.



Eisenstadt v. Baird: 1972 Supreme Court case that made it legal for unmarried minors to purchase birth control.

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Birth control in general, and the pill in particular were seen as excellent, inexpensive ways to combat poverty. Women could finish school, earn college degrees, and work before having children. A new mother at age 26 with a degree and a few years of savings already put away is in a much better position financially than a new mother at age 19, who has only finished high school. As a result, the pill was endorsed by many government officials, including President Johnson, and was distributed by doctors who could see the benefits it had for their patients.

The pill was not without its detractors. In fact, it became a controversial subject as Americans struggled with their thoughts on sexual morality, controlling population growth, and women's control of their reproductive rights. Never before had sexual activity been so separated from reproduction. For a heterosexual couple using the pill, intercourse became purely an expression of love, a means of physical pleasure, or both. While this was true of previous contraceptives, their relatively high failure rates and their less widespread use failed to have the social impact of the pill.

The spread of oral contraceptive use led many religious figures and institutions to debate the proper role of sex in society. The Roman Catholic Church in particular reiterated its teaching that artificial contraception distorts nature and the purpose of sex. Opponents of the pill, and the sexual freedom it provided to women, cited the increase in children born to unmarried mothers, sexually transmitted diseases, teen pregnancy, and divorce rates as evidence that the decline in traditional gender roles, brought about in part by the availability of birth control, was bad for America.

Despite opposition, the use of the oral contraceptive pill continues to be widespread. As of 2010, 80% of sexually active women had used the pill at some point in their lives. Today, women have other options for birth control that do not involve their partners, including implants and patches, but the pill remains the most popular, and its effect on society is undeniable.

ABORTION

No topic related to the feminist movement has aroused such passion and controversy as much as the right to an **abortion**, a medical procedure that ends a pregnancy. In the 1960s, there was no federal law regulating abortions, and many states had banned the practice entirely, except when the life of the mother was endangered. Women's groups argued that illegality led many women to seek black market abortions by unlicensed physicians or to perform the procedure on themselves. As a result, several states such as California and New York began to legalize abortions. With no definitive ruling from the federal government, women's groups sought the opinion of the Supreme Court.

The battle began in Texas, which outlawed any type of abortion unless a doctor determined that the mother's life was in danger. A woman challenged the law banning abortion. As the case slowly made its way up



Abortion: Medical procedure to end a pregnancy by choice.

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from the lower courts to the Supreme Court, she was referred to in court documents only as Jane Roe in order to protect her privacy. Defending the law was the Dallas District Attorney, Henry Wade. Thus, the case became known as *Roe v. Wade*.

In 1973, the Supreme Court invalidated the Texas law by a 7-2 vote. The majority of the justices maintained that although the Constitution never mentions abortion, a woman's right to abortion is implied by the Constitution's guarantee of privacy. Because of the **Roe v. Wade** decision, no state could restrict abortions during the first three months, or trimester, of a pregnancy. States were permitted to adopt restrictive laws in accordance with respecting the mother's health during the second trimester. The practice could be banned outright during the third trimester. Any state law that conflicted with this ruling was automatically overturned.



Roe v. Wade: 1973 Supreme Court case that legalized abortion in the first trimester of a pregnancy, and permitted some restrictions on abortions in the second and third trimesters. It remains one of the most controversial Supreme Court decisions.

Primary Source: Photograph

A pro-life rally. One of the signs directly references the day the *Roe v. Wade* decision was handed down by the Supreme Court.

Women's groups were ecstatic, but immediately an opposition emerged. The Roman Catholic Church had long criticized abortion as a form of infanticide and many fundamentalist Protestant ministers joined the outcry. The **National Right to Life Committee** formed with the explicit goal of reversing *Roe v. Wade*.



National Right to Life Committee: Organization dedicated to reversing the *Roe v. Wade* decision and making abortion illegal.

The question of abortion is fundamentally thorny because it involves basic beliefs about life, and often those beliefs are based on religion. Those who believe life begins at conception feel that the unborn child deserves the same legal protections as an adult. Ending such a life is equivalent to murder to those who subscribe to this belief. They believe that the government has a responsibility to protect all people, including those who have not yet been born. Opponents of abortion use the label **pro-life** to define their cause.



Pro-Life: Being opposed to abortion.

Others argue that life begins at birth, and that laws restricting abortion interfere with the right of a woman to decide what is in her own best interests. They believe that the government has no business telling women



Pro-Choice: Being in favor of legalized abortion.

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what to do with their bodies. Some argue that opponents of abortion are trying to impose their religious beliefs on others. Supporters of *Roe v. Wade* identify themselves as **pro-choice**.

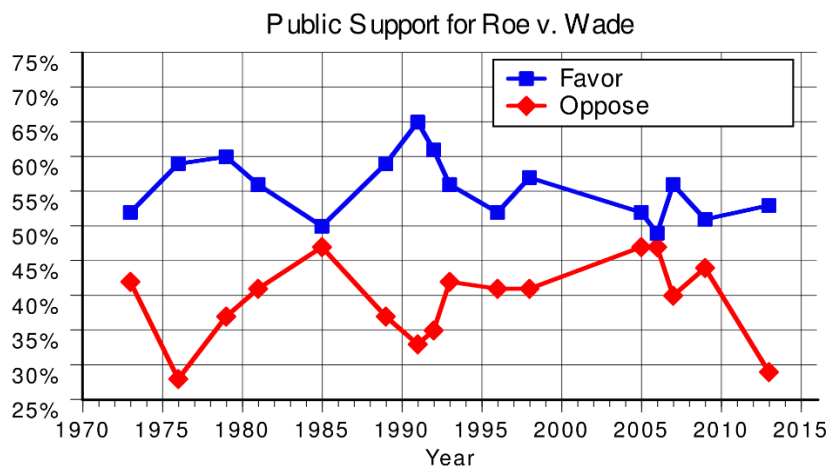
Since 1973, the battle has raged. Pro-life groups began to lobby their senators and representatives to propose a **Right-to-Life Amendment** to the Constitution. Although introduced in Congress, the measure has never received the necessary support. Pro-choice groups such as the **National Abortion Rights Action League** fear that a slow erosion of abortion rights has taken place since *Roe v. Wade* as states pass laws that make it harder to gain access to an abortion.



Right-to-Life Amendment: Proposed constitutional amendment that would make abortion illegal. The proposal has not passed in Congress.



National Abortion Rights Action League: Organization dedicated to making sure abortion remains legal.



Secondary Source: Chart

Support for the *Roe v. Wade* decision (and legalized abortion by extension) has wavered over time, but has remained positive since the decision was made.

The **Hyde Amendment** of 1976 prohibits the use of federal Medicaid funds for abortions. The idea behind the law was that because Medicaid is funded by taxes, people who believe abortion is wrong should not be forced to pay for it, even in a roundabout way.



Hyde Amendment: 1976 law that prohibits the use of tax money to pay for abortion. This means that Medicaid cannot cover abortions.

Since the Supreme Court ruled that women have a fundamental right to abortion, that right has been limited by a long string of laws and court cases. For example, in the 1992 case *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the Supreme Court ruled that states have the right to impose waiting periods and parental notification requirements so girls under the age of 18 cannot have an abortion without their parent's knowledge. In 2014, the Texas legislature passed a law that set new guidelines for operating abortion clinics. The law was so strict that half of all clinics could not meet the new standards closed. In some areas, abortion was legal, but women had to travel hundreds of miles to find a doctor willing and able to carry out the procedure. The Supreme Court ruled the law unconstitutional in *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* in 2016. The Court upheld this ruling in 2019 when it blocked implementation of a similar law in Louisiana. However, it will take many years to open new clinics to replace those that had to close. Pro-life advocates may have lost in court, but won in practical terms.

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Planned Parenthood is an organization that provides women with healthcare and advice about contraception, cancer screening and many other issues. However, since they pride themselves on providing safe, inexpensive abortions, protesters regularly picket outside their offices. Several Planned Parenthood sites have even been bombed and doctors who perform abortions murdered by anti-abortion extremists.



Planned Parenthood: Organization that provides healthcare services to women including abortions. They are often the focus of anti-abortion protests.

While the fight goes on in state capitals and in protest marches, the real fate of *Roe v. Wade* continues to lie with the Supreme Court. Although every ruling since 1973 upheld the fundamental decision that women have a right to abortion, the composition of the Court changes with every retirement. Activists on each side demand a **litmus test** for any justice named to the federal courts. Republicans have tended to appoint pro-life judges, and Democrats have selected pro-choice nominees. If Republican presidents were someday able to appoint enough conservative justices to significantly alter the balance of the Court, opponents of *Roe v. Wade* might have a chance of succeeding. For now, the battle remains as fierce as ever.



Litmus Test: A position that a candidate must take in order to receive support from a group of voters. A candidate's position on abortion is often a make-or-break factor in American politics.

DIVORCE

For most of America's history, it was difficult for couples to divorce. Marriage was an institution that was dominated by organized religions, and they were loath to grant divorces. Even well into the 1900s, divorces were granted only in cases of abuse or infidelity. Many Americans believed this was good for society. However, in the 1970s things began to change.

In 1967, California passed the nation's first **no-fault divorce** law. With this change, couples could divorce for any reason, or no reason at all. Within a few years, many other states followed California's lead and passed no-fault divorce laws of their own. The impact was dramatic. In the 1960s, there were 9.2 divorces per 1,000 married women. Just 20 years later in 1980, that number had more than doubled to 22.6 divorces per 1,000 married women. Less than 20% of marriages in 1950 ended in divorce, but roughly 50% of all couples who married in 1970 eventually divorced.



No-Fault Divorce: A law that allows couples to file for divorce without giving a reason. First passed in 1967, these laws make divorce much easier to obtain and consequently, more common.

Before the advent of no-fault divorce, social pressure and the authority of religious leaders convinced many couples to stay together, even when relationships had frayed. Sometimes it was challenging to prove that a spouse had been unfaithful and people were trapped in broken marriages. A change in the law gave legitimacy to divorce and began to erode the moral authority of churches. Eventually, many churches bent to the times. For example, the United Methodist Church, the largest mainline Protestant denomination in America announced in 1976 that they would be accommodating of divorced and remarried congregants.

As the rate of divorce grew, Americans began to worry about the effect divorce was having on children. On one hand, single parents usually have less time to spend with their children because they are working and are often more stressed since they have to bear the entire responsibility of raising

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children. On the other hand, it is perhaps equally stressful for children to be raised in homes filled with conflict.

In the long term, as marriage has lost its importance in the minds of young people, more and more have chosen to live together without being married. Now about 40% of all American children will live in a home with unmarried parents. Since these relationships are less stable, the vast majority of children born to unmarried couples see their parents separate by the time they turn 15.

Since the 1980s, divorce rates have come down somewhat, but they are still far higher than they were before no-fault divorce laws were enacted.

Another major change that happened to divorce law in the 1970s related to the disposition of property. In many states, head and master laws gave husbands final say over all property. Men could make financial decisions without consulting their wives. This meant that in cases of divorce, husbands could take property and savings and leave their ex-wives with nothing. In 1981, the Supreme Court ruled such laws unconstitutional in the case **Kirchberg v. Feenstra**. Citing the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protect under the law, they ruled that head of mastery laws unfairly favored men over women.

Although the rise in divorce rates since the passage of no-fault laws in the 1970s has resulted in social problems that were rare beforehand, the ability of women to obtain a divorce and protection of property has allowed women to escape abusive and unhappy marriages.

TITLE IX

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a major step forward in protecting women from discrimination, but it was written to protect people from discrimination in public places such as stores and bus stations. Many activists wanted a law specifically designed to protect the rights of female students, and so **Title IX** was enacted as a follow-up to the Civil Rights Act. While Title IX is best known for its impact on high school and collegiate athletics, the original statute made no explicit mention of sports. However, coverage of sports was implied.

The impact of the law on female athletics has been enormous. One study, completed in 2006, pointed to a large increase in the number of women participating in athletics at both the high school and college level. For every one girl involved in high school sports before Title IX was enacted, there are nine now, and the number of women in college sports had increased by more than 450%. A 2008 study of intercollegiate athletics showed that women's collegiate sports has grown to 9,101 teams, or 8.65 per school.

Some critics of the law contend that Title IX has resulted in the dismantling of men's sports programs. For example, though interest in the sport of wrestling has consistently increased at the high school level since 1990,



Kirchberg v. Feenstra: 1981 Supreme Court case that outlawed masterly laws which had granted all joint property to husbands in divorce.



Title IX: Addition to the 1964 Civil Rights Act that guaranteed equal access for girls. One major consequence has been the funding of girls athletics in high schools and colleges.

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scores of colleges have dropped their wrestling programs during that same period. In order to offer equal opportunities, some schools have chosen to reduce the options for men rather than increase them for women. Men's sports such as golf, tennis, rowing, track, swimming, as well as wrestling have all been abandoned by schools trying to comply with Title IX.

Most of these sports are money losers for colleges. That is, the cost of equipment and coaches exceeds what the sports earn in ticket sales. Athletic directors are forced to make hard choices when money is short and although many would love to offer every sport for both male and female students, the law's requirements make cutting legacy men's programs a necessity. Critics of Title IX believe this is unfair. There are currently 1.3 million more boys participating in high school sports than girls. Since colleges are forced to offer equal opportunities, some of those boys will simply have no teams to play for.

Despite such arguments, women's athletic programs are still far from equal to men's programs. The Women's Sports Foundation reported in a 2007 study of NCAA institutions that men's athletics receive the lion's share of athletic department budgets for operating expenses, recruiting, scholarships, and coaches' salaries.

Title IX applies to all educational programs and all aspects of a school, not only to athletics. One of the important other areas the law has affected, is the way schools have dealt with sexual harassment against female students. The Supreme Court ruled that when school administrators fail to protect students from harassment, they are denying girls equal access to education. As a result, the law has been used multiple times to force school leaders to address claims of sexual abuse and harassment and to institute programs to protect female students.

In 2006, for example, a federal court found that there was sufficient evidence that the University of Colorado acted with "deliberate indifference" toward students Lisa Simpson and Anne Gilmore, who were sexually assaulted by student football players. The university settled the case, promising to change its policies and pay \$2.5 million in damages. In 2008, Arizona State University was the subject of a lawsuit that alleged violations of rights guaranteed by Title IX. In that case, the university expelled a football player for multiple instances of severe sexual harassment, but readmitted him and he went on to rape a student in her dorm room. Despite its claim that it bore no responsibility, the school settled the lawsuit, agreeing to revise and improve its official response to sexual misconduct and to pay the plaintiff \$850,000 in damages and fees.

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Between 2010 and 2016, the Department of Education under President Obama announced that transgender students are also protected from discrimination under Title IX. It instructed public schools to treat transgender students consistent with their gender identity in academic life. A student who identifies as a transgender boy, for instance, is allowed entry to a boys-only class, and a student who identifies as a transgender girl is allowed entry to a girls-only class. This change in policy, is currently in flux. In February 2017, the Departments of Justice and Education under the Trump Administration withdrew the guidance on gender identity issued by the Obama administration and in 2018, the Department of Education announced that Title IX did not allow transgender students to use the bathroom of their gender identities. This is an issue that seems likely to be destined for the Supreme Court sometime in the coming years.



Primary Source: Photograph

Hillary Clinton speaking during the presidential campaign of 2016. Clinton was a former first lady, senator and secretary of state. She was the first woman to win the nomination of either the Democratic or Republican Party, but lost her general election bid to Donald Trump.

THE GLASS CEILING

In 1978, American writer Marilyn Loden described an invisible barrier that limited the ability of women to raise in organizations to high positions of power. This was nothing new. Women were keenly aware that men dominated leadership positions in politics, business, education and the military. In her speech, Loden coined the term the **glass ceiling** to describe this reality.

Despite major changes over the past few decades, the glass ceiling has persisted. As of 2014, only 5% of major companies were led by female CEOs. This trend persists in lower ranks as well. Far more men serve as directors and managers in American companies. In general in the workforce, women are at a disadvantage. In 2018 women earned 78¢ for every \$1.00 earned by men. In identical jobs, women earned 98¢ for every \$1.00 earned by men.




Glass Ceiling: Idea that women can be promoted in business, the military, or politics but can never rise to the highest levels. The phrase was first coined in 1978.

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Part of the reason for this is the penalty people pay for gaps in work. For both men and women, not working for periods of time, even for a few months, usually means starting again at a lower pay scale. However, since women are much more likely to have gaps in their working life to take care of children or aging parents, they disproportionately pay this penalty.

In politics, women are still underrepresented as well. Although **Hillary Clinton** won the democratic primary in 2016 and became the first woman to head a major party ticket, she lost to Donald Trump in the general election. Unlike many of the world's other advanced nations, the United States has never had a female president. In Congress in 2018, 23% of senators are women and in the House of Representatives, only 19% are women. On the Supreme Court, there are currently three women out of nine. For 192 years, a Supreme Court that was made up exclusively of men made the most important judicial decisions in America. Finally in 1981, **Sandra Day O'Connor** was appointed by President Reagan. Since then, three other women have served on the Court.



 **Hillary Clinton:** Former senator, secretary of state and first lady who ran for president in 2008 and 2016. She lost the primary in 2008 and the general election in 2016, but was the first woman to be nominated for president by one of the two major political parties.

 **Sandra Day O'Connor:** First woman to serve on the Supreme Court.

Primary Source: Photograph

From left to right: Sandra Day O'Connor, Sonia Sotomayor, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Elena Kagan, the four women to serve as justices on the Supreme Court.

WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES

The role that women have played in the armed forces has changed over America's history, most rapidly in the past few decades. For most of America's history, combat was a role reserved for men. There were a few notable exceptions. The first female American soldier was Deborah Sampson of Massachusetts who enlisted as a Continental Army under the name of Robert Shurtliff. She served for three years in the Revolutionary War and was wounded twice, and cut a musket ball out of her own thigh so no doctor would find out she was a woman. In another case of hidden identity, Sarah Rosetta Wakeman enlisted under the alias Lyons Wakeman in the Civil War. These women, brave as they might have been, did not significantly change the role women played in the armed forces. Generally,

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women served as cooks, cleaners and nurses who followed the armies, but did not see combat.

Perhaps the first time that a woman openly advocated for the chance to go into combat, was in 1898 at the cusp of the Spanish-American War. Annie Oakley, the hero of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show wrote a letter to President McKinley in which she offered "the government the services of a company of 50 'lady sharpshooters' who would provide their own arms and ammunition should war break out with Spain." The Spanish-American War did occur, but Oakley's offer was not accepted.

Women began taking on roles traditionally held by men for the first time during World War I. The first American women enlisted into the regular armed forces were 13,000 women admitted into active duty in the Navy and Marines, and a much smaller number admitted into the Coast Guard. The Yeoman recruits and women Marines primarily served in clerical positions, but they received the same benefits as men, including identical pay, and were considered veterans after the war.

In 1941, women again found that opportunities were opening up that had been closed before. There were 350,000 American women who served during World War II in the army and navy, as well as countless women who served in civilian capacities replacing men who were in uniform. During the war, women served in separate, female-only units, but in 1948, President Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Act, allowing women to serve in the armed forces in fully integrated units during peacetime.

Women again served in Korea and Vietnam, but as before, they were only allowed to play supporting roles. Women were nurses, clerks, telephone operators and sometimes transport pilots, but were never assigned to jobs in which combat was an expectation, and they had few opportunities to advance into the upper ranks.

That began to change in the 1970s. In 1976, the United States Air Force Academy, United States Coast Guard Academy, United States Military Academy at West Point and the United States Naval Academy became coeducational and women were able to join the same pathway as their male peers toward becoming officers. In 1996, women won admission to the Virginia Military Institute when the Supreme Court declared in *United States v. Virginia* that the school could not discriminate against women if it wanted to maintain its status as a premier military academy with direct connections to the army. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, wrote in the court's opinion that VMI could not deny "to women, simply because they are women, full citizenship stature—equal opportunity to aspire, achieve, participate in and contribute to society."

Prohibitions against women in combat also began to crumble. The 1991 Persian Gulf War proved to be the pivotal time for the role of women in the armed forces. Over 40,000 women served in almost every role the armed

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forces had to offer. However, while many came under fire, they were not permitted to participate in deliberate ground engagements. Despite this, there are many reports of women engaging enemy forces during the conflict.

During the Iraq War and the Afghanistan War of the 2000s, more than two hundred thousand women served, of which 152 lost their lives. Finally, women had the opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism, valor and abilities and in 2008, Ann Dunwoody became the first female four-star general in the Army. In 2012, Janet Wolfenbarger became the first female four-star general in the Air Force and Michelle Howard began her assignment as the Navy's first female, and first African American female, four-star admiral in 2014.



Primary Source: Photograph

Female pilots in the Air Force behind the F-15 fighter jets that they fly. As of 2015, women are permitted in all roles within the armed forces.

In December 2015, Defense Secretary Ash Carter stated that beginning in 2016 all combat jobs would open to women. Thus, 241 years after the outbreak of the American Revolution, women had finally gained full access to the armed forces.

It is hard to make the argument that new wave feminism was responsible for changing the role of women in the military since this was an evolution rather than a revolution. Additionally, full inclusion did not occur until decades after the protests of the 1960s and 1970, so it is a stretch to claim some direct cause and effect relationship between new wave feminism and gender parity in the armed forces. However, it is significant to note that the 1970s marked the turning point in which women began to take on combat and leadership positions. It might not have been the work of the feminist activists themselves that caused this change, but the evidence does show that changing attitudes in society were reflected in military policy.

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CONCLUSION

New wave feminism radically changed the face of American culture, leading to major shifts in public acceptance of birth control, the availability of abortion, divorce law, and widespread integration of women into sports activities, the military and the workplace.

The advocates of women's rights in the 1970s did not gain all that they had hoped for. They tried and failed to add the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution. But, like the many feminists who worked in the centuries before them and persisted in the face of disappointments, they have pressed on. Due to their continued efforts, it is no longer inconceivable that a woman might lead a major corporation, play professional sports or be elected president.

Since the history of inequality between genders in America is long and continues to evolve, the end of this chapter remains unwritten.

What do you think? Can men and women ever be equal?

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SUMMARY

Women have been fighting for equal rights since before the United States existed. In the early 1800s, women met at the Seneca Falls Convention and started working for the right to vote. However, at the same time the industrial revolution gave rise to the Cult of Domesticity, which established different roles for men and women in society. Women were supposed to stay at home to cook, clean, and care for children. Women finally won the right to vote in 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment.

In the 1960s, Second Wave Feminism started with the publication of Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique*. She criticized the Cult of Domesticity and challenged the idea that women should be happy as homemakers and mothers.

Laws such as the Civil Rights Act and Equal Pay Act gave women more rights. The National Organization for Women (NOW) started working to pass a constitutional amendment to guarantee women equal rights. The Equal Rights Act (ERA) was never ratified because Phyllis Schlafly organized a movement to stop it. She argued that equal rights would hurt women.

Some radical feminists demonstrated by burning bras or protesting at the Miss America Pageant.

A major change for women in the 1950s was the legalization of birth control. This helped contribute to the sexual revolution of the counterculture and made sex outside of marriage much more common.

The legalization of abortion with the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court ruling in 1973 was another major turning point for women. Abortion is still controversial and pro-life and pro-choice organizations and politicians continue to fight about it.

In the 1960s and 1970s, divorce laws changed so that women could divorce and maintain control of property and child custody. This greatly increased the rates of divorce since women could escape bad relationships and not have to leave their children or be cast into poverty.

Title IX guaranteed equal opportunities for girls in schools that received federal funding. This led to an increase in school sports for girls.

The glass ceiling is an imaginary boundary women cannot pass in government and politics. So far, no woman has ever been president, only four have been on the Supreme Court, and few have ever been company CEOs.

Women can now serve in any role in the armed forces, but this is a recent change. The role women played in the 1991 Persian Gulf War helped break down these barriers.



KEY IDEAS

Cult of Domesticity: Idea popularized in the early 1800s with the onset of the Industrial Revolution that certain tasks and issues were appropriate for women. These did not include work outside the home or politics. This has also been called the Women's Sphere.

Sexism: Prejudice or discrimination against a person because of his or her gender. It was a word that first became common during the feminist movement of the 1970s.

Pro-Life: Being opposed to abortion.

Pro-Choice: Being in favor of legalized abortion.

Litmus Test: A position that a candidate must take in order to receive support from a group of voters. A candidate's position on abortion is often a make-or-break factor in American politics.

Glass Ceiling: Idea that women can be promoted in business, the military, or politics but can never rise to the highest levels. The phrase was first coined in 1978.



LAWS & POLICIES

19th Amendment: Constitutional amendment ratified in 1920 granting women the right to vote.

Equal Pay Act of 1964: Law passed in 1964 which promised women the same pay men received for the same work.

Civil Rights Act of 1964: Law passed in 1964 that was designed to provide equal rights for African Americans (and all races) in public places. It also included protection for women.

Maternity Leave: Paid time off from work for women in order to care for newborn children.

Equal Rights Amendment (ERA): Constitutional amendment that would guarantee equal treatment under the law for women. It was passed by Congress and multiple states in the 1970s, but never ratified by enough states to become law.

Right-to-Life Amendment: Proposed constitutional amendment that would make abortion illegal. The proposal has not passed in Congress.

Hyde Amendment: 1976 law that prohibits the use of tax money to pay for abortion. This means that Medicaid cannot cover abortions.

No-Fault Divorce: A law that allows couples to file for divorce without giving a reason. First passed in 1967, these laws make divorce much easier to obtain and consequently, more common.

Title IX: Addition to the 1964 Civil Rights Act that guaranteed equal access for girls. One major consequence has been the funding of girls athletics in high schools and colleges.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Abigail Adams: Wife of the second president. She is remembered as an early champion for women's rights.

Betty Friedan: Feminist in the 1960s who wrote *The Feminine Mystique* criticizing the traditional role of women. Her book launched the feminist movement of the 1970s. She founded NOW.

Gloria Steinem: Feminist who founded *Ms Magazine* in 1972.

Germaine Greer: Australian professor who wrote about the traditional role of women in society. Instead of celebrating motherhood and femininity, she portrayed these roles as traps women were forced into.

National Organization for Women (NOW): Organization founded by Betty Friedan to promote women's rights.

Alice Paul: Advocate for women's suffrage in the early 1900s. She founded the National Women's Party and used more aggressive tactics to publicize the movement. In her later life she promoted the Equal Rights Amendment.

Phyllis Schlafly: Women who worked against ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. She argued that the law would result in undesirable changes for women.

Margaret Sanger: Champion of birth control in the early 1900s.

National Right to Life Committee: Organization dedicated to reversing the *Roe v. Wade* decision and making abortion illegal.

National Abortion Rights Action League: Organization dedicated to making sure abortion remains legal.

Planned Parenthood: Organization that provides healthcare services to women including abortions. They are often the focus of anti-abortion protests.

Hillary Clinton: Former senator, secretary of state and first lady who ran for president in 2008 and 2016. She lost the primary in 2008 and the general election in 2016, but was the first woman to be nominated for president by one of the two major political parties.

Sandra Day O'Connor: First woman to serve on the Supreme Court.



EVENTS

Seneca Falls Convention: The first major meeting of women's rights advocates in America, which occurred in New York in 1848.

Second Wave Feminism: A time period in the 1970s when women were actively promoting their rights. The time period included the *Roe v. Wade* case, legalization of birth control, as

well as failed push to pass the Equal Rights Amendment.

Miss America Pageant: Beauty contest that become the target of feminist protesters in the 1970s who argued that it, and other contests like it, promoted the objectification of women. They crowned a sheep in protest.

Bra Burning: Form of protest popularized by feminists in the 1960s and 1970s who wanted to demonstrate their rejection of traditional gender rules.



COURT CASES

Griswold v. Connecticut: 1965 Supreme Court case legalizing birth control.

Eisenstadt v. Baird: 1972 Supreme Court case that made it legal for unmarried minors to purchase birth control.

Roe v. Wade: 1973 Supreme Court case that legalized abortion in the first trimester of a pregnancy, and permitted some restrictions on abortions in the second and third trimesters. It remains one of the most controversial Supreme Court decisions.

Kirchberg v. Feenstra: 1981 Supreme Court case that outlawed masterly laws which had granted all joint property to husbands in divorce.



SCIENCE

Birth Control: Any form of contraception. The term was coined by Margaret Sanger.

Birth Control Pill: Oral form of contraception first approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1960. The widespread availability of this form of contraception helped fuel the sexual revolution in the 1960s.

Abortion: Medical procedure to end a pregnancy by choice.



LETTERS & BOOKS

"Remember the Ladies!": Quote from one of Abigail Adams' letters to John Adams during the debate over the Declaration of Independence in which she urged him to consider women's rights in the establishment of the nation.

The Feminine Mystique: Book by Betty Friedan critical of the role of women in society. The book helped spark the feminist movement of the 1970s.

6

S I X T H Q U E S T I O N WHY DID AMERICA TURN AWAY FROM LIBERALISM?

**WAS THE SOCIAL
REVOLUTION
ACTUALLY
REVOLUTIONARY?**

INTRODUCTION

In 1980, confidence in the American economy and government hit rock bottom. Looking for a change and the promise of a better future, voters turned to Ronald Reagan for answers. Reagan was a good communicator. He was funny and offered an optimistic vision for America. However, his election was a result of more than just his engaging personality and outlook.

Reagan was the first president who was supported by what became known as the New Right, a group of people who had very different beliefs about America and its government. Their message was clear. Government had become too big. Taxes were high and needed to be cut to stimulate growth and investment. Government programs that had been part of the New Deal and Great Society needed to be trimmed down to size. Hippies, women's rights advocates, teenagers engaged in premarital sex, lewd music and abortion rights supporters were ruining America's moral character. Military spending needed to be increased to fix the degenerating state of the American war machine. The United States was still the largest superpower in the world with the best system of government and it was time to go back to the days when America was respected in the world and Americans showed some respect for themselves.

These sentiments were felt by many in 1980. But what gave them the power to override older ideas? The New Deal and Great Society had been enormously popular. Programs like Social Security, Medicare and Welfare were all popular. People had been enthusiastic about the Civil Rights Movement and had wanted change during the 1960s and 1970s. Why did they turn their back on those feelings?

Could it have been the economy? Perhaps it was that reformers had tried to make too many changes too quickly. Or, perhaps Reagan and his supporters were simply better leaders and did a better job of selling their point of view in the marketplace of ideas.

What do you think? Why did America turn away from liberalism?

QUESTION SEVENTEEN

WAS THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION ACTUALLY REVOLUTIONARY?

The 1950s are remembered as one of the most conservative decades in the past century. A republican was in the White House. Conformity was the norm. Underneath the veneer of peaceful sameness, however, an eagerness for change was brewing, and by the time the Baby Boomers who had behaved so nicely as schoolchildren in the 50s left home for college in the 60s, Americans were falling over themselves to remake their nation. The Civil Rights Movement was making headlines. Democratic presidents were expanding government in an effort to go to the Moon, create a Great Society and save the Earth. As the Social Revolution unfolded, liberals broke down rules about music, marriage, sex, gender, and drugs.

By the end of the 60s, they had gone too far. Musical innovators overdosed on drugs. Government had grown too much. High taxes and the war in Vietnam combined with economic problems in the 70s and dampened everyone's spirits. The psychedelic excitement of the earlier decade faded as the Baby Boomers grew up, had children, looked for jobs and became Yuppies.

In the 1970s, conservatives asserted themselves and offered different path. They lowered taxes and promoted traditional social values. They implemented a war on drugs and put labels on vulgar music.

What do we as historians make of this social seesaw? A revolution is a change that cannot be undone. Can we call the changes of the 1960s a Social Revolution if we also call the changes that followed them a Conservative Revolution?

Perhaps the Social Revolution was just an anomaly. Maybe it was just a brief moment of heady liberalism. A freak accident, perhaps, when too many teenagers became young adults all at the same time and everyone suddenly thought they could fix every problem.

Alternatively, perhaps the true nature of America is one of change. If that is true, the conservatism of the 50s and 80s were a natural reaction of fear and trepidation, but they were the exception, not the rule. This would explain why the Beat Generation existed even when so many people were trying to fit in during the 50s, and also why the conservatives of the 70s and 80s weren't able to undo so many of the

changes the Social Revolution inspired. After all, if America is a nation of change, you cannot stand still for too long, and you certainly cannot go backwards.

What do you think? Was the Social Revolution really revolutionary?