

Women rights

Sociology, Feminism



If you ask a young girl what she wants to be when she grows up, she may tell you she wants to be a doctor, lawyer, or even a teacher. That is what any child would perceive their future to become, just like their parents. But what that little girl is unaware of, is that if she had lived a little over 150 years ago, her future dreams would be quite different. Women living a life of religious freedom, having a voice in government, and attending schools is normal in our everyday lives as we reach the new millennium . However, women did not always have an equal say or chance in life. In our American History, women have demonstrated and worked for reform of women's rights. Through seven generations, it took many meetings, petition drives, lobbying, public speaking, and nonviolent resistance to make our world the way it is now. The Women's Rights Movement begins its task on July 13th, 1848, where a lady named Elizabeth Cady Stanton decided enough was enough, and she started the fight for her rights as well as all women's rights. Within the next week of her decision she held a convention in Seneca Falls called, " A convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman". Stanton created a list to present called " Declaration of Sentiments" which stated areas in life where women were treated unjustly. (*1) After the second day of the convention, every resolution on her declaration was passed except the one that called for women the right to vote. As time passed, however, many conventions were held all the way up to the Civil War. Women just like Stanton, such as Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and Sojourner Truth traveled throughout the country lecturing and organizing for the next forty years. A 72 year battle includes many speakers, political strategists, organizers, lobbyist, and so forth, until what is needed is

done. Thousands of people participating in the movement to now win " that most basic American civil right"... the right to vote. The vote was finally won in 1920, but this was not the end. Suffragists became active in fighting for the rights for protection from abuse in work (1919), Equal Rights Amendment (1923), and abortion. The birth control movement was fought for some time and denied in 1936. Birth control became legal in 1965. The second wave for this era started mainly in the sixties. In 1964 the Civil Rights Act was passed, prohibiting employment discrimination for the sexes as well as race, religion, and national origin. Two years later, a woman named Betty Friedan opened the National Organization for Women, which was followed by other organizations tending to other minorities as well. By 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment is re-introduced and finally passed and sent to the states for ratification. " Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex". To be ratified, it required 38 states to approve, which was said to be just about a " shoo-in". So, the campaigns started, and marches, and demonstrations.... by 1982 the deadline for ratification reached and they had just about enough votes to support the ERA. Today, at the beginning of the millennium , women have made clear progress since Elizabeth Stanton declared enough was enough. The first woman elected to Congress was in 1916. By 1971, women were still less than 3% of our political representatives. And today women only hold an 11% of seats in congress, and 21% of state legislative seats. Although these these numbers seem small, women have made a big impact and changed thousands of local, state, and federal laws that had limited women's legal status and social roles. In our country today, a man, or a woman has chance

to fulfill their dreams, to go to a good school of choice and become something. When you ask that little girl what she wants to be when she grows up, she is no longer influenced by society's discriminations, she can reach for the stars.