

WOMEN IN HISTORY

1. “An adult female person
2. A woman belonging to a particular category (as by birth, residence, membership, or occupation) —usually used in combination
3. Councilwoman
4. Womankind
5. Distinctively feminine nature : womanliness
6. A woman who is a servant or personal attendant
7. Chiefly dialectal : wife
8. Mistress
9. Girlfriend sense 2
10. A woman who is extremely fond of or devoted to something specified” (merriam webster, 2019)



NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE

“while some glass ceilings have been shattered (see: Title IX), others remain. But progress continues to be made. As Clinton said while accepting her nomination, “When there are no ceilings, the sky’s the limit.” ” (History, 2019)

History. (1912). Women gather at the Woman Suffrage Headquarters located in Cleveland, Ohio, in September 1912. At extreme right is Miss Belle Sherwin, president of the National League of Women Voters. Retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/the-fight-for-womens-suffrage#&gid=c0260cc2400026c3b&pid=womens-suffrage-gettyimages-108217301>



RECORDS

FIRST WAVE OF FEMINISM : “March 31, 1776: In a letter to her husband, Founding Father John Adams, future first lady Abigail Adams makes a plea to him and the Continental Congress to “remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.”

January 23, 1849: Elizabeth Blackwell becomes the first woman to graduate from medical school and become a doctor in the United States. Born in Bristol, England, she graduated from Geneva College in New York with the highest grades in her entire class.

May 29, 1851: A former slave turned abolitionist and women’s rights activist, Sojourner Truth delivers her famous “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech at the Women’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. “And ain’t I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain’t I a woman? I have borne 13 children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain’t I a woman?”(History, 2019)

Emmeline Pankhurst arrested outside Buckingham Palace. (1914). Retrieved from: <https://www.historycolorado.org/story/womens-history/2019/06/11/how-us-suffragists-adopted-uk-suffragettes-militant-tactics>

“Dec. 10, 1869: The legislature of the territory of Wyoming passes America’s first woman suffrage law, granting women the right to vote and hold office. In 1890, Wyoming is the 44th state admitted to the Union and becomes the first state to allow women the right to vote.

May 15, 1869: Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton found the National Woman Suffrage Association, which coordinated the national suffrage movement. In 1890, the group teamed with the American Woman Suffrage Association to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

October 16, 1916: Margaret Sanger opens the first birth control clinic in the United States. Located in Brownsville, Brooklyn, her clinic was deemed illegal under the “Comstock Laws” forbidding birth control, and the clinic was raided on October 26, 1916. When she had to close two additional times due to legal threats, she closed the clinic and eventually founded the American Birth Control League in 1921—the precursor to today’s Planned Parenthood.

April 2, 1917: Jeannette Rankin of Montana, a longtime activist with the National Woman Suffrage Association, is sworn in as the first woman elected to Congress as a member of the House of Representatives.

Aug. 18, 1920: Ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is completed, declaring “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.” It is nicknamed “The Susan B. Anthony Amendment” in honor of her work on behalf of women’s suffrage.

May 20–21, 1932: Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman, and second pilot ever (Charles Lindbergh was first) to fly solo nonstop across the Atlantic.”(History, 2019)

SECOND WAVE OF FEMINISM : “Dec. 1, 1955: Black seamstress Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Ala. The move helps launch the civil rights movement.

May 9, 1960: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves the first commercially produced birth control pill in the world, allowing women to control when and if they have children. Margaret Sanger initially commissioned “the pill” with funding from heiress Katherine McCormick.

June 10, 1963: President John F. Kennedy signs into law the Equal Pay Act, prohibiting sex-based wage discrimination between men and women performing the same job in the same workplace.

July 2, 1964: President Lyndon B. Johnson, signs the Civil Rights Act into law; Title VII bans employment discrimination based on race, religion, national origin or sex.

June 30, 1966: Betty Friedan, author of 1963’s *The Feminine Mystique*, helps found the National Organization for Women (NOW), using, as the organization now states, “grassroots activism to promote feminist ideals, lead societal change, eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect the equal rights of all women and girls in all aspects of social, political, and economic life.

June 23, 1972: Title IX of the Education Amendments is signed into law by President Richard Nixon. It states “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”(History, 2019)

“Jan. 22, 1973: In its landmark 7–2 *Roe v. Wade* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court declares that the Constitution protects a woman’s legal right to an abortion.

Sept. 20, 1973: In “The Battle of the Sexes,” tennis great Billie Jean King beats Bobby Riggs in straight sets during an exhibition match aired on primetime TV and drawing 90 million viewers. “I thought it would set us back 50 years if I didn’t win that match,” King says after the match. “It would ruin the women’s [tennis] tour and affect all women’s self-esteem.”

Sandra Day O’Connor, Sally Ride

July 7, 1981: Sandra Day O’Connor is sworn in by President Ronald Reagan as the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. She retires in 2006, after serving for 24 years.

June 18 1983: Flying on the Space Shuttle Challenger, Sally Ride becomes the first American woman in space.

July 12, 1984: Democratic presidential nominee Walter Mondale names U.S. Rep. Geraldine Ferraro (N.Y.) as his running mate, making her the first woman vice president nominee by a major party.

March 12, 1993: Nominated by President Bill Clinton, Janet Reno is sworn in as the first female attorney general of the United States.”(History, 2019)

“THIRD WAVE OF FEMINISM : “Jan. 23, 1997: Also nominated by Clinton, Madeleine Albright is sworn in as the nation’s first female secretary of state.

Sept. 13, 1994: Clinton signs the Violence Against Women Act as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, providing funding for programs that help victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, stalking and other gender-related violence.

Jan. 4, 2007: U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) becomes the first female speaker of the House. In 2019, she reclaims the title, becoming the first lawmaker to hold the office two times in more than 50 years.

Jan. 24, 2013: The U.S. military removes a ban against women serving in combat positions.

FOURTH WAVE OF FEMINISM : “July 26, 2016: Hillary Clinton becomes the first woman to receive a presidential nomination from a major political party. During her speech at the Democratic National Convention, she says, “Standing here as my mother’s daughter, and my daughter’s mother, I’m so happy this day has come.”

January 20, 2021: Kamala Harris is sworn in as the first woman and first woman of color vice president of the United States. “While I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last,” Harris said after getting elected in November.

The daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, Harris served as California’s first Black female attorney general and won election to the U.S. Senate in 2016. She made her own unsuccessful presidential bid before being selected by former vice president Joe Biden as his running mate.”(History, 2019)

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NOT A SPECIES OF CATTLE

“To counter the perception that the contest was just about “bathing beauties,” it added a talent competition in the 1930s and started awarding scholarships to finalists after World War II. Despite this, the point of the pageant was still to crown one woman as the most beautiful. Critics continued to take issue with the pageant into the 1960s. But by that point, the criticism wasn’t coming from conservatives worried about women’s propriety anymore—it was coming from liberal, second-wave feminists who considered the contest demeaning.

The most public example of this criticism was a protest at the 1968 Miss America pageant in Atlantic City. Women carried signs with messages like “Welcome to the Miss America cattle auction” and “All women are beautiful.” In a ten-point statement, organizers argued that the pageant judged women like animals at a county fair (and to emphasize the point, protesters crowned a live sheep as “Miss America”). Its second point, titled “Racism with Roses,” accused the pageant of adhering to a racist standard of beauty by only crowning white women.

Roberts was surprised when it was announced in June 2018 that Miss America was getting rid of the bathing suit competition, and speculated that the decision had more to do with the #MeToo movement than the famous protest in 1968. The chair of Miss America’s board of directors is Gretchen Carlson, whose allegations of sexual harassment at Fox News led to Roger Ailes’ firing in 2016.”(Little, 2018)

History. (1968). A demonstrator carries a poster that reads “I Am A Woman, Not a Toy, Pet, or Mascot” with a live sheep on a leash as she protests the Miss America beauty pageant in Atlantic City, New Jersey). Retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/news/miss-america-protest-1968>



SAVING LIVES

“Dorothea Lynde Dix (1802-1887) was an author, teacher and reformer. Her efforts on behalf of the mentally ill and prisoners helped create dozens of new institutions across the United States and in Europe and changed people’s perceptions of these populations. Charged during the American Civil War with the administration of military hospitals, Dix also established a reputation as an advocate for the work of female nurses. Her own troubled family background and impoverished youth served as a galvanizing force throughout her career, although she remained silent on her own biographical details for most of her long, productive life.”^(History.com Editors, 2018)

**“IN A WORLD WHERE THERE IS SO
MUCH TO BE DONE. I FELT STRONGLY
IMPRESSED THAT THERE MUST BE
SOMETHING FOR ME TO DO.”**

(D. Dix)

“She took a job teaching inmates in an East Cambridge prison, where conditions were so abysmal and the treatment of prisoners so inhumane that she began agitating at once for their improvement.

Prisons at the time were unregulated and unhygienic, with violent criminals housed side by side with the mentally ill. Inmates were often subject to the whims and brutalities of their jailers. Dix visited every public and private facility she could access, documenting the conditions she found with unflinching honesty. She then presented her findings to the legislature of Massachusetts, demanding that officials take action toward reform. Her reports—filled with dramatic accounts of prisoners flogged, starved, chained, physically and sexually abused by their keepers, and left naked and without heat or sanitation—shocked her audience and galvanized a movement to improve conditions for the imprisoned and insane.

Dix volunteered her services one week after the Civil War (1861–1865) began. Shortly after her arrival in Washington in April 1861, she was appointed to organize and outfit the Union Army hospitals and to oversee the vast nursing staff that the war would require. As superintendent of women nurses, she was the first woman to serve in such a high capacity in a federally appointed role.

With supplies pouring in from voluntary societies across the north, Dix’s administrative skills were sorely needed to manage the flow of bandages and clothing as the war wore on. Still, Dix often clashed with army officials and was widely feared and disliked by her volunteer female nurses. After months of hard work and exhaustion, she was eventually ousted from her position, stripped of authority by the fall of 1863 and sent home.”(History.com Editors, 2018)



ACTIVE VOICE

“The triumph of woman’s suffrage in the United States in 1920 was very much the work of Carrie Catt.” (History.com Editors, 2018a)

“Activist Carrie Chapman Catt (1859-1947) was instrumental to the cause that brought equal voting rights to U.S. citizens. A teacher and then superintendent of schools in Iowa, Catt became involved in the women’s suffrage movement in the 1880s. She served as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) from 1900 to 1904 and again from 1915 to 1920, spearheading the movement with her ability to organize campaigns, mobilize volunteers and deliver effective speeches. Shortly before the suffragists celebrated victory with passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, Catt founded the League of Women Voters.

She landed on her feet but only after some harrowing experiences in the male working world. In 1890 she married George Catt, a wealthy engineer. Their marriage allowed her to spend a good part of each year on the road campaigning for woman’s suffrage, a cause she had become involved in in Iowa in the late 1880s.”(History.com Editors, 2018a)

“NO WRITTEN LAW HAS EVER BEEN MORE BINDING THAN UNWRITTEN CUSTOM SUPPORTED BY POPULAR OPINION”

(C.C. Catt)

“In Catt’s approach to politics, organization was the watchword and she was superb at it. From her first endeavors in Iowa in the 1880s to her last in Tennessee in 1920, Catt supervised dozens of campaigns, mobilized numerous volunteers (1 million by the end), and made hundreds of speeches. She made skilled use of communication and publicity, fashioning disciplined campaigns and building a highly effective machine.

Catt believed it was woman’s natural right to participate in politics on an equal basis with men. If women could vote, she argued, they would become a force for world peace and would help improve the conditions of life for themselves and their children. Above all, she was concerned with women’s dignity. Angry that women had no control over their lives, she felt that political participation would give them a voice in decisions affecting them, enhancing their dignity as human beings.

One of Catt’s overriding goals was that of world peace, a cause she pursued throughout her life. Another was that the political process should be rational and issue-oriented, dominated by citizens, not politicians. To that end, she founded the League of Women Voters in 1920. It remains something of a monument to her ideals, devoting itself to issues and placing what it considers the public interest over partisan politics. Catt was proud of her role in this organization until the end of her life.” (History.com Editors, 2018a)



POLITICALLY

“Jeannette Rankin was a Montana politician who made history in 1916 as the first woman ever elected to the United States Congress. She was also the only member of Congress to cast a vote against participation in both world wars. Unafraid to take controversial positions on several inflammatory issues, Rankin was a leader in the women’s suffrage movement and a lifelong pacifist.

After graduating from Montana State University (now the University of Montana) in 1902, Rankin spent brief stints as a social worker in San Francisco and New York. She then moved to Washington State, where she joined the women’s suffrage movement, a fight that culminated in 1910 when Washington became the fifth state in the Union to grant women the right to vote.

Rankin went on to work as a professional lobbyist for the National American Woman Suffrage Association, traveling back and forth across the country to speak and lobby for women’s right to vote. Her grassroots organizing efforts in her home state helped win the women of Montana voting rights in 1914.” (History.com Editors, 2009)

“Rankin wasn’t the first woman to run for federal office. In 1866, suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton launched a symbolic bid for a Congressional seat in New York, while Ohio native Victoria Woodhull ran for President in 1872.

Jeannette Rankin campaigned on social welfare issues, U.S. neutrality in World War I and the right to vote for women in every state. She made history on November 7, 1916, when she won her election by a margin of 7,500 votes to become the first female member of Congress.

Shortly after her term began in April 1917, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to “make the world safe for democracy” by declaring war on Germany. Rankin, who held strong pacifist views, voted against the American declaration of war. On April 6, 1917, the resolution passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 373–50.

She was one of the founding members of the Committee on Woman Suffrage, which led the fight in the House of Representatives for a constitutional amendment that would grant women nationwide the right to vote.

Rankin opened the 1918 congressional debate on a constitutional women’s suffrage amendment by recalling President Wilson’s speech to garner support for U.S. entry into World War I.” (History.com Editors, 2009)

“She became a lobbyist and speaker for the National Council for the Prevention of War from 1929 to 1939.

After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Jeannette Rankin cast the sole vote against World War II, making her the only Congress person to vote against U.S. involvement in both World Wars.

As a woman I can’t go to war, and I refuse to send anyone else,” she said. The immediate backlash against Rankin’s anti-war vote was intense. When angry bystanders threatened to do her harm, Rankin locked herself briefly in a phone booth inside the House Republican Cloakroom while waiting for a police escort back to her office.

Rankin’s actions were widely ridiculed in the pro-war press. Given her unpopularity, she opted not to seek reelection in 1942.” (History.com Editors, 2009)



NOT JUST BUNNIES

“Social activist, writer, editor and lecturer Gloria Steinem was born in Ohio in 1934. Steinem helped create New York magazine in the 1960s, and in the 1970s she was among the founders of the National Women’s Political Caucus and the feminist Ms magazine. Diagnosed with breast cancer in the 1980s, Steinem overcame the disease and continued to write influential books and essays. Despite her long-time opposition to marriage, she wed environmental and animal rights activist David Bale at age 66.” (History.com Editors, 2018c)

“After finishing her degree in 1956, Steinem received a fellowship to study in India. She first worked for Independent Research Service and then established a career for herself as a freelance writer. One of her most famous articles from the time was a 1963 expose on New York City’s Playboy Club for *Show* magazine. Steinem went undercover for the piece, working as a waitress, or a scantily clad “bunny” as they called them, at the club. In the late 1960s, she helped create *New York* magazine, and wrote a column on politics for the publication. Steinem became more engaged in the women’s movement after reporting on an abortion hearing given by the radical feminist group known as the Redstockings. She expressed her feminist views in such essays as “After Black Power, Women’s Liberation.”

In 1971 Steinem joined other prominent feminists, such as Bella Abzug and Betty Friedan, in forming the National Women’s Political Caucus, which worked on behalf of women’s issues. She also took the lead in launching the pioneering, feminist *Ms* magazine. It began as an insert in *New York* magazine in December 1971; its first independent issue appeared in January 1972. Under her direction, the magazine tackled important topics, including domestic violence. *Ms*. became the first national publication to feature the subject on its cover in 1976.

As her public profile continued to rise, Gloria Steinem faced criticism from some feminists, including the Redstockings, for her association with the CIA-backed Independent Research Service. Others questioned her commitment to the feminist movement because of her glamorous image. Undeterred, Steinem continued on her own way, speaking out, lecturing widely, and organizing various women’s functions. She also wrote extensively on women’s issues. Her 1983 collection of essays, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, featured works on a broad range of topics from “The Importance of Work” to “The Politics of Food.””(History.com Editors, 2018c)

“In 1986, Steinem faced a very personal challenge when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She was able to beat the disease with treatment. That same year, Steinem explored one of America’s most iconic women in the book *Marilyn: Norma Jean*. She became a consulting editor at *Ms* magazine the following year after the publication was sold to an Australian company.

Steinem found herself the subject of media scrutiny with her 1992 book *Revolution from Within: A Book of Self-Esteem*. To some feminists, the book’s focus on personal development to be a retreat from social activism. Steinem was surprised by the backlash, believing that a strong self-image to be crucial to creating change. “We need to be long-distance runners to make a real social revolution. And you can’t be a long-distance runner unless you have some inner strength,” she explained to *People* magazine. She considers the work to be “most political thing I’ve written. I was saying that many institutions are designed to undermine our self-authority in order to get us to obey their authority,” she told *Interview* magazine.

Steinem had another collection of writings, *Moving Beyond Words: Age, Rage, Sex, Power, Money, Muscles: Breaking Boundaries of Gender*, published in 1994. In one of the essays, “Doing Sixty,” she reflected on reaching that chronological milestone. Steinem was also the subject of a biography written by another noted feminist Carolyn G. Heilbrun entitled *Education of a Woman: The Life of Gloria Steinem*.”(History.com Editors, 2018c)

FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM

PART 3 - WOMEN IN HISTORY - NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE - FIGHTING TO BE FREE

“The women’s suffrage movement was a decades-long fight to win the right to vote for women in the United States. It took activists and reformers nearly 100 years to win that right, and the campaign was not easy: Disagreements over strategy threatened to cripple the movement more than once. But on August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was finally ratified, enfranchising all American women and declaring for the first time that they, like men, deserve all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

The campaign for women’s suffrage began in earnest in the decades before the Civil War. During the 1820s and ‘30s, most states had extended the franchise to all white men, regardless of how much money or property they had.

At the same time, all sorts of reform groups were proliferating across the United States—temperance leagues, religious movements, moral-reform societies, anti-slavery organizations—and in many of these, women played a prominent role.

Meanwhile, many American women were beginning to chafe against what historians have called the “Cult of True Womanhood”: that is, the idea that the only “true” woman was a pious, submissive wife and mother concerned exclusively with home and family.” (History.com Editors, 2009)

History. (1913a). A car taking part in a suffragette parade in Long Island, New York. Retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/the=-fight-for-womens-suffrage#&gid=c0260icc2400026c3b&pid=womens-suffrage-gettyimages-3088637>



“Almost immediately after the war ended, the 14th Amendment and the 15th Amendment to the Constitution raised familiar questions of suffrage and citizenship.

The 14th Amendment, ratified in 1868, extends the Constitution’s protection to all citizens—and defines “citizens” as “male”; the 15th, ratified in 1870, guarantees Black men the right to vote.

Some women’s suffrage advocates believed that this was their chance to push lawmakers for truly universal suffrage. As a result, they refused to support the 15th Amendment and even allied with racist Southerners who argued that white women’s votes could be used to neutralize those cast by African Americans.

Others argued that it was unfair to endanger Black enfranchisement by tying it to the markedly less popular campaign for female suffrage. This pro-15th-Amendment faction formed a group called the American Woman Suffrage Association and fought for the franchise on a state-by-state basis.

The suffragists’ approach had changed. Instead of arguing that women deserved the same rights and responsibilities as men because women and men were “created equal,” the new generation of activists argued that women deserved the vote because they were different from men. They could make their domesticity into a political virtue, using the franchise to create a purer, more moral “maternal commonwealth.”

This argument served many political agendas: Temperance advocates, for instance, wanted women to have the vote because they thought it would mobilize an enormous voting bloc on behalf of their cause, and many middle-class white people were swayed once again by the argument that the enfranchisement of white women would “ensure immediate and durable white supremacy, honestly attained.” ”(History.com Editors, 2009)

How the suffrage movement betrayed black women [Opinion]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/outlook/article/How-the-suffrage-movement-betrayed-black-women-13115437.php>



PART 3 - WOMEN IN HISTORY - NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE - FIGHTING TO BE FREE

“Starting in 1910, some states in the West began to extend the vote to women for the first time in almost 20 years.

Still, southern and eastern states resisted. In 1916, NAWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt unveiled what she called a “Winning Plan” to get the vote at last: a blitz campaign that mobilized state and local suffrage organizations all over the country, with special focus on those recalcitrant regions.

Meanwhile, a splinter group called the National Woman’s Party founded by Alice Paul focused on more radical, militant tactics—hunger strikes and White House pickets, for instance—aimed at winning dramatic publicity for their cause.

World War I slowed the suffragists’ campaign but helped them advance their argument nonetheless: Women’s work on behalf of the war effort, activists pointed out, proved that they were just as patriotic and deserving of citizenship as men.

Finally, on August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified. And on November 2 of that year, more than 8 million women across the United States voted in elections for the first time.”(History.com Editors, 2009)

