

FOUNDATIONS

SECTION

I

Do not copy, post, or distribute

Do not copy, post, or distribute

2

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

LEARNING GOALS

After reading this chapter, you will be able to understand:

- How history impacts women and leadership in the present day
- Elements that hinder or help women attain equity and opportunity as leaders
- The varied leadership experiences for women, depending on race, in early colonial times and today
- The history of women's early and continued engagement in leadership

INTRODUCTION

“How come women have such a hard time being leaders today?” a male undergraduate student recently asked at the beginning of class. The young man from a rural area of the United States was surprised to learn that so few women held high-level leadership roles when he knew plenty of women in his life who demonstrated leadership. He asked an excellent question and this section of the book has been written to answer his inquiry using a historical perspective.

The intent of this chapter is to prepare students to examine the present by looking through a lens to the past. The fact that women were deprived of basic rights historically has repercussions now. Simply put, we will answer this question: What do you need to know about U.S. history that will help you understand women and leadership today? You may be surprised by some of our history—how restrictive policies for women really were—and how long it has taken to remedy some of the most problematic issues. To give an overview of the history of women and leadership in the U.S. context, two major elements will be discussed: (a) themes describing how women were *disadvantaged* in their opportunities to lead and (b) specific examples of factors that *enabled* women's leadership using a metaphor of the four waves of feminism. Despite the variety of constraints on women, they found ways to persevere... and to lead.

HISTORIC THEMES THAT INHIBIT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

A variety of elements come together to form a bigger picture—one that demonstrates why women have historically been held back from leadership, or conversely, what enabled them to move forward. Specifically, the following themes that inhibited women will be discussed in this segment: (a) laws and policies; (b) lack of women's right to vote (suffrage); (c) negative impacts of sustained racism; (d) lack of access to education; (e) lack of access to financial resources; and (f) social conventions. These themes are presented from the context of U.S. history and will show reasons for women's limited leadership, especially in the 20th and early 21st centuries.

Laws and Policies

The first theme that helps explain why women were inhibited is U.S. laws and policies, which were initially written to benefit men. Throughout U.S. history, and specifically through the Declaration of Independence, we see that those who wrote our founding documents did not include *all* people and excluded women in particular. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all *men* [emphasis added] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (U.S. Declaration of Independence, a transcription, 1776).

Language is important and we need to consider who benefited from these specific words and who were disadvantaged by them. Using a critical perspective, think about the laws that govern us. Who holds power using these words or governing structures outlined in the U.S. Constitution? It is evident that those who benefitted were white men, whereas people of color and women were overlooked by this language.

It may not be a surprise to learn that the laws of England were brought to the United States after the American Revolution ended in 1783 (Zaher, 2002) and English Common Law had an influence on how the United States established its own legal system (Jacobs, 1991). These laws enabled men the right to control and have power over their wives, known as *feme covert*. The rights of women, according to these laws, were not conducive to full personhood, let alone leadership.

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs everything. (Blackstone, 1765, p. 430)

These legal doctrines, known as **coverture**, were seen as a way for husbands to *protect* their wives while also putting them under male authority. Though women had some rights to “necessaries” (Blackstone, 1765, p. 430), it is abundantly clear that men held absolute authority over their wives, and women were understood to be their

husbands' possessions. Husbands were allowed, for example, to restrain their wives and to use physical force to compel their ownership of them (Hartog, 2002). Contrary to the plight of married women, single women and widows had rights "such as the right to own property, to keep the money they earned, to conduct their own businesses, and to sign contracts" (McMillen, 2014, p. 22). Known as *feme soles*, these women enjoyed greater freedoms than married women.

In addition to limited rights as a spouse, the coverture laws severely limited women's economic and legal activities. Married women could not own property or keep their children in the unlikely event of divorce (Lemke, 2016), clearly limiting their agency. With such strict rules for women, it is easy to understand how they lived in subservience to their husbands. The legal status of married women was equivalent to that of children—they were dependent on men, either fathers or husbands, and derived their social status in the same manner (Lorber, 2010). To make an obvious observation, English Common Law did not even mention same-sex couples, thus also intimating that only one type of marriage was acceptable—that of a man and a woman. Coverture began to change in the mid-19th and into the early 20th century through the Married Women's Property Acts (MWPA), which was adopted by individual states (Lemke, 2016).

Along with the English, there is another group that impacted the U.S. democratic ideology who is often overlooked (Johansen, 1990). What may be surprising to some is that the Native American population also influenced the formation of the U.S. system of government. The Iroquois Confederacy created the Great Law of Peace (Great Law), which "provided for federalism, separation of powers, equitable distribution of wealth, accountability of elected officials, freedom of assembly, speech, and religion, and a system of natural rights" (Jacobs, 1991, p. 497). It was from the Great Law that the United States borrowed significant ideas when creating its own government. It was not until 1988 that the contributions of the Iroquois were recognized by the U.S. Congress in helping develop its early federal system. "Whereas the confederation of the original Thirteen Colonies into one republic was influenced by the political system developed by the Iroquois Confederacy as were many of the democratic principles which were incorporated into the Constitution itself" (H.R. Con. Res. 331, 1988; S. Con. Res. 76, 1988).

It is crucial to understand that the Great Law also recognized the importance of women's **suffrage**, or the right to vote, when early Americans were settling in their new land in the 1700s. According to Jacobs (1991), the Iroquois Confederacy included a societal and governmental structure that was composed of clans that held women in the highest regard. When a young woman married, her husband moved into the home of his mother-in-law. "Clan Mothers are the most respected members and hold the highest positions of authority, leading the matrilineal clan. They are chosen by other adult women in the clan" (Jacobs, 1991, p. 500). Clan Mothers also select the chiefs who would serve in Councils of Clans. The Clan Mothers decided if and when the warriors

(men) would be sent into battle. Women in the clans had far more respect and stature in their societies than did early American women (Jacobs, 1991) in colonial times. Even the household economy was run by women and they only gave money to their husbands when they thought it was appropriate. Though the Iroquois Confederacy would not be considered a matriarchy strictly defined, women held considerable influence. It seems almost unfathomable that women had so much power, authority, and respect in the Iroquois Confederacy at a time when the United States had coverture laws and slavery and members of these two societies lived side by side in the present-day eastern United States.

Our country might look very different today if we had borrowed more democratic principles from the Iroquois—including the large number and significant roles for women. Although framers of the U.S. Constitution, including George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, borrowed significantly from the Great Law, they ignored the authority, rights, and suffrage of women (Jacobs, 1991). Thomas Jefferson is said to have spent time with the Iroquois and even a Seneca Chief (Jefferson, 1975), yet he and John Adams preferred property-based suffrage, which means a person could vote only if they owned property. Due to the adoption of English Common Law and coverture, voting was illegal for married women because they could not lawfully own property.

It was not for lack of trying by women that they were not included in framing early American laws. There were women who worked toward this end to enable women to gain more liberties including suffrage and education. Abigail Adams, in 1776, beseeched her husband, John Adams, who would later become the second U.S. president, to “Remember the Ladies.” This well-known request has been handed down and spoken about for centuries. See the Spotlight On segment for more about the letters between Abigail and John to learn how rights for women were requested (and ignored) in the early years of our country.

SPOTLIGHT ON

LETTERS BETWEEN ABIGAIL ADAMS AND JOHN ADAMS: *REMEMBER THE LADIES*

Abigail to John, March 31, 1776:

In the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would 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.

That your sex are naturally tyrannical is a truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute; but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of master for the more tender and endearing one of friend. Why, then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity. Men of sense in all ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your sex. Regard us as Beings placed by providence under your protection and in imitation of the Supreme Being make use of that power only for our happiness.

Source: "Abigail Adams to John Adams, 31 March 1776," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-01-02-0241>. [Original source: The Adams Papers, Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 1, December 1761 – May 1776, ed. Lyman H. Butterfield. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963, pp. 369–371.]

John to Abigail, April 14, 1776:

As to your extraordinary Code of Laws, I cannot but laugh. We have been told that our Struggle has loosened the bands of Government every where. That Children and Apprentices were disobedient—that schools and Colledges were grown turbulent—that Indians slighted their Guardians and Negroes grew insolent to their Masters. But your Letter was the first Intimation that another Tribe more numerous and powerfull than all the rest were grown discontented.—This is rather too coarse a Compliment but you are so saucy, I wont blot it out.

Depend upon it, We know better than to repeal our Masculine systems. Altho they are in full force, you know they are little more than Theory. We dare not exert our Power in its full Latitude. We are obliged to go fair, and softly, and in Practice you know We are the subjects. We have only the Name of Masters, and rather than give up this, which would compleatly subject Us to the Despotism of the Peticcoat, I hope General Washington, and all our brave Heroes would fight. I am sure every good Politician would plot, as long as he would against Despotism, Empire, Monarchy, Aristocracy, Oligarchy, or Ochlocracy.—A fine Story indeed. I begin to think the Ministry as deep as they are wicked. After stirring up Tories, Landjobbers, Trimmers, Bigots, Canadians, Indians, Negroes, Hanoverians, Hessians, Russians, Irish Roman Catholicks, Scotch Renegadoes, at last they have stimulated the [] to demand new Priviledges and threaten to rebel.

Source: "John Adams to Abigail Adams, 14 April 1776," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-01-02-0248>. [Original source: The Adams Papers, Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 1, December 1761 – May 1776, ed. Lyman H. Butterfield. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963, pp. 381–383.]

It is apparent that the framers of The Constitution and early government officials used hierarchical systems, rather than egalitarian structures, to function. **Patriarchy**—a system in which all major organizations are led by men and benefit men—clearly shows a lack of input by women. Though the term was not conceived of at the time, patriarchy was at work during the creation of our country's laws and

is still alive today. Consider all organizations that you can think of—your list should include government, private sector, social sector, public sector, military, religious institutions, and educational systems. Can you think of any of these organizations that are dominated by women leaders? If not, then you can see that we still live in a patriarchal society—one that has its roots in our nation's founding.

Not all laws and policies were detrimental to women's leadership; there are some that helped. For example, affirmative action was introduced by Executive Orders in the United States in the 1960s. With the intent to promote opportunities for women and ethnic minorities in hiring and education practices, affirmative action has been challenged in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Affirmative action policies tend to help white women more than any other demographic group (Crenshaw, 2007). Other statutes, such as Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities that receive federal funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). More public policies are discussed later in the book.

The Fight for Women's Right to Vote

Suffrage, or the right to vote, was not originally granted by our Founding Fathers to men of color or women of any kind. Only white men signed the original documents of our early government and held seats in the initial conventions and later Congress. Without the right to vote, some women knew they could not escape the inequities that severely limited their abilities to live to their full potential and contribute to the development and leadership of this country. Suffrage was the *pièce de résistance*, or the most important right, that women needed to change the status quo.

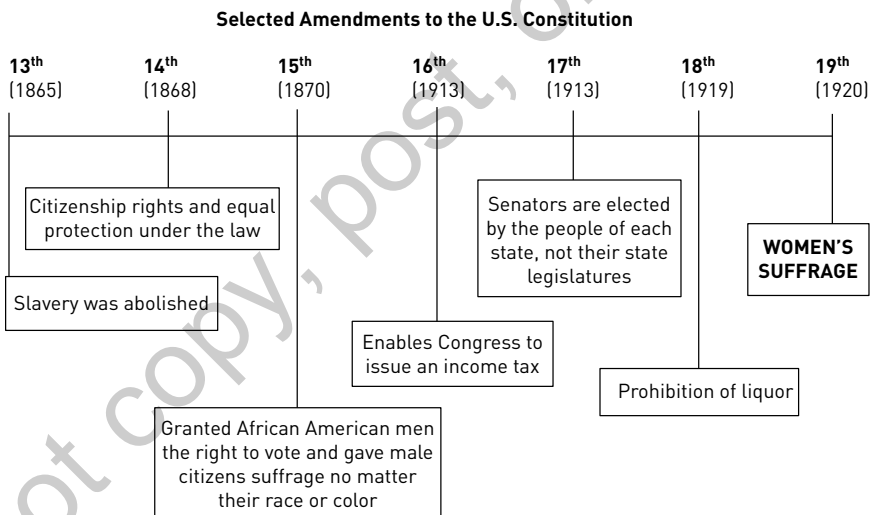
Like Abigail Adams, other women leaders were calling for women's rights during the 18th century in the United States and in other countries. Mary Wollstonecraft, an English writer, penned *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* in 1786 and later, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792. She took considerable criticism for her views that women should be educated and that men were not intellectually superior (Wollstonecraft, 1996). In addition, U.S. writer Judith Sargent Murray wrote an essay, *On the Equality of the Sexes*, in 1779 that was not published until 1790. Women leaders during this time period who had independent thoughts, who wrote about the rights of women, and who spoke out for increased freedom, had an incredibly difficult and unwelcome task. They were not celebrated for their courage then and not much has changed for modern-day feminists who continue to advocate for women's rights. They are still badgered and harangued for wanting gender equity.

Most origin stories about the beginning of the women's movement point to the work of Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and later Susan B. Anthony. All of these women were white, elite, and privileged. Their families enabled them to have the education, financial resources, self-respect, and confidence necessary to create radical change (Marilley, 1996). Although their work was preceded by other dedicated women, it was not until the 19th century that change really began to be seen. However,

they worked hard to give women's suffrage an event that would stand the test of time to become the official starting point for women's activism in the United States (Tetrault, 2014). That event was the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, but many events would transpire before this momentous occasion.

When faced with the possibility that Black men would gain suffrage before white women, Anthony was furious. "I would sooner cut off my right hand than ask the ballot for the Black man and not for woman" decried Susan B. Anthony (Anthony in Barry, 1988, p. 171). Just a few years after the Civil War, the context of the time was pitting race against sex and driving a wedge between women. See Figure 2.1 for a timeline of Amendments to the U.S. Constitution during this period. Stanton and Anthony campaigned against the proposed 14th Amendment, which would grant Black men citizenship rights and instead worked on forming the American Equal Rights Association (AERA), whose focus was universal suffrage. The AERA became the precursor to several other women's suffrage organizations.

FIGURE 2.1 ■ Timeline of Selected Amendments to the U.S. Constitution



Source: U.S. National Archives: America's Founding Documents.

In 1869, Stanton and Anthony formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), which was predicated on a bitter split between women specifically over the proposed 15th Amendment (Barry, 1988), which prohibits federal or state governments from denying a citizen the right to vote, based on race, color, or prior condition of being a slave. Formed in 1869, the mission of this organization was to seek women's suffrage first and work toward attaining suffrage as the 16th Amendment. At this time, Stanton

and Anthony were accused of racism as the new NWSA did not call for universal suffrage as the American Equal Rights Association had done. The struggle was real and the stakes were high.

The fight for women's rights and universal suffrage cannot be fully understood without a discussion of the differences in the experiences of African American women with other women in colonial times. Noted earlier, we see that some Native American women, specifically those in the Iroquois Confederacy, had the right to vote at this point, but it was not the case for women from other demographics and backgrounds. As difficult as it was for white women to be subjected to the laws of coverture, many African American women in the United States encountered a very different reality; they experienced the atrocities of slavery, which categorized them as chattel and legally owned by their masters. Rights of Black women were left up to the discretion of their owners while they also experienced Black male sexism. To be clear, not all Black women were enslaved, but it is important to reveal aspects of this experience and how it relates to leadership.

When Black women were faced with the choice to align with Black men to fight for abolition or align with white women to fight for suffrage, they faced an impossible decision. The concept of intersectionality helps us to understand how this convergence of race and gender compounded the problematic choices for women of color. As will be discussed throughout this book, interlocking oppressions always make life more daunting. Difficult as it is to imagine the social context of the time, a stake was being driven into the heart of America. Instead of freedom for Blacks and suffrage for women occurring simultaneously, people were forced to choose, to compete with one another for basic rights, rather than to collaborate for a more unified country. The struggle for suffrage caused a bitter divide between women—one where they were forced to fight against each other. Due to the patriarchal structures that were in place, ones that offered deprivation of human rights either to all Blacks or to all women, divisiveness and distrust became common.

Impact of Race

If we want to understand women and leadership in the present, we need to see where racism intersects with gender in the past. Though the history of many races and ethnicities could be told in this section, we chose to focus on African Americans due to the impacts of slavery and continued racism against Black people in the present day. Millions of women and men lived as slaves until the 13th Amendment (abolition of slavery) to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in December 1865. Sexist and racist oppression was the norm for African American women (hooks, 2014). Not only were slaves noted by the color of their skin, but women endured a double injustice by virtue of their gender. They were exploited for their labor, were brutalized, and often lived in fear of being sexually assaulted (hooks, 2014). The gender roles of Black women today are still impacted by this legacy of slavery in the United States.

Speaking in public was not seen as proper for women in this era as they exposed themselves, not just their minds, but also their bodies, to public scrutiny. Sojourner Truth confronted these hurdles, referred to her time as a slave, and noted the hard work that she had done. Her life refuted the assertion that women were too frail and helpless to be given suffrage. When giving a speech to the 1851 women's rights convention in Ohio, she demanded the audience to "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?" (Truth in Zackodnik, 2004, p. 50). As female slaves performed the same work as Black male slaves, "white male patriarchs were contradicting their own sexist order that claimed women to be inferior because she lacked physical prowess" (hooks, 1981, p. 71). Therefore, to explain how Black women could perform the same work tasks as Black male slaves, white men proffered that these women were not real women but rather "masculinized sub-human creatures" (hooks, 1981, p. 71). This, presumably, would deter white women from thinking they should be seen as equals to white men, rather than the inferior weaker sex, if their only point of comparison was not human.

LEADER PROFILE 2.1

HARRIET TUBMAN

"For the faint of heart she carried a pistol, telling her charges to go on or die, for a dead fugitive slave could tell no tales. Not all the tracks on the Underground Railroad were smooth" (Larson, 2004, p. xiii). In 1822 Araminta "Minty" Ross was born a slave in Maryland. After marriage, she became Harriet Tubman and lives in the collective memory of Americans as a freedom fighter and conductor on the Underground Railroad—a secret network used to guide slaves to freedom. To accomplish her goals, Tubman used her enormous spiritual strength, which was fostered by her parents and the African American community.

According to Larson (2004), the young Minty was owned by Edward Brodess and was rented out to neighboring families in Dorchester County, Maryland. Beaten, abused, and torn from her family, she worked hard from a very young age. Struck in the head by a slave owner as an adolescent, she was left with episodes of unconsciousness and hallucinations her entire life. After recovering from her initial head wound, she often labored in outdoor jobs traditionally held by male slaves. Proud of her physical strength, she cut and hauled wood, plowed the fields, and trapped furs in nearby swamps.

Due to her ability to work with men, she was linked to communication networks among free Black and slave men. It was here, Larson (2004) notes, that she met mariners and gathered information about dangerous and safe spaces from the Eastern Shore of Maryland into Delaware, and to the free state of Pennsylvania. After the death of her owner and upon her pending sale, Harriet ran away in 1849. Guided by the North Star, she traveled by night, on her way to freedom in Philadelphia, a distance of roughly 130 miles. She was assisted by abolitionists and others on the Underground Railroad.

(Continued)

LEADER PROFILE 2.1 (CONTINUED)**HARRIET TUBMAN**

Once free, she worked as a cook and as a domestic to save as much money as she could (Larson, 2004). She kept in touch with messengers about her family in Maryland. In December 1850, she made the first rescue attempt to save her niece, Kessiah, and her two children from the auction block. Just after bidding ended and Kessiah was sold, she was set aside until the auctioneer finished dinner. When he returned, he found the slaves had escaped. Kessiah was joined by her husband where he then rowed them to safety near Baltimore. From here Tubman took them to freedom in Philadelphia. This is how she surreptitiously transported about 70 people over 13 journeys during a period from around 1849 to 1859. Additionally, she is presumed to have given instructions to about 50 additional slaves on how to navigate the path to freedom in the north. Harriet Tubman performed many other humanitarian deeds including working for the Union forces during the Civil War in the South, advocating for abolition, and fighting for women's suffrage. She died in Auburn, New York, at the age of 91 in 1913.

Though Tubman could not read or write, nor did she hold a formal position, she was a leader. She demonstrated enormous courage, acted in the best interest of those she led, and was selfless. We would do well to have more of these attributes in our leaders today.

Other Black women, such as Anna Cooper, also spoke about the need for liberation from both racism and sexism. Author/activist bell hooks (1981) shares how this specific 19th-century woman stood up and broke the silence to articulate the experiences of being female and Black, what we now know as intersectionality. In her own words, Cooper states, “The White woman could at least plead for her own emancipation; the Black women doubly enslaved, could but suffer and struggle and be silent” (Cooper in hooks, 1981, p. 2). In the late 19th century, there was some unity among Black and white women calling for suffrage and articulating women's experiences. However, trust was tenuous. These historic events still cause some distrust today.

Access to Education

Women did not have the same opportunities to attain education in the early American period as they do today (Snyder, 1993). Women of color had the double disparity of their sex and race and did not have the same possibilities as white women (Solomon, 1985). Education for girls became more common in the 19th century and in the early 20th century. Post-secondary education for women became more widely accessible in the 1970s until it reached 50% of all students enrolled in 1980 (Solomon, 1985). See Table 2.1 for additional information about the percentage of women enrolled in higher education institutions. In the 1980s, women began earning more baccalaureate degrees than men overall (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). With knowledge came power.

TABLE 2.1 ■ Women Enrolled in U.S. Institutions of Higher Education, 1870–1980

Year	Number of Women Enrolled (Thousands)	Percentage of All Students Enrolled
1870	11	21.0
1900	85	36.8
1960	1,223	37.9
1975	3,847	45.4
1980	5,694	51.8

Source: Solomon, B. (1985). *In the company of educated women*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics*. 1975. Part I; National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, (Washington, D.C., 1981, 1982).

Historically, it is easy to see that those who had education were generally those who advocated for change. For example, Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906) was born in Massachusetts, was raised as a Quaker, and attended a Quaker boarding school near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She moved to New York to become a teacher and later became a temperance activist, abolitionist, and suffragist (Barry, 1988). Single her entire life, she enjoyed more freedom than did her married friends. Due to her advanced education for that time, she was able to advocate for other people, especially for women.

Both Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were well known for their work as abolitionists and suffragists. Mott (1793–1880) was a Quaker minister and spoke out for the rights of others, including those of slaves, Indians, immigrants, and women (Greene, 1981). She was raised by Quaker parents in Massachusetts and educated at a Quaker boarding school in New York. Stanton (1815–1902) was born in New York to strict and religious parents where her father was a lawyer. She learned Greek and Latin from her neighbor and attended Johnstown Academy where she excelled as a student. Later she went to the all-girls Troy Female Seminary (Ginzberg, 2009). “Stanton was the first person to devote her considerable intellect solely to developing the philosophy and promoting the cause of women’s rights. She essentially invented and embodied what we might term stand-alone feminism” (Ginzberg, 2009, p. 11). **Feminism** is a movement to bring equality between women and men in social, economic, government, and business spheres. The women in these brief examples demonstrate how knowledge is power. Educated women had more resources to advocate for abolition and for suffrage.

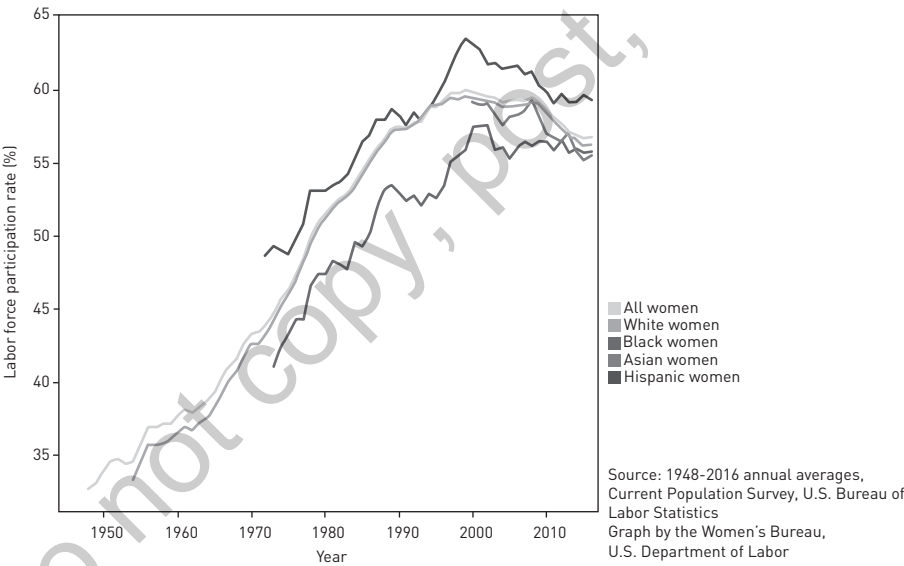
Though women have made considerable progress in the realm of education, which enables them to secure better jobs and higher wages, the amount of education does not correlate with the number of leadership positions women should be earning. Women make up half the U.S. population and earn the majority of college degrees, but they have always been underrepresented in every sector of leadership (Tan & DeFrank-Cole, 2019).

Access to Financial Resources

Not only does financial wealth give people power to purchase things they want, but it also provides freedom and independence. Though true for both women and men, in a patriarchal society, women have historically had less opportunity to earn money, especially early on in our country’s history. Thus, they did not have financial resources to spend on issues they wished to support. Though women represent 46% of the paid labor force in 2016 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2018), women were not well represented in the public sphere in the early history of the country. More specifically, they comprised only 28.6% of the paid labor force in 1948 when men held 71.4% of jobs in the same year.

Black women have participated in the paid labor force longer and in higher numbers than women from other ethnic groups (see Figure 2.2; U.S. Department of Labor, 2018). Most did not have the luxury of pursuing higher education until the latter part of the 20th century (Duran, 2015). Despite their participation in the labor force, Black women

FIGURE 2.2 ■ U.S. Labor Force Participation by Women, 1948–2016



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Women’s Bureau, Women in the labor force. Labor force participation rate by sex, race and Hispanic ethnicity 1948–2016 annual averages.

Notes: Represents the percentage of persons in the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and older that are employed or actively looking for work. Estimates for the race groups will not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Data for the individual race groups do not include people of two or more races. Hispanics can be of any race. The comparability of historical data has been affected at various times by methodological and other changes in the Current Population Survey.

did not earn high wages due to discrimination and later Jim Crow laws, which is a system of discrimination against Blacks in education, employment, financial lending, voting, and accommodations, among others (Alexander, 2012). Historically and now, women earn less money than men, and Black women earn less money than white women.

The ways in which women spend their resources are also different than men. Women contribute more to philanthropic causes than do men (Women's Philanthropy Institute, Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, 2010). In a study published in 2011, researchers found that women score higher than men when testing for empathy and that these scores matter when giving, and that women are likely to give more (Mesch, Brown, Moore, & Hayat, 2011). They also state that women tend to be more altruistic and to promote social change. In addition, Eagly, Diekmann, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Koenig (2004) found that women have a stronger commitment to equality than do men.

Thinking beyond philanthropic causes that women may give to, money also matters in political campaigns. "People, not dollars, vote. But money helps to shape both voter behaviour and governmental decisions" (Alexander, 2001, p. 198). Women in elected political office help to shape policies for women. Paxton and Hughes (2014) state that women draft legislation that is related to their concerns. They tend to focus on issues related to children, education, and health care when they have authority over budgets and policies. Women recognize that they also might gain more employment opportunities if they are represented in elected office (Eagly et al., 2004).

LEADER PROFILE 2.2

PEARL S. BUCK

Pearl S. Buck was the first woman to win both a Pulitzer Prize (1932) and a Nobel Prize for Literature (1938) and is one of only two women to hold this distinction (Toni Morrison is the other). Born in West Virginia in 1892 to Presbyterian missionaries, she moved with her family to China as an infant and spent much of the first half of her life there. She returned to the United States to pursue an undergraduate degree at Randolph-Macon Women's College and receive a master's degree from Cornell University.

Throughout the 20th century, when so much of the world was at war, Buck used her writing to promote peace and understanding. She leveraged her global stature as a best-selling and award-winning author to become a strong advocate for a variety of causes, including civil rights, East-West relations, immigration, international adoption, and women's rights. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Buck spoke and wrote in support of the Equal Rights Amendment for women. Her 1941 collection of essays, *Of Men and Women*, helped to inspire later women writers. Here she offered an observation about teaching and writing women's history:

History, for example, has always been taught as the work of man. When woman appears in it she is either a queen, of little practical use, or a rebel

(Continued)

LEADER PROFILE 2.2 (CONTINUED)**PEARL S. BUCK**

smashing up furniture or praying in saloons. The truth has never been told about women in history: that everywhere man has gone woman has gone too, and what he has done she has done also. Women are ignorant of their own past and ignorant of their own importance in that past. In curiosity a few months ago I asked a haphazard score of women of my acquaintance if they had heard of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Only one had even heard her name, and she had no recollection of more. Yet only a generation ago Elizabeth Cady Stanton was called the greatest woman in the United States, and by some the greatest in the world.... [I]f the aim of education is to be enlightening of men and women about each other, of course history must be taught truthfully about both, and truthfully rewritten. [Buck, 1971, pp. 179–180]

Her fiction emphasized the trials and tribulations of female characters and gave a powerful voice to women from different cultures all over the world. Guided by the empathy she learned while growing up as an American “outsider” in China, Buck devoted her life to fighting for “outsiders” and for the oppressed. Walter White, the executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People from 1931 to 1955, called Buck one of “only two White Americans [the other was Eleanor Roosevelt] who understood the reality of Black life” [White in Conn, 1996, p. xvi]. Buck died in 1973 at the age of 80.

Drawing on the power of the pen, Pearl Sydenstricker Buck became a leader. Without an official leadership position, she influenced millions of people in many nations across multiple generations to support the protection and expansion of human rights. Her example continues to inform and inspire activists and scholars around the world.

Social Conventions for Women

Considering the factors that inhibit women’s progress and leadership, structural barriers such as the lack of access to legal representation, lack of suffrage, slavery, lack of access to education, and lack of money all complicate the lives of women. There are, however, some opaque barriers that do not fit neatly into the above categories, elements that limit women’s abilities to easily move through a society based on social conventions of the day. These may include access to birth control and religious teachings.

Access to Birth Control

“People have tried to control reproduction in virtually all known societies” (Gordon, 2007, p. 7). Birth control dramatically changed options for women when determining if, or when, they would have children. Safe and reliable contraception enabled women to have a level of control over their bodies that would enable them to work in the public sphere in ways they could not without it. This liberty in the last 50 years has allowed

women to spend more time on education and employment, if they wished, rather than child-rearing. Such control by women did not come without intense scrutiny and public controversy, especially depending on the era in which contraception is discussed. “(C)onflicts about reproductive rights are political conflicts,” (Gordon, 2007, p. vii), which were debated in the public spheres, and came under governmental oversight. It was not until 1965 that the birth control pill became available to married women; seven years later, unmarried women legally acquired the same freedom through the action of the Supreme Court (Thompson, 2013).

The Comstock Act, passed in 1873, forbade the transportation of information or contraceptive devices through the U.S. Postal Service. Named for the postmaster under whose leadership the law was created, the Comstock Act attempted to curtail *obscenity* (Gordon, 2007). There were real repercussions for transmitting information about birth control or selling contraceptives through the mail and people were prosecuted when caught. Whether for feminism, sexual freedom, or justice, ideologies about birth control caused various social movements over the past 150 years. Victorian-era beliefs of the 19th century promoted women as the fairer sex, more pure than men, and therefore the common mindset was that intercourse should be indulged only for reproduction. These beliefs curtailed women’s lives in multiple ways, not the least of which was in their opportunities for having paid employment without which forced their dependency on men. Rather than independence and equality, lack of access to birth control led to fewer possibilities for women, especially in leadership.

Influence of Religious Teachings

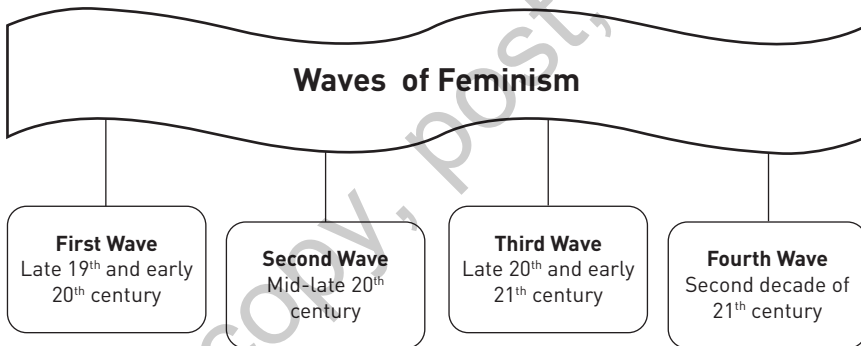
The presence or absence of religious teachings also influences women. Though examples could be selected from many different religious beliefs, we selected a popular one in the United States for review. Consider faiths in the Judeo-Christian tradition that encourage women to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis, 1:28, King James Version). The use of birth control, therefore, is not one debated only in moralistic and political terms, but also in religious ones. Even in the present day, there are organized religions that prohibit the use of contraceptives among their faithful. Additionally, the Bible advises women to be submissive to their husbands in Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18 (King James Version). If subservience to men is divinely inspired, a woman had a very difficult choice to make: to obey her husband or disobey God. These perceived consequences had eternal implications.

Put simply, women wanted upward mobility, dignity, autonomy, and access to contraceptives. With a strong collective voice, women were able to gain control over their bodies, which helped them attain these rights (Gordon, 2007). To be restricted in so many ways, both seen and unseen, women’s lives were subordinated to men’s lives. With the advent of the women’s movement came more opportunities for women to choose their destinies rather than having them dictated by men.

ELEMENTS THAT ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Despite the previously discussed barriers, women still demonstrated leadership and moved themselves forward. The feelings of purpose and connection that were felt by those women who worked together to win more liberties emboldened them to persist. Though there were times when wedges were used to divide women, history tells us that women accomplished more when they collaborated than when they were working separately. Using the framework of the four waves of feminism (see Figure 2.3), this section will demonstrate how women cooperated and exhibited leadership through organizing against abolition, to gain suffrage, as well as advocating for change during the women's movement. The wave metaphor helps us differentiate the periods in history when much significant organizing occurred, though it is not tantamount to saying that "nothing happened" in intervening times. Though the term *feminism* was not used in the 1800s, it is being applied here so that women's work for equality may be categorized into time periods and better understood in the U.S. context.

FIGURE 2.3 ■ Waves of Feminism



Source: Adapted from Marilley, S. M. (1996). *Woman suffrage and the origins of liberal feminism in the United States, 1820-1920*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Walker, R. (January 1992). *Becoming the third wave*. Ms: 39-41.

First Wave of Feminism

Organizing Against Slavery

Looking back to the beginning of the first wave of feminism, women mobilized to join in the fight against abolition and to champion women's rights at the same time (Marilley, 1996). Women developed important skills through the abolitionist movement such as public speaking and lobbying members of Congress with petitions. As there are so few women in senior roles, women often needed to influence men since they held (and still hold) the majority of leadership positions.

In the early to mid-1800s, and still today, acting with a sense of charity, compassion, and high moral character were desirable qualities for many women in society. Those qualities were exactly what they used as abolitionists in the late 1820s and early 1830s to begin their fight for women's rights. As an example, Maria Stewart, a free-born Black woman who spoke and wrote in opposition to slavery, came from a religious background. She wrote a speech to mobilize other women and it was published in the *Liberator* in 1831 (Marilley, 1996). Her efforts encouraged other women, and this type of women's organizing gave power to their movement. To be certain, women did not possess any real power or authority to demand changes through politics and legislatures, but they used their strengths and aligned their skills with societal gender norms of that era.

Organizing for the Right to Vote

As referenced earlier in the context of the suffrage movement, two of the most famous women known for their impact on securing suffrage for women in the United States are Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Together they were two of the architects of the 1848 Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention (Ginzberg, 2009). This convention is regarded as one of the most important occurrences of the American women's rights movement in the United States. At this meeting, a highly important statement on the equality of women was announced. The Declaration of Sentiments proclaimed in a format similar to the Declaration of Independence that: "we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men *and women* [emphasis added] are created equal" (Free, 2015, p. 35). The Declaration was a document to establish equal rights for women including those in the civil, social, political, and religious sectors (Free, 2015). This was a bold move by those who signed the document and they would face ridicule for demanding such audacious new policies.

The efforts to secure suffrage were laborious and it took women working with other women to earn respect and become emboldened to move forward. The network of women provided strength in their movement that other activities did not give them. Look at the timeline in Table 2.2 to get a better sense in which years which states and territories gained the right to vote.

TABLE 2.2 ■ Timeline of Women's Suffrage in the United States	
Women's Right to Vote in the United States	
Before Statehood	
1869	Territory of Wyoming
1870	Territory of Utah
1883	Territory of Washington

(Continued)

TABLE 2.2 ■ Timeline of Women’s Suffrage in the United States (CONTINUED)

Women’s Right to Vote in the United States	
1887	Territory of Montana
1913	Territory of Alaska
Prior to 19th Amendment (Women’s Suffrage)	
1890	Wyoming
1893	Colorado
1896	Utah, Idaho
1910	Washington
1911	California
1912	Arizona, Kansas, Oregon
1914	Montana, Nevada
1917	New York
1918	Michigan, Oklahoma, South Dakota
Partial Suffrage*	
1913	Illinois
1917	Nebraska, Ohio, Indiana, North Dakota, Rhode Island
1919	Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Tennessee, Wisconsin
After Passage of 19th Amendment (1920)	
Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, (Territory of) Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia	
* Ability to vote in only presidential elections prior to the passage of the 19th Amendment	

Source: Based on Center for American Women and Politics. (2014, August). *Teach a girl to lead: Women’s suffrage in the U.S. by state*. Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

Though Table 2.2 highlights when some women were granted suffrage, not all women were permitted to vote in the years indicated. Native American women had to wait until the Indian Citizenship Act was passed in 1924 (Wilkerson-Freeman, 2002). Women of Asian descent were denied citizenship and voting rights until the Immigration and Nationality Act (McCarran-Walter Act) of 1952 (Lien, 2001). Wilkerson-Freeman (2002) notes that Black women, as well as poor white women, often confronted poll taxes, were forced to take literacy tests, or faced other discriminatory practices, which

severely limited their participation in voting. The 24th Amendment banned these egregious acts in 1962 (History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives, 1962). The Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibited racial discrimination, which assisted various ethnic groups in voting more freely (Cascio & Washington, 2014; *Congressional Digest*, 2018). Even in the present day, there are initiatives to prevent specific demographics of people from voting. Consider the gerrymandering that goes on in states regarding congressional districts. Where the lines are drawn in specific states benefits some political parties while simultaneously disenfranchising others.

The first wave of feminism was about women's opposition to forced dependency on men (Rendell, 2000). Women did not want to be excluded from the public sphere and wanted equal legal rights. This fight against inequalities in the first wave is somewhat different from the push for understanding and appreciating how women were different from men in the second wave.

Second Wave of Feminism

Betty Friedan is often credited as being a spokesperson for the second wave of feminism in the United States due to the publication of her 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique*, where she challenged the typical role for white women as housewives. She was also one of a group of women who founded the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966 and became its first president (Rodgers, 2017). Gloria Steinem (Leader Profile 1.1), cofounder of *Ms.* magazine, was also a leader in the second wave of feminism. Both of these women were seen as trailblazers, particularly for white women.

Issues of finance matter deeply to a person's independence and they were important topics in the second wave. Whether in acquiring personal wealth, contributing to philanthropic causes, or in shaping policies for women, money provided freedom. When women have greater finances, they may contribute to campaigns to elect more women who support their causes, and promote women's liberties and more female-friendly policies, including health care, family leave, and public education.

One element that women focused on in the second wave was getting more white women into the labor force. Recognizing that there were greater opportunities for women than being housewives, women were encouraged to work outside the home and earn an income. Black women had worked outside the home for many years, so there were differences in labor force participation between races. This also meant that the feminist movement had different priorities for different groups of women. White women could not speak for all women as bell hooks stated in 1981:

When the women's movement began in the late 60s, it was evident that the White women who dominated the movement felt it was "their" movement, that is the medium through which a White woman would voice her grievances to society. ... They urged Black women to join "their" movement or in some cases the women's movement, but in dialogues and writings, their attitudes toward Black women were both racist and sexist. (p. 137)

Simultaneous to the efforts by white women, Black women were expressing their discontent and sharing their experiences in the 1960s and 1970s. Black feminism helped identify the unique struggles Black women faced, though some did not like the combination of the two words. The term *womanist* was later coined by Alice Walker as a more representative word because the “feminist” movement, often viewed through the lens of white women, did not sufficiently speak to the particular needs and concerns of Black women (Duran, 2015). With a devotion to the community and a dedication to protect Black men, womanism distinguishes itself from feminism. “(W)omanist and womanism layer shades of race and class into the gendered prism made visible by feminism” (Jacobs, 2011, p. 26). Black women were in a precarious situation—should they fight sexism and/or racism? white women and their brand of feminism did not treat Black women fairly during the suffrage movement, as has been previously discussed, and Black men were patriarchal. They wanted a term and a movement that were representative of their particular conditions, were more inclusive, and that rejected any forms of oppression.

In 1974, a group of Black and lesbian feminists began gathering and established the Combahee River Collective. The group was named for an action on the river in South Carolina where Harriet Tubman planned and led a raid, which freed 750 slaves (Herrmann & Stewart, 2001). They produced a statement that articulated who they were, what they wanted to do, and why they were gathering. “We are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking” (Combahee River Collective Statement in Smith, 1983, p. 264). The women categorized themselves as feminists and lesbians and believed their struggles for liberation could not be disentangled from race, class, or sexual oppression. Solidarity around their racial identity was paramount. “We struggle together with Black men against racism, while we also struggle with Black men about sexism” (Combahee River Collective Statement in Smith, 1983, p. 267).

The women’s movement, especially in the second wave, redefined leadership and how it was manifest. “Rather than seeking power over others, the leaders of the women’s movement wanted to empower one another to share leadership” (Rodgers, 2017, p. 74). Some women rejected the notion of leadership or treated it more as a collective. As can be seen in the examples above, women gathered together, began describing their own experiences, made plans for social change, and followed through to enact many of the improvements they sought.

Third Wave of Feminism

The third wave of feminism tried to be more inclusive than its predecessors (Snyder, 2008). It also began broadening the definition of what it might mean to be a feminist and promoting self-acceptance, rather than vilifying those who may have different views or who may not want to be revolutionary activists. Rebecca Walker (1995)

stated, “There are an infinite number of moments and experiences that make up female empowerment” (p. xxxvi). **Intersectionality** helped shape this wave, as there were many identities to take into consideration. Intersectionality, as described in Chapter 1, is a way of better understanding a person’s identity by looking at a variety of factors, including, race, class, gender, education, and sexuality. Kimberle Crenshaw applied the term to feminism as it relates to a variety of oppressive identities (Adewunmi, 2014). Young women in this era grew up never knowing a world without birth control pills, without women professors, or Women’s Studies programs on their college campuses. How they sought to identify as feminists, if at all, was a choice that women in the third wave had the ability to make because of previous women’s activism.

We are currently living in the fourth wave of feminism, so details about this era are beyond the scope of this historical chapter. However, movements to organize women against sexual harassment and assault, like #MeToo, and the greater representation of women in elected office, are pillars of this time period. Social movements such as these will be discussed more in Chapter 13.

SUMMARY

How women were treated in the early days of our country impacts how women are perceived today, especially as it relates to leadership. Initially without citizenship, suffrage, legal rights, or full personhood, women were never seen as formal leaders in the first 100 years of the republic. Even in the second century, women in the United States rarely held official public positions and continually struggled for freedom and liberty. Realistically, it has been only in recent history, briefly during World War II, and more consistently since the 1970s, that women have been taking on more formal and public roles as leaders. To be clear, women worked and demonstrated leadership throughout history, but it generally was not documented or took place in more private spheres around their homes and in their communities. It was typically in nonhierarchical ways that were less recognized and discussed less frequently in history classes. A variety of limiting factors including restrictive laws, lack of suffrage, racism, lack of education, little money, and stifling social conventions prohibited women from advancing. Balancing those against the elements that enhanced women, such as organizing and the implementation of laws with equity as their mission, the picture of women’s leadership comes into better focus.

Women in the United States still live in a country where the dominant force in their lives has been a patriarchal structure designed by and for white men. To overcome forces that have been in play for 250 years is not easy. Women have always sought to be involved in setting the direction of our country and still do so today. It just takes more time and conscious planning to navigate the labyrinth in which they do their work and lead.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is women's leadership in the 21st century still impacted by historical events?
2. Why did women not get the vote until 1920 in the United States?
3. How does history impact the present-day views of women and leadership?
4. How different might our country look today if we had borrowed more democratic principles from the Iroquois—including the large number and significant roles for women?
5. Why do you think women's suffrage was not included in the original U.S. Constitution?

LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE: TAKING HISTORICAL CONTEXT INTO ACCOUNT

Regular reflection is one of the most effective tools in developing as an effective leader (Adler, 2016). One way to encourage regular reflection is by committing to keep a leadership development journal to record your thoughts, ideas, and experiences.

Journal Reflection

Review and reflect upon the history of women and leadership in the United States. Identify three things that surprised you. Consider how you might address inequities that you still see in our country today.

KEY TERMS

Coverture 22
 Feminism 31
 Intersectionality 41

Patriarchy 25
 Suffrage 23