



## *7 Ways that Studying US History 1877 to Modern Times History Shapes the Way You Think About Women in Society*

1. Women were suppose to stay home and take care of the children so their husbands could go to work.

Week 2: A New Freedom?



H. Armstrong Robert, [Husband Leaves for Work](#)

Men went off to work while women were expected to stay at home with the children. In this picture this mother has two young children to take care of by herself. It also appears the husband is going away on a business trip. This puts a lot of stress on the mother. It was not socially acceptable for her to work. "The family wage has always been a myth." ([Shall Married Women Work?](#)) Very few people supported women working outside the house at this time, men were the sole financial provider of the home. Citizens expressed their concerns about married women working. It was the white man's job to protect women. The rape myth is when the black



men were raping white women. However, many were consensual affairs. This helped women bond and gain power over white men. This allowed for the white women to begin to gain momentum and separate from their husband and societal constructs ([The New South and Lynching, January 23rd, 2019](#)) By this time, in 1890,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of Americans worked for wages. They stopped working on family farms and in personal business. ([Crash Course #23: The Industrial Economy](#)) Why wouldn't it make sense for married women to work?

## 2. Women had unfair jobs and were crammed in awful conditions for low wages.

Week 4: Freedom at Home and Abroad?



Stell Photo Service, [Women Employees at Work](#)

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire changed a lot for the factory workers. Women were shoved into the textile factory under horrible conditions. Above you can see how crammed the women were. The fire erupted on March 25th, 1911 on the 8th floor of the building. Most people escaped by jumping or the elevator because the doors were locked from the outside so no one could leave. However, about 150 people died. The factory owners were charged with manslaughter but were later acquitted. This fire led to reform legislation for the workplace and mass concern ([Triangle Shirtwaist film](#)). Many people protested and without the protesting, there



would have been a much slower line of change. Before the fire, women rarely made more than \$6.00. They didn't have the basic necessities when working, they were crammed in the factory like animals, "the human being didn't mean anything" ([Conditions at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company \(1911\)](#)). In terms of social reform, Eleanor Roosevelt and Rose Schneiderman worked together to help factory workers in bad conditions. Women contacted senators in hopes of getting better working conditions. During this time, women played a big role in progressivism looking for social change ([Social Reform, February 4th, 2019](#)). During this time women fought more for themselves than before.

### 3. New technology gave women the chance to have more time to do other things, beyond housework.

Week 5: Social Freedom?



#### [Women Were Liberated with Technology](#)

Women were still suppose stay at home and take care of the house and the children. On the flip side, new technology gave women more time with their children and do other things. The



washing machine above is just one way that gave women more hands free way to do their house work. As seen above the woman seems relieved to have a washing machine as she is doing laundry. The “Advertisements of the 1920s” shows how women were pressured into buying the technology. “Washday in your home is doomed -- a day of rest and recreation is assured...” implying that life would be better with this technology ([Advertisements of the 1920's](#)). During the 1920s women were becoming their own. Women were taking control of their body. They cut their hair and wore shorter skirts, they began smoking, drinking, found ways to take illegal birth control. However they were still expected to work at home and get married. On the other hand at this time 75% of homes didn't even have a washer yet ([Crash Course #32](#)). This was the age of consumption. Husbands were buying their wives washing machines. In this time the flappers were also dating rather than courting. Even though there was more independence in marriage, women found a great deal of freedom without a husband. They began binding their chest, exploring heterosexuality, and had slim figures ([The “MODERN” 1920s, February 11, 2019](#)). These technologies are what women, specifically flappers needed to do spring forward in their pioneer for equal rights.

#### **4. World War II helped women gain territory in employment aspects.**

Week 6: More Freedom at Home and Abroad?



Sally Greenhill, [Women with Children](#)

On the front, women were supposed to stay home and take care of the children. As seen in this picture the mother is taking care of the children. The children occupied a majority of their time. However as the move for women's rights progressed, women came to make up  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the labor workforce by the time World War II rolled around. ([Crash Course #36: World War II Part 2- The Homefront](#)) World War II allowed for women to take lot of jobs that men previously had. This gave women a chance to get out of the house and not take care of the children. It gave women a chance to prove they were worth a job. However women were went back to the home after the war was over. Working women lost their jobs post war. ([Crash Course #36: World War II Part 2- The Homefront](#)) Some of the first people to lost their jobs were the African American women, white women also lost their jobs but the numbers where fewer. There weren't as many children born during this time and while the men were away at war. However abortion was illegal along with birth control. There was also less marriage. ([The Depression & New Deal, February 18th, 2019](#)) Post war and faced with the Depression, women worked harder than ever to keep families together. They had to stay home and take care of the children. Furthermore divorce was uncommon during this time. Women were supposed to keep things happy in the



family ([Family Life \(1939\)](#)). This picture encompasses the happiness women tried to maintain while the men were at war.

### 5. Women protested to work to obtain the rights they wanted.

Week 9: Free to Be Me and You?



Bettmann Archive/Getty Images, 1970, [Women Protesting the Right to Vote](#)

Throughout these continued ups and downs of women's rights they continued to fight for their rights. In the picture above you can see women protesting the right to vote, something that white, rich men had been able to do for decades. I don't think women's rights would have progressed (and regressed) in the ways they did without women protesting. One of the most powerful movements was the Black Freedom Movement. Rosa Parks headed a majority of the movement fighting for black women. Claudette Colvin was the first women to not give up her seat when protesting on a bus ([The Black Freedom Movement, March 18th, 2019](#)). Despite their strives, the women of this movement still had set roles. Very few men seemed to feel for the problems that women were facing. Many men were very defensive and came off unsupportive ([Hayden & King, "Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo" \(1965\)](#)). Not many men helped support the women's movement in the beginning. Women weren't the only ones that were fighting for equal rights. Gays were also fighting for similar rights. In some cases they protested together. Similarly they both fought for equal job opportunities and marriage rights. ([Social Movements of the Late 20th Century, March 20, 2019](#)). I find it very noble that women among other minorities fought



for rights they wanted. Not all of these protests were violent, many were silent, things like sit ins. The women above are walking through the streets with signs.

### 6. Women of color suffered more discrimination.

Week 10: What are Women's Rights?



Bettye Lane, [Women for Equal Pay](#)

Women made up 51% of the minority. They struggled to find jobs and to get out of the house and away from being the only sole keeper of the house. Above black women are fighting for their right of equal pay. Women wanted child care, minority rights, and equal opportunities to name just a few. Middle class women were targeted. Women who did work outside of the house were still expected to come home and do housework. This was considered a “double day,” coming home from a full work day only to take care of children. ([Feminism & Women's Movements, March 27th, 2019](#)). The radical factions supported and advocated for equal rights for everyone. Activists really fought for the rights that they later earned ([She's Beautiful When She's Angry](#)). Nonetheless, all women suffered from oppression but women of color had the greatest suffer. A great role model during the 1960s and 1970s was Jennie Chavez. Her motivation stemmed from the Chicano movement. Mexican American women, like other groups,

suffered double oppression ([Chavez, “The Double Oppression of Mexican-American Women” \(1972\)](#)). When looking back, despite the ups and downs that continue to be suffered, women should be proud for how many rights and freedoms they have gained over the years.

## 7. Women wanted to control their bodies.

Week 12: A New Right?



Roe v. Wade, [Women Fighting for Abortion](#)

Throughout history, women were pushed into men's shadows therefore hindering the right to their own body. Above women are protesting the right to abortion. They wanted to be able to decide whether they could get a legal abortion or not. In *The Total Woman*, Marabel Morgan talks about how she thought her marriage was going to be the best thing that happened to her. However she marriage was nothing she expected. “Women need to be loved; men need to be admired” (Morgan, 111). Once women were married they lost a lot of their personal freedoms. However, not only were these personal freedoms lost within marriage, they were stripped by the government in some cases as well. “Wives must submit to your husbands’ leadership” in which husbands were compared to God (Morgan, 112). Women were not valued in marriage at all ([Morgan, “The Total Woman” \(1973\)](#)). Reaganomics made it harder for women as well. Being very religious and being in favor of prayer in schools, they were also anti-abortion ([The New Right, April 8th, 2019](#)). Being anti-abortion resulted in women finding





underground abortions. I believe this was a setback for women among other minority groups. An example of this is being anti-bussing. Bussing was the act of taking kids to schools on the other side of town to further integrate schools. This would have been very beneficial for everyone involved ([The New Right, April 8th, 2019](#)). In *Roe v. Wade* women fought for the right to make decisions about their own bodies. Women suffered when there were bombings of abortion clinics. Despite this, there were illegal abortion clinics. Many saw abortion as murder. ([Roe v. Wade, Part 2: The Culture Wars](#)). However, women should be given the opportunity to choose what happens to their body. Legalizing abortion, in some states, gave women more choice over their body.