

Southern New Hampshire University

Finding Our Way:

Friedan, Steinem, and the Fight for the Women's Movement, 1960-1980.

A Capstone Project Submitted to the College of Online and Continuing Education in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Master of Arts in History

By

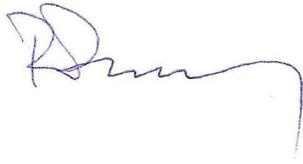
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## Abstract

The recent re-emergence of the women's movement after the 2016 presidential election has generated new interest in understanding the hardships that the second-wave of feminism faced in an effort to avoid those conflicts as the movement continues. Studying Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan from the time period of 1960-1980 provides a catalyst to understanding the challenges the women's movement faced within itself and from outside the movement. By considering each activist's writings, speeches, biographies, the historiography of their lives, and influence on the movement, as well as the media and the public's reaction to them, this project looks at how the movement began as one, fragmented into many parts, and in the end came back together to fight for women's rights instead of against women's progression. The central argument that drove the research was that Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem's relationship was as complicated as the movement, and their disagreements were not detrimental to the movement, as often portrayed by the media at the time, but rather forced the leaders to consider their representation of all women within the movement. The early stage of the second-wave of feminism is often criticized for lacking diversity, and Friedan and Steinem are often pointed at as the cause. Through her iconic book, *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan wrote of the plight of the housewife by interviewing her classmates from college, all middle-class and educated, white women. Her book was criticized for lacking any mention of black women, poor women, or uneducated women. Later, Steinem enters the women's movement with the purpose of including more women and not just the housewife. However, her publication *Ms.* magazine was criticized in its early stages for employing mostly white women and encouraging women to see themselves as the "same", essentially ignoring the fact that the movement was made up of many different

kinds of women. The contradictions within the movement are a reflection of the women that led it. By delving deeper into Friedan and Steinem's relationship with each other, as well as their relationship with the movement, one can grasp a better understanding of how these two feminist icons fought not only for women but for the movement they represented.

## **Dedication**

For those women in my life who have taught me strength, wisdom, kindness, perseverance, and  
love.

For those women who have yet to realize that feminism is not a bad word, arguments do not  
equal defeat, and you can make a difference.

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Personally, I would like to thank my husband, Travis, for his relentless support and encouragement when I doubted myself, or just needed a sounding board to listen to ideas or frustrations. This process over the last two years did not just affect me it affected him as well. We had to give up trips and weekends, so that I could get my papers and readings completed. Without his understanding and support, this process would have been much more difficult. My parents, in-laws, brothers and sisters always encouraged me to continue through the struggles and reminded me why I chose this path. Finally, I would like to give special acknowledgement to the most patient, kind, thoughtful teacher I have known, my Dad, George Robinson. Over the course of this project, and others in this program, he read multiple drafts and revisions, offered

critiques (which I either accepted or rejected and then would ask him to do it again!) and helped me find perspective when I would go too far off in one direction.

To all of you, I could not have completed this on my own, and I am so grateful for all of your support, and kind words of encouragement.

## **List of Abbreviations**

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

ERA – Equal Rights Amendment

FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation

NOW – National Organization of Women

NWC – National Women’s Conference

Stop ERA – Stop Taking Our Rights

UC Davis – University of California Davis

“Am I saying that women must be liberated from motherhood? No. I am saying that motherhood will only be a joyous and responsible human act when women are free to make, with full conscious choice and full human responsibility, the decisions to become mothers.

~Betty Friedan, *The Sexual Revolution*, 1969.

“One more thing, especially to the sisters, because I wish someone had said it to me; it would have saved me so much time. You don’t have to play one role in this revolutionary age above all others. If you’re willing to pay the price for it, you can do anything you want to do. And the price is worth it.”

~Gloria Steinem, “Living the Revolution,” May 31, 1970.

## Introduction

In the late 1950s Betty Friedan, a suburban housewife and mother, began to question what had become of her life. Prior to being a mother, Friedan was at one time a journalist whose works purpose was to expose the difficulties felt by unions when vying for workers rights. However, once married and with children, her works purpose became her family. This shift in her perceived purpose resulted in Friedan questioning societies responsibility for the pressure towards men and women to fulfill certain roles. During Friedan's time in the suburbs, she began to realize that although her life had changed drastically as a result of starting a family, her husband's had not. While he was off at work, Friedan's life now consisted of watching her children and keeping up with her housework. The purpose, the pace, and the heaviness of her dissatisfaction with these gender roles became the topic of the book she published in 1963, *The Feminine Mystique*.<sup>1</sup> Historians point to the publication and popularity of this book as the beginning of the second wave of feminism.<sup>2</sup> Friedan had inadvertently begun a revolution by exposing the secret fears and worries of women all over the country that simply being called "wife" or "mother" did not fulfill their lives; the modern women's movement had begun.

By 1972, almost a decade after Friedan's iconic book, the women's movement in the United States is a fully formed revolution gaining political strides and importance. Women all over the United States were rebelling against societies gender roles and changing the narrative of the country. Gloria Steinem, a journalist made famous by her article published in 1963 (the same year Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*) exposing the misogyny of the Playboy Club in

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<sup>1</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963; repr., New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Howard Brick, *The Age of Contradictions: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 51.

New York, by going undercover as a Playboy Bunny, published her own magazine for women.<sup>3</sup> This magazine was much different than other women's publications on the market. Unlike, *Redbook*, *McCall's*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Ladies Home Journal*, Steinem's *Ms.* would cover what women wanted to discuss: politics, their bodies, current events, and how to get more involved with the movement. This progressive publication first hit the newsstands in July 1972, and immediately sold out. The women's movement had turned into women's liberation.

Although both Friedan and Steinem entered the women's movement from middle-class, college educated, white female, journalist backgrounds, their ideologies and approach differed greatly. This difference created tension within the movement and both women felt the backlash. Friedan was the beginning of the movement, while Steinem entered it much later, and found that with the publication of *Ms.*, some women thought she was a fraud and an FBI plant to turn the women's movement against itself. While others were relieved and excited that there was now a platform for them to connect with other women and end the isolation in their journeys of motherhood, or work, or both. As the women's movement began to grow and evolve, both Friedan and Steinem evolved as well. Both women were important not only to the movement, but also to push each other, to stretch their ideologies and rhetoric in an effort to include more women and more issues.

It is no surprise that all women involved in the feminist movement did not always get along. The movement had many different agendas and topics that were shuffled around on the priority list of different groups within the movement. However, the questions this research project asks are more specific to two powerful women within the movement and their

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<sup>3</sup> Gloria Steinem, "A Bunny's Tale," *Show Magazine* (May 1, 1963 & June 1, 1963).

contradictions of each other's work as a means to reflect the larger conflicts within the movement itself. Was Freidan's rejection of Steinem's feminism a rejection of Steinem herself, or was it a rejection of the direction of the movement? Was Freidan able to continue to evolve within the movement as it changed over the decades? What aspects of Steinem's *Ms.* magazine upset women involved in the movement the most? Can an idea as large and long-standing as the women's movement ever really be a cohesive revolution? What conflicts within the movement still stand today? The answers to these questions will help not only create clarity surrounding the beginning of the second-wave of feminism, but they will also lead to a larger discussion concerning the women's movement today and provide insight into what makes a revolution a success or failure. As the women's movement sought to bring women together around a common cause, *Ms.* gave women that connection. The reason some women and feminist groups rejected the magazine was partly in response to the principals, images and ideologies of Cold War feminism created by Betty Freidan.

The 1970s brought a dramatic change to the women's movement. Women who had broken away from the civil rights movement took with them unprecedented knowledge of how a movement can become a revolution. Professor emerita at UC Davis, and journalist, Ruth Rosen published a book in 2000, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*, which simultaneously condenses the women's movement, while expanding the movements breadth to reveal its impact. In one section of the book, which covers the women's movement's break from the civil rights movement, she explains that, "The movement [civil rights], after all, gave them [women] great freedom to explore their ideas and values. They also learned how to organize, write press releases, run mimeograph machines, and mediate

conflicts...they were teaching a critical mass of young women how to think strategically and theoretically.”<sup>4</sup> However, before any of this could happen Betty Friedan’s *Feminine Mystique* would be published in 1963. The revelations this book held were not limited to the women who Friedan interviewed, or even herself. By publishing this book, Friedan lit a fuse that was laying dormant and that many women had never noticed before. Historian Daniel Horowitz wrote a book on Friedan and argues that her early work with union disputes influenced her iconic book and later work with the women’s movement. In this book, Horowitz finds that Friedan’s skills as a journalist coupled with her desire to expose the inequalities within fields of labor, created a woman who was bound to expose the heartache and secret desires of the Cold War generation of women who had been told to suppress them.<sup>5</sup>

Almost a decade after Friedan’s revelations to women all over America that they were not alone in feeling unfulfilled by their lives as wife and mother, Steinem published *Ms.* magazine and started a new dialogue for women, about women, through women, reflecting what women wanted from their lives. Later on, in 1976, Friedan published a collection of her own writings through the early women’s movement. In the introduction to one piece, Friedan reveals that she was asked why she was writing for *McCall’s* instead of *Ms.* and her response was, “But it didn’t interest me to talk to the already convinced, especially within the framework of a new kind of feminist conformity, which seemed to me in its way as denying to women’s reality as the old feminine mystique.”<sup>6</sup> Friedan’s conflict with *Ms.* and Steinem’s form of feminism was that it

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<sup>4</sup> Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women’s Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 121.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of “The Feminine Mystique”: The American Left, The Cold War, and Modern Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Betty Friedan, *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women’s Movement* (New York: Random House, 1976), 188.

excluded many women who were not as extreme. According to one historian, “it was said that ‘women’s liberation’ differed sharply from ‘women’s rights’ campaigns early in the 1960s by widening the scope of criticism beyond the denial of opportunity in jobs and politics; criticism now targeted the structure of gender relations in private life...”<sup>7</sup> Freidan and Steinem formed their interpretations of women’s rights in different era’s and with different insights. Although both women have similar backgrounds, their work reflects very different interpretations of the past as well as different visions for the future.

Undoubtedly, the women’s movement has been a success. Women in America have more rights now than any generation previous. Rosen, in the introduction to her book, recalls teaching a class at UC Davis in 1980 where she asked the class what they could recall about the lives of women before the women’s movement had taken off and what issues women had redefined. She remembered being met with:

Eyes glazed over...What issues? I stood there listening to the silence and then spontaneously began to sketch out that world. I began to cover the blackboard with short catchphrases that reflected some of the ordinary but invariable painful female experiences that the women’s movement had excavated and exposed to public view. Then, noting their growing amazement, I paused, took a deep breath, and stared at my own sprawling list.<sup>8</sup>

However, there is still work to be done, and critics might wonder why some items on the agenda have not yet been accomplished. The women’s movement continues today with women who represent a vastly different world than what they inherited. Although their approach may have

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<sup>7</sup> Howard Brick, *The Age of Contradictions*, 166.

<sup>8</sup> Rosen, *The World Split Open*, pg. xiii.

been different, Friedan and Steinem's dialogue through the movement inspired and still inspires many women to take up the cause.

In 1963, when Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, she was a suburban housewife and mother, who was previously a journalist covering labor disputes and union concerns. Her new life in the New York suburbs had given her a place to contemplate her unhappiness; the confusion of feeling unhappy when society was telling her that her life was the "American Dream". *The Feminine Mystique*, published after interviewing hundreds of women revealed that many women were feeling her same disappointment. However, as historian Howard Brick concluded later, Friedan's book was only a margin of the radical changes called for by other feminists of her time, "Betty Friedan's better known book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) was more modest than [Alice] Rossi's 'Proposal.' Even as Friedan promoted occupational opportunity for women, she did not emphasize, as Rossi did, the need for a new social network of child care centers, and she downplayed the aim of transforming gender relations in home life."<sup>9</sup> Friedan's characterization by historians as a more conservative feminist shows how she may have lost some of her progressive appeal during the women's liberation movement of the 1970s. Friedan said in her 1976 book, which reflected her inspirations to join the movement in the first place, that she was not interested in being involved with Steinem's *Ms.* magazine, or other publications that harnessed the tension within the movement and created more by rejecting all forms of feminism, "at one point Cynthia Epstein and sister sociologists went to see the editors of *Ms.* to try and persuade them to include 'service' features on food, fashion, and home,

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<sup>9</sup> Brick, *The Age of Contradictions*, 51.

like other women's magazines...But the editors at *Ms.* were shocked at the very notion of including 'service' to the housewife in the liberated columns of *Ms.*!"<sup>10</sup>

As the movement progressed and became larger, it was easy to feel that one didn't belong if they could not find their place. Many women within the movement felt these feelings of being misunderstood or excluded because they were not extreme enough. As much as Steinem's magazine and more extreme forms of feminism reached millions of women, so did Friedan's more conservative take on this progressive idea through her books and lectures. Both women took on the task of creating and maintaining a revolution that has lasted decades, and has included millions of women from multiple generations. To some it seems sad that the United States still does not treat women the same as men, however to others it is inspiring to see how far women have come and how much they can help contribute to gain more equality and freedoms.

There are a few historians who have written specifically on Friedan and Steinem. Daniel Horowitz is a historian who has written on Friedan and how her earlier work with labor unions gave her the necessary skills to create *The Feminine Mystique* and inspire the second wave of the women's movement to begin.<sup>11</sup> Horowitz's work was meticulously researched, and thoroughly vetted before being published by a university press. In the early stages of his work, he tried to entertain an audience with Friedan through his wife, who was her colleague, however, he could never procure one, and so he wrote the book using the resources he had, including many of Friedan's own writings on her early work as a journalist. Along with these more specific books on Friedan and Steinem, there are also a number of books that were helpful in providing context

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<sup>10</sup> Friedan, *It Changed My Life*, 189.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of "The Feminine Mystique": The American Left, the Cold War and Modern Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), eBook.

to the time period, such as, *Age of Fracture* by Daniel T. Rogers, *A War for the Soul of America: A History of Culture Wars* by Andrew Hartman, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought & Culture in the 1960s* by Howard Brick, and two books by historian James T. Patterson *Grand Expectations: The United States 1945-1974*, and *Restless Giant: The United States from Watergate to Bush v. Gore*, and finally historian Elaine Tyler May's study on American families during the Cold War.<sup>12</sup> All of these works utilize sources and documents that provide context for a tumultuous time period in American history. Although each work contributes a different angle to the history of this time period, all include the women's movement and its contribution to the unstable revolutionary spirit of the era as well as the movement's significance in advancing the country.

When selecting sources it was imperative to find those that did not glorify the movement or those involved, but rather revealed the flaws and conflicts within the inter-workings of the women's movement and those involved in keeping it moving forward. One book in particular was a refreshing take on the women's movement for the editor's, Stephanie Gilmore an assistant professor of women's studies at Dickenson College, compilation of essays, was purposefully trying to reveal the many coalitions and alliances created within the movement as a way to dispel the popular theory that the movement was incohesive.<sup>13</sup> This theory goes directly against what Friedan wrote in her 1976 compilation of essays, when she felt that the movement was beginning

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<sup>12</sup> Daniel T. Rogers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011). Andrew Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2015). Howard Brick, *The Age of Contradictions: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2000). James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). James T. Patterson, *Restless Giant: The United States from Watergate to Bush v. Gore* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Book, Inc., 1998), eBook.

<sup>13</sup> Stephanie Gilmore, eds., *Feminist Coalitions: Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

to fracture between the conservative feminists and the more extreme radicals.<sup>14</sup> It is interesting and significant to see the change in rhetoric over the course of three decades. Gilmore's book also places the movement itself into a new context when discussed through a fresh perspective.

Along with historians' interpretations of the significance of the women's movement to its historical time frame, there are also the voices of the women themselves. Books by Friedan and Steinem are not difficult to come by. The voices of the women involved in significant events of the second-wave of feminism are also not difficult to come by. Further, the media's coverage of the second wave of feminism has been the center of many scholars work including Debra Baker Beck, and Bonnie J. Dow.<sup>15</sup> These works show how the media framed the women's movement and presented it to the country, which inevitably formulated peoples opinions on the movement and those who were involved. And finally, there are the voices of those that dissented the movement's purpose and stance on political as well as social issues. *The New York Times* historical database provided many articles and letters to the editor that reflected the effect these women had on the lives of women and men all over the United States.

The recent interest of millions of Americans in the fight for women's rights was exposed during the Women's March, and subsequent women's marches all over the country, in January of 2017. These marches saw the reemergence of white, middle class women's involvement in a movement that they once felt alienated from. The new involvement of millions of people in a

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<sup>14</sup> Friedan, *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement*.

<sup>15</sup> Debra Baker Beck, "The 'F' Word: How the Media Frame Feminism," *NWSA Journal* 10, no. 1 (Spring, 1998): 139-153, accessed on April 13, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4316558>. Bonnie J. Dow, *Watching Women's Liberation, 1970: Feminism's Pivotal Year on the Network News* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

movement that has spanned over one hundred years in this country warrants a prolific historical record.

Women like Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, although icons of the movement have yet to be compared to each other in the larger context of contention within the movement. Did these leaders contribute to the contention or was the contention a natural result of much larger problems within the movement? The answers to questions like this are the foundation of this new research into the culture of one of the largest and longest social movements in American history. In the preface, “The Longest Revolution”, to Ruth Rosen’s 2006 book *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women’s Movement Changed America*, Rosen lays out the conception of the book and how she came to realize that the women’s movement had been so impactful. After listing all of the accomplishments of the women’s movement for women and society in general, Rosen was elated to find, “. . .that the changes in women’s lives had been so deep, so wide-ranging, so transformative. I realized that the women’s movement could not be erased, that it had brought about changes that these young people now took for granted.”<sup>16</sup> By exploring women like Friedan and Steinem I can add to the history of the women’s movement with a story that will reflect not only the hardships the movement felt from outside itself but also how the women within the movement challenged each other to redefine the priorities of the revolution to reflect the women it represented.

Friedan and Steinem’s progressive political agenda’s were the inspiration for the movement, and their contradictory ideologies and rhetoric created tensions within the movement’s participants. This tension lead to dysfunction and alienation of many women, who

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<sup>16</sup> Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open*, xiii.

wanted to participate, while at the same time, challenged the movement to stay relevant and reflective. The women's movement in America is different than other revolutions, as it has spanned centuries and countries affecting people of all religions, and races. The inclusivity of the movement is matched by its exclusivity in thought and action. Although Friedan and Steinem may not have agreed on each other's approach, they laid the groundwork for a continuing conversation in how best to move forward.

Betty Friedan's books reveal her views on the movement in general and specifically her role in contradiction to the other facets of feminism. Her earliest feminist work, *The Feminine Mystique*, was the catalyst for the part of the movement discussed in this research.<sup>17</sup> Its revelations as well as its impact are of the utmost importance to this topic. Later, in 1976, Friedan's published a collection of her personal writings, *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement*, which reflected her progression towards feminism prior to publishing the iconic *The Feminine Mystique*.<sup>18</sup> This book includes introductions to each section of writing and walks the reader through the evolution of Friedan's early feminist thought, including her thoughts on Steinem's *Ms*. Then, in 1997, while teaching at Mount Vernon College in Washington D.C, Friedan published a book called *Beyond Gender: The New Politics of Work and Family*. This book explains of a paradigm shift in the movement, "beyond feminism, beyond sexual politics, beyond identity politics altogether. A new paradigm for women and men."<sup>19</sup> Friedan goes on to discuss her split from National Organization of Women (NOW) in 1970 and it being partially caused by the women who were entering the organization and changing it to

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<sup>17</sup> Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*.

<sup>18</sup> Friedan, *It Changed My Life*.

<sup>19</sup> Betty Friedan, *Beyond Gender: The New Politics of Work and Family* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore: distributed by Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

reflect sexual politics. Most revealing is Friedan's disclosure of the attacks against her by Steinem's *Ms.* in response to the publication of Friedan's 1981 book, *The Second Stage*, which caused her to bow out of feminist organizational politics entirely.<sup>20</sup>

Steinem's books are written quite differently than Friedan's. She does not discuss her own contributions to the movement as much as she works to show how far the movement has come and how much work is still left to do. Friedan's work, although contributed greatly to feminist ideology, was more reflective on her own contributions and personal evolution rather than the evolution of the movement itself. Whereby, Steinem is more forward thinking and hopeful for the future rather than reflective on what has occurred. In 2012, Steinem published a book that covered her time in the movement from the early sixties to the early eighties, entitled *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*.<sup>21</sup> Although this book highlights the past, its purpose is to influence the future of the movement and future feminists. One year later, Steinem published another book entitled, *Revolution from Within: A Book of Self-Esteem*, which reveals Steinem's conclusion that a person is influenced as well as influences political change around them.<sup>22</sup> Even more revealing, Steinem lets the reader into her own evolution of internal and external change. These books reveal the changes Steinem went through early in her career as well as explanations for what her critics would call a delayed entrance into the women's movement.

Historians have agreed that both Friedan and Steinem contributed exponentially to the women's movement and the social and cultural changes in the United States over the last forty

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>21</sup> Gloria Steinem, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* (New York: Open Road Media, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> Gloria Steinem, *Revolution From Within: A Book of Self-Esteem* (New York: Open Road Media, 2013).

years. The debates really enter the larger context of conservative and liberal beliefs during this time period and the reflection of those beliefs within the movement. The vast expanse of participants in the women's movement and those that labeled themselves feminists encompassed varied political leanings. Due to the political nature of much of the movement, there were clashes between these groups. The women's movement could not have changed the culture or societal structures of America without making political changes. And as most women involved in the movement agreed that they wanted more rights, there were disagreements on what those rights should be. Historian's coverage of the time period reflects these difficulties however, they do so in general terms. The research into Freidan and Steinem's influence on each other and the movement will reverse the historical trend of including the women's movement into the history of the 1960s and 1970s, and instead place the 1960s and 1970s into the history of the women's movement, as it has spanned almost the entirety of the countries history.

The capstone project will follow a general outline of addressing the historiography of the topic, it will cover each woman separately and her feminist ideological evolution during the course of the two decades (1960-1980), and then it will compare the two women and reveal not only how the movement progressed but also how it became fractured and how Freidan and Steinem contributed to the fracturing. Of course, this will not negate the obvious upward trend of the movement's success, it is merely meant to reveal how two iconic women of the movement represented a different base all while working for the success of all women, and how those different philosophies contributed to some of the movement's difficulties.

Each chapter will move chronologically through its topic, while highlighting major events and tensions that were created. Chapter one zooms out and reflects on the women's

movement by placing Friedan and Steinem within its context. This chapter is not meant to be a complete history of the second-wave of feminism, but rather provide a historical context for understanding how Friedan and Steinem influenced the movement on a large scale. Chapter two zooms in on Betty Friedan and her evolution from housewife to revolutionary to her eventual exit from the women's movement she helped begin. Much like Chapter two focuses on Friedan, Chapter three will zoom in on Gloria Steinem. This chapter will reflect on Steinem's late integration into the movement and the problems this caused for her, as well as the success of *Ms.* and her more radical actions during this time period. Finally, Chapter four will bring the two women together to gain a better understanding of their effect on one another, as well as how their discontinuity was reflective of the strife within the movement and revealed cracks that movement needed to repair.

The ethical issues are contained in my concern about tackling two very important historical figures, one that is still living. The purpose of this work is not to downplay or negate the impressive significance of the social and political advancements that I and other women (and men) can contribute to the endless inspiration and sacrifices of Betty Freidan and Gloria Steinem. Rather this work should reveal the humanness of these two women, and the complex relationship they both had with feminism, the movement and each other. The problem sometimes with icons is that we like to stick them in a box and we forget that they evolve just as we do. Their positions shift, their thinking changes, they become more enlightened or stauncher in their ideals. It is unfair to think that by examining those changes, one would remove the importance of these women to American history, specifically women's history. Instead, these changes and difficulties accepting others theories, as well as each woman's internal struggle to remain

relevant and in tune to the movements purpose reflects the intelligence and thoughtfulness behind the movement itself. My intent is to show the beauty of the movement through the struggle between the women who led it.

## Chapter 1: The Women's Movement 1960s-1980s

The women's movement has worked continuously over the last century to ensure gender does not dictate equality. As society has evolved, so has the movement. Second-wave feminism, born from the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, used very different tactics than feminists of the past. As the movement moved out of the 60s and into the 70s it fractured into two sides, one more conservative and one more radical. Some historians might argue that the women's movement of the 1960s was first born during World War II when women filled the jobs of men who went off to fight overseas. This gave women a taste of what life was like working, raising kids, and taking care of the home. When the men returned from the war, women were told to go back home and be mothers and wives. Many women accepted this role and relished in it, while many other women were not satisfied with society's definition of what their role should be. Books like Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* were responsible for revealing this unhappiness to the world and offering an alternative. The women's movement of the 1960s-1980s was defined by faction and disagreements in how women should fight for their rights and what rights they should be fighting for.

Feminism in America can be sectioned off into three different categories that moved through history chronologically. First there was the first wave of the women's movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which gave women the vote and eventually became the women's movement. Although there were many women who continued fighting for more equal rights between 1920 and 1963, historians often consider this time period more of a down swing in the fight for gender equality. Second, there was the woman's movement in the 1960s inspired by Betty Friedan's

book *The Feminine Mystique*. This movement was a little different as it included many middle class white women who had never considered themselves feminists before. Third, the women's movement demanding equality between men and women becomes women's liberation, which demanded women to be liberated from the pressures of a patriarchal society. The message of women's liberation was spread with the help of all female run publications like Gloria Steinem's *Ms*. The change in the movement from 1963 through the 1970s felt drastic for some, enlightening for others, and the rest pushed forward with the continuation of an agenda laid forth a century before. Friedan and Steinem, although fighting the same war, were fighting different battles and sometimes getting in each other's way or worse refusing to help each other out.

During World War II, women took to working outside of the home as means to provide for their families as well as answer the call of their nation to fill the void left by men leaving to fight in the war. The United States government's successful propaganda campaign to move women into the workforce was made possible by images such as Rosie the Riveter telling women that they were strong enough to handle the house, the kids and the manual labor jobs their husbands left behind. More than 7 million women joined the already 14 million women in the workforce between the 1940-1945.<sup>1</sup> Many of these women were married and had children. And almost all of them were paid less for the same work performed by the men they were replacing.<sup>2</sup> In an article covering a study done by Harvard and Boston University economists Claudia Goldin and Claudia Olivetti respectively, the argument was made that, "The dominant

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<sup>1</sup> Claudia Goldin and Claudia Olivetti, "Shocking Labor Supply: Reassessment of the Role of World War II on Women's Labor Supply," *The American Economic Review* 103, no. 3, Papers and Proceedings of the One Hundred Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association (May 2013), 257, accessed on February 28, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23469739>.

<sup>2</sup> Mary M. Schweitzer, "World War II and Female Labor Force Participation Rates," *The Journal of Economic History* 40, no. 1 The Tasks of Economic History (March, 1980), 89-95, accessed on February 28, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2120427>.

feature of the female labor force in the United States across the twentieth century is its striking and large increase. But continuity in the increase may be an illusion. Women's paid employment may have been permanently altered by certain events."<sup>3</sup> Although the authors of the study do not name those revisionist historians, Goldin and Olivetti conclude that many revisionist historians have gotten this particular part of women's history wrong. The increase in women's employment was not what it seemed, and it did not technically last as long as was originally recorded. Using the mobilization rate instrument and the Palmer survey, the economists' study resulted in findings that reflected the longevity of a woman in the workforce was dependent on how much education she had. The more education a woman had, the better the job and the more likely she was to keep it after the war. The less education a woman had the more likely she was to find herself in a manufacturing job where woman were often unwelcomed.<sup>4</sup>

This research by Goldin and Olivetti presents an interesting point about the most influential women of the movement, who were most often middle class, and educated. Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem were both college-educated and raised by women who were college-educated. Although the research discusses women employed during the war, it also reveals what types of work women were doing when employed during the war. Part of Friedan and Steinem's work in the movement was to create more opportunities for women to hold more senior positions in the workplace. Both Friedan and Steinem worked in New York City as journalists and freelance writers. Their work took them to the office, where they gained experience working for male editors whom they did not feel understood the women they were producing writings for. After her success with *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan wrote articles for *McCall's*, while

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<sup>3</sup> Goldin and Olivetti, "Shocking Labor Supply," 257.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 261-262.

Steinem worked to create *Ms.*, a publication for women, run by women, and supported by companies that supported the women's movement. Friedan said she wrote for magazines like *McCall's* because she was trying to convert women who had not yet woken up to the idea of feminism and being involved in the women's movement. Steinem's *Ms.* magazine reached out for women who were already convinced and showed them how to become more involved.

After World War II, the U.S. government as well as society made it abundantly clear that women were to stay at home, make babies and take care of them while the husband went out and made the money. This new role of "stay-at-home-mom" was suffocating for many women, as Betty Friedan explains in *The Feminine Mystique*:

It is my thesis that the core of the problem for women today is not sexual but a problem of identity—a stunting or evasion of growth that is perpetuated by the feminine mystique. It is my thesis that as the Victorian culture did not permit women to accept or gratify their basic sexual needs, our culture does not permit women to accept or gratify their basic need to grow and fulfill their potentialities as human beings, a need which is not solely defined by their sexual role.<sup>5</sup>

Post WWII brought the onslaught of Cold War rhetoric around the country. Communism became synonymous with traitor, and just as the Red Scare had done in the 1920s, and McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare created fear in America during the 1950s. The Nuclear Family became the focus of the propaganda and the wife was at the center of the family. She was the one who would protect her family from any nuclear threat, "...the rhetoric of civil defense taught that the household was a bunker where women's expertise and competence were vital to a nation at

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<sup>5</sup> Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963), 77.

risk...the allocation of civil defense duties was divided along gender lines..."<sup>6</sup> The country was telling women that if they did not stay at home and keep their house prepared, their family could be annihilated from nuclear attack, and further they could be responsible for the destruction of their entire country. Basically, it was a woman's civic responsibility to stay at home and keep the house and family taken care of.

The problem was that many women found this role as homemaker and mother not completely fulfilling and there were no outlets for that frustration. What Betty Friedan uncovered when she began interviewing women for the book *The Feminine Mystique* was that many women hid these feelings because they felt guilty for feeling them.<sup>7</sup> Friedan's book highlighted the many publications that were pushing this social agenda of men and women fulfilling certain gender roles and the despair many American's felt due to this pressure. Friedan pulls from publications such as *McCall's*, *Redbook*, *Time*, *Life*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Ladies Home Journal* to name a few, to show how articles published in the early 1950s pushed women into the home and men to the workplace. These articles even went so far as to say women who wanted to work had a condition that needed to be tended with psychiatric help as to not damage her husband's ego.<sup>8</sup> What Friedan uncovered was more than just unhappy housewives looking for an outlet for their frustration. Instead Friedan began a social movement that asked the American people to reflect on their position, question their roles, and challenge their perceptions of what was morally right.

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<sup>6</sup> Kristina Zarlengo, "Civilian Threat, the Suburban Citadel, and Atomic Age American Women," *Signs* 24, no. 4 Institutions, Regulation, and Social Control (Summer, 1999), 940, accessed on October 26, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3175598>.

<sup>7</sup> Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 15-32.

<sup>8</sup> Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 58.

As a means to streamline the feminists' agenda, and to organize their power, a group of women, including Betty Friedan, started a feminist civil rights organization in 1966 called the National Organization for Women (NOW). Sociologist Alice Rossi, argued for the founding of NOW by stating that, "gender is an artificial construct of culture," and that men and women could work together to create equality among the sexes.<sup>9</sup> Many women were afraid to join a group that went against societies norms, but eventually NOW would have hundreds of thousands of members and chapters located all over the country.<sup>10</sup> However, not only men, but also women, would block feminism and women's fight for equal rights. Women like Phyllis Schlafly, whose conservative values would not allow her to think of herself as equal to a man, but instead found her value in the biggest difference of all, women having the ability to bear children. The second wave of feminism had one of it's most difficult battles ahead, which was to change the definition of what it meant to be a woman without denying the differences between women and men, sexual reproduction.

While Friedan was discovering the mysteries that plagued many American housewives, and uncovering her own desires for more than the title of "wife" and "mother", pro-family, anti-feminism, conservative Phyllis Schlafly was solidifying her own place in the argument for women's rights. According to historian and professor, Donald T. Critchlow, by tracing Schlafly's life and career, one can understand the shift of the Republican Party from moderate/liberal to conservative.<sup>11</sup> Schlafly represented the other side of the feminist argument that women were meant to be mothers and their civic responsibility lay in raising children that would do good in

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<sup>9</sup> Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 75-78.

<sup>10</sup> National Organization for Women, <http://now.org/about/>.

<sup>11</sup> Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 4.

the world. Many women in America believed this argument also. This backlash against Betty Friedan and the women's movement created a storm of reactions in American society during the 1960s. Including Schlafly's decades of attempts to stop the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, which became the center of the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

1923 marked the start of the decades long battle over the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). This amendment proposed, "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States, or by any State, on account of sex."<sup>12</sup> By the 1940s, many prominent female politicians were in agreement that women were the weaker sex and needed protection under the law.<sup>13</sup> They feared that the ERA would undo much of their work to gain women legal protections. However, there were a number of women that disagreed with their argument, and felt that the passage of the ERA was the only way to secure equal protection and opportunity for women in America. According to historian James T. Patterson, this dissension and discontinuity among women in America, led to the defeat of the ERA in both the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>14</sup> After the 1963 publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and the reemergence of the women's movement into the forefront of American social and political life, the ERA became a battle among the liberal and conservative men and women of America. In 1972 the ERA was approved by both the house and the senate and was moved to be ratified by the states. However, the required thirty-eight states ratification was not met by the 1979 deadline, and the ERA is still not included in the amendments to the United States Constitution.

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<sup>12</sup> James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 36.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

Phyllis Schlafly was at the center of the anti-feminism movement. As feminists were gearing up for protests and battles with legislation, Schlafly was figuring out ways to stop them. In early 1972, she published what was considered to be an anti-feminist manifesto entitled, “What’s Wrong with ‘Equal Rights’ for Women?” where she lays out her foundations behind her disdain and disbelief in fighting for women’s liberation and directly attacks *Ms.* as a catalyst for corrupting and misrepresenting American women and society. According to historian David Critchlow’s book on Phyllis Schlafly and the shift in Grassroots Conservatism, he reveals that Schlafly’s manifesto starts out by directly contradicting Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* by making a claim that above all else, it is a woman’s duty to have a family and raise her children.<sup>15</sup> Further Schlafly, argues in the manifesto that the ERA would take away the protections women enjoyed in American society. According to Schlafly:

The women’s libbers are radicals who are waging a total assault on the family, on marriage, and on children. Don’t take my work for it—read their own literature and prove to yourself what these characters are trying to do. The most pretentious of the women’s liberation magazines is called *Ms.*, and subtitled ‘The New Magazine for Women,’ with Gloria Steinem listed as president and secretary...It is anti-family, anti-children, and pro-abortion. It is a series of sharp-tongued, high pitched whining complaints by unmarried women...The women’s libbers don’t understand that most women want to be a wife, mother, and homemaker—we are happy in that role.”<sup>16</sup>

In the summer of 1972, Schlafly officially began the national campaign to stop the passage of the ERA. As feminists were working diligently to support the ERA, Schlafly started a group called Stop ERA (Stop Taking Our Privileges), and the women’s movement now had to battle not only men but also women who did not want to see progression for women’s rights.

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<sup>15</sup> Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 217.

<sup>16</sup> Phyllis Schlafly, “What’s Wrong With ‘Equal Rights’ for Women?,” *Phyllis Schlafly Report* 5, no 7 (February, 1972), accessed on August 15, 2017, <http://eagleforum.org/publications/psr/feb1972.html>.

Although the women's movement felt oppression from outside of itself, the focus of this research is on the discontent from within and how that discontent created momentum and kept the movement relevant. As the movement continued through the decades, contention and differences grew from within and outside. Many historians argue that these hostilities coming from within the movement, made the progress of the movement's agenda difficult. However, there is an emerging idea that the alliances built within the movement should be the focus of the history. According to a collection of essays published in 2008, edited by professor of women's studies at Dickenson College, Stephanie Gilmore, "How people draw attention to and speak about their awareness of difference and multiple lived experiences through gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, and other differences is at the core of understanding coalitions—and of *Feminist Coalitions*."<sup>17</sup> These feminist coalitions paved the way for change to happen and for rhetoric and laws concerning women to change. In the last essay of the book, written by Elizabeth Kaminski, the larger context of the impact of female coalitions is that, "As women came together across differences and worked toward a common goal, they left evidence that differences need not fragment a movement. In addition, they show that when activists work in coalition, they create new frameworks for analyzing social problems, altering the cultural and political terrain in which they worked."<sup>18</sup> Just because women did not always agree on every part of the movement does not negate the importance of the movement itself.

Along with different coalitions, the women's movement evolved into the larger context of women's liberation. Historian Sara M. Evans, published an article in 2015 that criticized the

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<sup>17</sup> Gilmore Stephanie, ed. *Feminist Coalitions: Historical Perspectives on Second Wave Feminism in the United States* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 5.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Kaminski, "Learning from Coalitions: Intersections and New Directions in Activism and Scholarship," in *Feminist Coalitions: Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States*, ed. by Stephanie Gilmore (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 287.

fact that many scholars have not included women's liberation into the context of late twentieth century history. In this article, Evans defines women's liberation as:

A radical, multiracial feminist movement that grew directly out of the New Left, civil rights, antiwar, and related freedom movements of the 1960s. Its insight that 'the personal is political,' its intentionally decentralized structure, and its consciousness raising method allowed it to grow so fast and with such intensity that it swept up liberal feminist organizations such as the National Organization for Women (NOW) in a wildfire of change. After 1970 'women's liberation' was a label appropriated by a very wide variety of groups of women who may have had little or no connection to its originators.<sup>19</sup>

Evans argues that much of the scholarly work published on second-wave feminism does not actually reflect the history but rather the bias of the people telling it, "It was these academy-based theorists who fixed the perception of the 1970s Second Wave feminists as white, middle-class, self-interested, and anti-sex."<sup>20</sup> Most importantly, Evans argument centers on the idea that the history of women's liberation pushes the radicals to the edges of the movement instead of starring them in the center. Women's liberation was by definition driven by more radical methods. Friedan may have ignited the fire that started the movement, but she refused to participate in some of the more radical aspects of the movement and Evans points out that history has rewarded her for it.

In August of 1970, NOW sponsored an event called Women's Strike for Equality. NOW was known for being a group of more mild revolutionaries, but they were inspired by the more militant language of the women's liberation movement.<sup>21</sup> This march was deemed successful by

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<sup>19</sup> Sara M. Evans, "Women's Liberation: Seeing the Revolution Clearly," *Feminist Studies* 41, no. 1 (2015), 139, accessed on June 1, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.15767/feministstudies.41.1.138>.

<sup>20</sup> Evans, "Women's Liberation: Seeing the Revolution Clearly," 141.

<sup>21</sup> Evans, "Women's Liberation: Seeing the Revolution Clearly," 147.

the women's movement, and politicians and the media built stories around the women's liberation movement. Although not all stories were positive, and some even sought to fracture the movement and turn women against one another, there are some who believe that the media's acknowledgement of the movement gave the movement legitimacy with the rest of the country.<sup>22</sup> However, many women involved in the movement, including Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, were not pleased with the portrayal. Debra Baker Beck published an article in 1998 covering the ways that media created negative connotations around the word "feminism",

Bra-burners is only one of the several less-than-kind labels attached to feminists in the media... In the media, the opposite of 'family' often is 'feminist'. Other popular stereotypical descriptors of feminists include 'bubbleheaded,' 'Amazons,' 'angries,' 'radical,' and 'hairy.' The practice of labeling feminists as lesbians or 'dykes' has been a particularly effective means of silencing supporters and scaring away others who share feminist views. This is particularly true of younger heterosexual women."<sup>23</sup>

This discussion of sexuality became a dividing point in the movement for many women, including Betty Friedan.

At the 1970 March for Equality, Betty Friedan was asked to speak, but before she spoke she was bombarded with the pressure to wear a "lavender lesbian armband" to show her solidarity with lesbians. According to her, she did not put on the lavender armband because sexual orientation was not the focus of her movement.<sup>24</sup> After the march, Friedan was ridiculed for not showing her solidarity with the movement, and Steinem was praised for saying, "We are all

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<sup>22</sup> Debra Baker Beck, "The 'F' Word: How the Media Frame Feminism," *NWSA Journal* 10, no. 1 (Spring, 1998), 144, accessed on April 13, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4316558>.

<sup>23</sup> Beck, 143.

<sup>24</sup> Friedan, *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (New York: Random House, 1976), 158-159.

lesbians”; “Feminism is lesbianism.”<sup>25</sup> These two women were constantly fighting for the same thing, more rights and equality for women in America, but they could not have gone about it in more different fashions.

Before the discussions of woman’s liberation could even occur, there had to be discussions of the countries perception of women and their place in the world. Prior to 1920, women were not considered to have full citizenship in the United States because they could not vote. In the eyes of the law, they were no different than children, or livestock. However, with the passage of the nineteenth amendment women obtained the right to vote and thus a step towards equality. However, the women of this time period fought wholeheartedly for women’s equality, believing a woman belonged in the home taking care of the children. The early women’s movement was focused on protecting women and children in they eyes of the law. This agenda carried over into the 1940s when many women lobbied against the passage of the ERA due to it rescinding many of the protections women had gained, by making them equal to men under the law.<sup>26</sup> However, as feminist and author Susan Brownmiller pointed out in her 2013 book, *Femininity*, “Historically, as I have attempted to show, the fear of not being feminine enough, in style or in spirit, has been used as a sledgehammer against the collective and individual aspirations of women since failure in femininity carries the charge of mannish or neutered, making biological gender subject to ongoing proof.”<sup>27</sup> This fear of losing ones femininity by becoming a feminist was debilitating for many women in regards to joining the movement.

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<sup>25</sup> Friedan, *It Changed My Life*, 159.

<sup>26</sup> Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, 36-37.

<sup>27</sup> Susan Brownmiller, *Femininity* (New York: Open Road Media, 2013), eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), accessed April 12, 2017, Epilogue.

A breath of relief was sighed by the throngs of feminists out there when so many women who were once afraid to label themselves feminists, began reading the *Feminine Mystique* and realizing that they were not alone, and their feelings of dissatisfaction with their roles as wife and mother did not make them any less of a woman. However, at this time Betty Freidan was not suggesting that women and men not try to get along and create a family. Freidan's goal was always to change the responsibilities within a family so that they did not depend on gender. For example, in her 1997 book, *Beyond Gender: The New Politics of Work and Family*, Friedan argues that, "In those days [1950s], a wife and mother who worked outside the home was supposed to be losing her femininity, undermining her husband's masculinity, and neglecting her children no matter how much her paycheck was needed to pay the bills."<sup>28</sup> This pressure that both men and women were feeling was placed on them by society and finally, in 1963 women decided they no longer wanted to feel guilty for doing things that made them happy. The women's movement had begun and was started on the notion that if a woman wanted to be a mother, she should be a mother, if she wanted to go to work, she should go to work. Neither decision should make her feel guilty.

Until the 1970s, and women's liberation made many women feel like their decision to stay home and be a mom, while their husbands went to work, was looked down upon by the very movement that had given them that decision. Between 1970 and 1973, Betty Friedan was often questioned about why she decided to write for an "establishment" publication like *McCalls* instead of a more radical publication like Steinem's *Ms.* magazine,

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<sup>28</sup> Betty Friedan, *Beyond Gender: The New Politics of Work and Family* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Press, 1997), 5.

I always viewed the women's movement as a movement of the mainstream of American society—moving women into and thus changing that mainstream. I was interested in writing for those 8,000,000 women's magazine readers, the suburban housewives, the women who had children and /or jobs, with husbands or without, who still had to deal with housekeeping, meals, and clothes as I did, even as we also now took ourselves more seriously as people.<sup>29</sup>

During the early 1970s, Friedan felt betrayed by the more radical section of the movement called women's liberation.<sup>30</sup> Steinem's magazine was the voice of that portion of the movement.

Women's liberation embodied not only the liberation of women from the confines of their physical world, but also their psychological world. The names that different groups within the movement gave themselves played into this liberation. According to historian Howard Brick, "In 1969 one wing of women's liberation resurrected the name 'feminist'—with the qualifier 'radical'—to insist that the struggle against sex inequality and hierarchy constituted an independent movement that rightfully occupied the center, not the periphery, of revolutionary consciousness."<sup>31</sup> The rhetoric as well as the perception of the movement and the women involved created cohesion in some parts of the movement while creating divisions in others.

The creation of *Ms.* in 1972 was met with a flurry of excitement and expectation. Gloria Steinem, who by the late 1960s was writing and lecturing about the movement, was a latecomer to the realizations that many women came to after reading Friedan's *Feminine Mystique*. Friedan's book sparked the movement that would become Steinem's life's work. However, *Ms.* and Gloria Steinem were on a different path from Friedan. Historian Amy Erdman Farrell

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<sup>29</sup> Betty Friedan, *It Changed My Life*, 188.

<sup>30</sup> Friedan, *It Changed My Life*, 189.

<sup>31</sup> Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought & Culture in the 1960s* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), 182.

published a book in 1998 which argued, “What makes *Ms.* magazine such a fascinating endeavor...is that it did indeed promise to create what I call ‘popular feminism’...In speaking of a ‘popular feminism,’ I refer to both a feminism that is widespread, common to many, and one that emerges from the realm of popular culture.”<sup>32</sup> *Ms.* made it possible and popular to not want to be a mother or a wife, rather than just question the role and want to change it, the magazine gave voice to many women who did not want it at all.

The term “women’s movement” encompasses all of the movement from beginning to present. However, it is too simple of a term. The history of women’s fight for equality and rights is one that spans the history of the United States. Within that history, there are different phases, sections, and groups that fought along the way. Some might say that it does not matter if it is called the women’s movement or women’s liberation, however, to the people involved along the way it matters a great deal. They were fighting for different things. They are still fighting for different things under the same umbrella term of “the women’s movement”. Friedan and Steinem, whose lives were and are, respectively, defined by the fight for women’s rights fought in different groups running parallel to each other. Friedan clearly believed that she was fighting for all women especially those that still wanted to remain married and mothers even if they were involved in the movement, while Steinem was spearheading a section of the movement that was more progressive and frankly more exclusive.

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<sup>32</sup> Amy Erdman Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood: Ms. Magazine and Promise of Popular Feminism* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 5.

## Chapter 2: Betty Friedan

In 1952, Betty Friedan was fired from her job at a union publication due to her pregnancy. This was her second pregnancy, and she fought this decision against The Newspaper Guild, “This was, Friedan later remembered, as she mentioned her efforts to call a meeting in protest, ‘the first personal stirring of my own feminism, I guess. But the other women were just embarrassed, and the men uncomprehending. It was my own fault, getting pregnant again, a *personal* matter, not something you should take to the union. There was no word in 1949 for ‘sex discrimination’.”<sup>1</sup> Historian Daniel Horowitz has argued in articles and books that Betty Friedan’s feminism was not just born out of boredom as a housewife, but rather her earlier work fighting for unions rights and the people involved in them. The *Feminine Mystique* was more than just a realization of feminism and women’s inequality in society. Betty Friedan was writing to incite a revolution, and she did just that.

Many historians argue that the women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s was a revolution that included white middle-class women, started by educated, white, middle-class women. Friedan and Steinem both fit that description. Betty Friedan, born Bettye Goldstein, was raised in Peoria, Illinois by a father who was a jeweler and a mother, who gave up a career in writing to raise a family.<sup>2</sup> After graduating from Smith College *summa cum laude* with a degree in psychology in 1942, Friedan went on to graduate school at the University of California at

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Horowitz, “Rethinking Betty Friedan and the Feminine Mystique: Labor Union Radicalism and Feminism in Cold War America,” *American Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (March, 1996), 6, accessed on November 27, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30041520>. Betty Friedan, *It Changed My Life*, 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Berkeley.<sup>3</sup> After her first year, she won a fellowship to continue her education into her doctorate, but she found herself at a crossroads, which Friedan would later discover many women struggled with: to choose between the certain future of a wife and mother or the uncertain future of education and career.<sup>4</sup> In 1943, the idea of women “having it all” did not yet exist. She had to choose,

No question was important to me that year but love. We walked in the Berkeley hills and a boy said: ‘Nothing can come of this, between us. I’ll never win a fellowship like yours.’ ...I gave up the fellowship, in relief. But for years afterward, I could not read a word of the science that once I had thought of as my future life’s work; the reminder of it all was too painful.<sup>5</sup>

Friedan left Berkeley, and her future as a psychologist, to move back East and become a wife. She would not marry that boy from Berkeley, but rather a returning vet named Carl Friedan in 1947. They eventually settled in the suburbs of Rockland County in 1956, and this is when Friedan began to try to uncover the “problem that has no name.”

In the years after she left Berkeley and the early years of her marriage, Friedan worked as a labor journalist. She was removed from her position to make room for returning veterans at the small labor news service where she was employed, “All the girls I knew had jobs like that, but it was official policy that no matter how good, researchers, who were women, could never become writers or editors.”<sup>6</sup> This did not matter to Friedan at the time. Although she identified as politically and socially radical, this radicalism did not include feminism, no one did. Rather, her

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of the Feminine Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 88.

<sup>4</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963), 69-70.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>6</sup> Friedan, *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women’s Movement* (New York: Random House, 1976), 9.

involvement focused on race relations, the working class, McCarthyism, and the coming of WWII.<sup>7</sup> According to Horowitz, Friedan published her work as a labor journalist under her maiden name, Goldstein, even though she had married in 1947, until she began writing for women's magazine's in 1955.<sup>8</sup> This radicalization of Friedan in her formative years as an undergrad and graduate student, laid the foundation for her consideration of women's issues in the 1950s.

The *Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963, actually began in 1957 when Friedan sent a questionnaire out to her Smith alumni of the Class of '42. It had been fifteen years since graduation, and Friedan was in the throgs of "the problem that has no name." She was a wife and mother of three, living in an eleven-room Victorian house in the suburbs of New York. She was not happy and did not know why. Her questionnaire, which later she said was "of inappropriate and unnecessary depth," left her with more questions than answers and inspired her to explore what it was that these well-educated housewives had in common.<sup>9</sup> The findings were first written as an essay which Friedan had sent to numerous publications and was denied every time, "(*McCall's*) because its male editor didn't believe it, and rewritten by another (*Ladies' Home Journal*) to deny its evidence so I wouldn't let them print it, and received by a third (*Redbook*), in a shocked rejection note, as something with which 'only the most neurotic housewife could possibly identify'.<sup>10</sup> Thus, she realized that the only way to get anyone to take this seriously was to write a book, and *The Feminine Mystique* was born.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>8</sup> Horowitz, "Rethinking Betty Friedan and the Feminine Mystique," 18.

<sup>9</sup> Friedan, *It Changed My Life*, 17.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 17.

When the book was published in 1963, there were only three thousand in circulation. Demand grew, and millions more were published. Friedan had given voice to the inner struggle that many women had been hiding and suffering in, in silence. “The problem that has no name” was given one, and men and women all over the United States were shocked. Not all men and women accepted this new phenomenon as truth, and at the same time the women’s movement was born so was the anti-feminist movement, which fought to keep life the same and women in their rightful place, at home. Phyllis Schlafly was at the head of this movement, and she argued that the women’s movement would be the downfall of the country. This ideology was born out of the Cold War America, which created gender roles completely based on the government’s need to push consumer products and control the American public. In historian Elaine Tyler May’s 1988 book highlighting the social constructs of the Cold War Era family, she finds that, “For in the early years of the cold war, amid a world of uncertainties brought about by World War II and its aftermath, the home seemed to offer a secure private nest removed from the dangers of the outside world.”<sup>11</sup> The home and family became the security the country was looking for. Marriage even became an indicator of stability and safety, “From the 1940s through the early 1960s, Americans married at a higher rate and at a younger age than did their European counterparts...also reduced the divorce rate after a postwar peak.”<sup>12</sup> The backlash against Friedan’s book and the movement it was beginning was grounded in the fear of it creating an instability that many people were not ready for.

After the success of *The Feminine Mystique*, and her own personal enlightenment to women’s inequality in America, Betty Friedan reached back into her past of political and social

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<sup>11</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1988), 3, eBook.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

radicalism and threw herself whole heartedly into the newly founded women's movement. Conventions and lectures pushing the movement forward were happening all over the country. More and more scholars and activists were ready to form a coalition that would formally place women's rights in the realm of political possibilities. In 1966, Betty Friedan along with other conspirators formed the National Organization for Women (NOW), and officially entered the realm of government from a nongovernmental perspective. However, the formation was not easy and was in fact frightening for many of the people involved; it was the period of post-McCarthyism and people were afraid of revealing their political leanings. Nevertheless, NOW was officially formed on October 6, 1966, "By creating a feminist civil rights organization, NOW members did more than assert their independence from male-dominated liberal politics; they publicly acknowledged that liberal political culture was inadequate to address the reality of women's lives...they also freed themselves to consider the question of women's rights from a more radical perspective."<sup>13</sup>

NOW's Statement of Purpose from 1966, written by Friedan, was a powerful statement to the condition of women in America at that time. It contained arguments and facts of the inequality women faced in the workplace, politics, academics, and at home. The '66 Statement of Purpose reads:

Enormous changes taking place in our society make it both possible and urgently necessary to advance the unfinished revolution of women toward equality, now. With a life span lengthened to nearly 75 years it is no longer either necessary or possible for women to devote the greater part of their lives to child-rearing; yet childbearing and rearing which continues to be a most important part of most women's lives—still is used

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<sup>13</sup> Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 74-75.

to justify barring women from equal professional and economic participation and advance.<sup>14</sup>

Friedan and NOW were making the statement that women were citizen's of the United States, and if they were to be recognized as such, perceptions must be changed, "The citizen whose rights the state protected had always been imagined as a man, and his biological and work lives were dramatically different from those experienced by a woman."<sup>15</sup> The women's movement had now taken on the responsibility of changing the American public's perception of gender roles as well as expanding the definition of democracy by repositioning these roles within the home.<sup>16</sup> This change threatened centuries of societal norms, and resistance was inevitable.

Once NOW was created and began to work towards securing the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which was viewed by some to threaten the nuclear family, thus threatening the very existence of American democracy, it therefore had to be stopped. Phyllis Schlafly was just the woman to try to do it. In 1967, NOW supported the ERA and helped to push it through Congress. After a short hold up in committee, it was finally approved by Congress in 1970 by a vote of 352 to 15 but still needed to be ratified by three-fourths of the states. However, due to disagreements with added and removed language and amendments to the ERA, it did not make it out of Congress and to the states until 1972, and then the states were given seven years to ratify.<sup>17</sup> In 1973, the Supreme Court's legalization of abortion (*Roe v. Wade*) pushed conservative women, like Phyllis Schlafly, to speak out against the ERA. In September

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<sup>14</sup> Betty Friedan, "The National Organization for Women's 1966 Statement of Purpose," *National Organization for Women*.

<sup>15</sup> Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 77.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-78.

<sup>17</sup> Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 216.

of 1972, Schlafly formed the Stop ERA movement, which coincidentally she really knew nothing about the ERA until 1971, when she was asked to speak at a conservative forum in Connecticut where she was to debate the ERA thus requiring learning about it.<sup>18</sup>

Historian David T. Critchlow's book covering the change in conservative politics through the work of Phyllis Schlafly reveals that Schlafly's interest in antifeminism marked the beginning of grassroots conservative politics concerning themselves with social issues other than communism or defense.<sup>19</sup> In 1963 Betty Friedan had revealed the throngs of women unsatisfied with the trappings of their role as housewife, but by 1972, Phyllis Schlafly was fighting back against that notion in her antifeminist manifesto entitled, "What wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women?" published in the *Phyllis Schlafly Report*.<sup>20</sup> She argued directly against Friedan's revelations in *The Feminine Mystique*, arguing that, "the real liberation of women of backbreaking drudgery of prior centuries is 'the American free enterprise system which stimulated inventive geniuses' to provide women with labor saving devices."<sup>21</sup> Friedan's popular idea that women were trapped in their homes by societies norms and required an amendment to the Constitution, seemed to only be popular with a certain part of American society. Regardless, by 1972 the women's liberation was the focus of the women's movement, and there was dissension among the group.

Although Friedan and Steinem worked together with a larger group to form the National Women's Political Caucus in 1971, there were underlying tensions between the two women, and within the movement itself, that were exacerbated by their work together in this cause. The

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 216-217.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 217.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 217.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 218.

National Women's Political Caucus, "an organization that sought to increase the number of women in politics and draw attention of politicians to women's issues," was finding it difficult to come to a consensus among the leaders concerning who to involve in that process.<sup>22</sup> Some in the coalition, like Steinem and others, were concerned with assisting politicians who were progressive in regards to social change. Freidan was mostly concerned with ensuring the movement appealed to all women including Midwestern Republican women. According to Horowitz, Freidan was "most productive as an outsider" and required that status to continue her work.<sup>23</sup> However, this outsider status eventually made her out of touch with the direction the women's movement was going. Steinem had burst onto the scene after her 1963 expose on the New York Playboy Club, where she went undercover as a Playboy Bunny to reveal what really happens in these "guys clubs". Her direction in the movement was more radical and dynamic, whereas Freidan remained stagnant and as she had done in *The Feminine Mystique* played into the reality that was for white, middle-class, educated women.

There were other struggles within the caucus, directly between Friedan and Steinem, which made it difficult for Friedan to continue working so closely with the movement. Friedan highlights much of this upheaval in her 1976 book *It Changed My Life*, but even more is revealed in *New York Times* "Letters to the Editor: Feminism" from August of 1976. In these two letters, one written by Shana Alexander, one of the founding members of the National Women's Political Caucus, and the other by the reviewer herself, Stephanie Herington, the tensions between Friedan and Steinem are undeniable. Alexander said, "It was always Abzug and Steinem against Friedan, for whatever reason, and you never quite knew the reason, because

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<sup>22</sup> Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of The Feminine Mystique*, 232.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

Abzug, Steinem, et al. would never tell you.”<sup>24</sup> Although Herington’s reply does discount the complaints Alexander makes in her letter about Herington’s critical review of Friedan’s account, she nonetheless can deny the fact that the two leaders did not get along but argues whose fault that really was, “So it must have been difficult for Friedan to find herself outmaneuvered by Abzug and Steinem in the National Women’s Political Caucus. But Friedan implies that Abzug and Steinem prevailed not because they were more skilled at political infighting but because they resorted to subterfuge and ballot tampering.”<sup>25</sup> The fact that Steinem and Friedan did not get along well when they worked together for the National Women’s Political Conference is not the question, rather why they did not get along is the question to be answered.

As the movement surged on, Friedan’s outsider status within the leadership of the movement made it difficult for her to mesh with the movements evolving objectives. Eventually, the movement became concerned not with only women’s working rights (Friedan’s specialty from her past with working for unions) but the movement worked to include issues of race, sexuality, and more radical women’s issues. Friedan’s popularity and thus power was dwindling in the 1970s, all the while she was serving as vice president of the National Association to Repeal Abortion Laws which aided in the Supreme Court decision in 1973 to make abortion legal.<sup>26</sup> Regardless of this enormous success, Friedan’s actions to stay an outsider created the space for her to step down as President of NOW in 1970 when she felt that the organization was moving toward alienation of all women by pushing different sexual ideologies, “The attempt to equate feminism and the women’s movement with lesbianism had always been a favorite device of those who wanted to discredit the women’s movement—or a way to frighten them away from

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<sup>24</sup> Shana Alexander, “Letters to the Editor: Feminism,” *New York Times*, August 15, 1976, 192.

<sup>25</sup> Stephanie Harrington, “Letters to the Editor: Feminism,” *New York Times*, August 15, 1976, 192.

<sup>26</sup> Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of The Feminine Mystique*, 232-233.

it.”<sup>27</sup> According to Horowitz reading of a 1973 *New York Times Article* written by Friedan, she was convinced that the dissension within NOW in regards to lesbianism was even propagated by the FBI and CIA.<sup>28</sup> In the same article Friedan attacks Steinem directly by criticizing her, “for creating ‘a false analogy with obsolete or irrelevant ideologies of class warfare or race separatism.’”<sup>29</sup>

In March of 1973, representatives from a wide spectrum of the women’s movement spoke out publicly at a press conference in the Time-Life Building to relay their frustrations and anger with Betty Friedan for publishing this 1973 article in the *New York Times*. The speakers referred to Friedan with respect for her part in the early movement, but they viewed her as obsolete and “outgrown by the daughters” of the movement. The women further criticized Friedan by calling her, “severely myopic, a lesbian-phobe, a dyke-baiter, a woman who has sold out, Joan Friedan Betty of Arc (and thereafter Betty Joan), a disgrace to any movement, a reformist in the middle of a revolution, a conjurer of phantoms and a narcissistic and self-congratulatory polemicist who had reached new heights of paranoia and egotism. Also the Joe McCarthy of the women’s movement.”<sup>30</sup> It would seem that by the mid-1970s either Betty Friedan had outgrown the movement or the movement had outgrown Betty Friedan.

Friedan remained important to the movement as one of its founders, but lived on the outskirts by personal as well as popular decision. Her commitment to keep white, middle-class, educated women part of a movement that no longer needed them kept her on the fringes of a

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<sup>27</sup> Friedan, *It Changed My Life*, 140.

<sup>28</sup> Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of The Feminine Mystique*, 233.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>30</sup> Laurie Johnston, “Mrs. Friedan’s Essay Irks Feminists: Criticisms Also Given,” *New York Times*, March 8, 1973, 52.

revolution that simultaneously honored the work she had done while criticizing the work she was trying to continue. Although Friedan kept writing, and toured the country, giving lectures and speeches, rallying women to join the cause, more progressively aggressive women like Steinem were the future of the movement. Until 1977, at an ERA rally in Houston, Texas, Friedan finally came around to supporting the thing she thought would be the downfall of the women's movement, gay rights. She joined in with the other feminist leaders in calling for an end to discrimination on the basis of sexual preference.<sup>31</sup> Getting Friedan's endorsement at the National Women's Conference was a huge surge of momentum for the people involved with the movement.

In the 1980s the women's movement fractured even more around issues of race, sexuality, and reproductive rights. Over the course of the next five years Friedan was working on a book called *The Second Stage*, published in 1981 where she, "proposed coming to new terms with family, with motherhood, with men, with careers, going beyond the impossible dilemmas of the old paradigm, the male model or its sexual obverse."<sup>32</sup> True to her original claims for revolution, throughout her career Friedan never abandoned the notion that for real change to occur, people would have to reconsider their own gender roles within a family. However, in her 1997 book *Beyond Gender*, Friedan discusses her fear for children affected by the changing family dynamic. In the last chapter of the book, Friedan reveals a concern for the well-being not just of the children, but of the women who are left to raise the growing number of fatherless children, "It makes me uneasy that this development is always discussed in terms that demonize

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<sup>31</sup> Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 151.

<sup>32</sup> Betty Friedan, *Beyond Gender: The New Politics of Work and Family* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore: Distributed by Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 7.

the mother, the welfare mother, the single-parent mother, the unmarried mother. We need to deal with the causes and effects of fatherless families and what directions in public and private policies and moral discourse might result in more responsible participation of fathers in the raising of children.”<sup>33</sup> Friedan’s persistence in fighting for women’s rights and equality was beneficial for every person in America.

Friedan’s preparation for her work in the feminist movement came in her work for union laborers in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Her personal framework for women’s equality was founded in her fight for better working conditions for men. It was not long before she translated those early ideologies into one of the most influential books of the twentieth century. Friedan dedicated her life to fighting for women’s equality and in exposing many women’s secret hidden desire to be more than just a housewife she exposed her own desires to be free of the shackles of her life. This was upsetting to her husband Carl, who after their divorce in 1969, told a reporter that, “she had time to write it [*The Feminine Mystique*] because she lived in a mansion on the Hudson River, had a full-time maid and was completely supported by me.”<sup>34</sup> The irony in his statement does not go unnoticed and neither does the timing of it as divorce includes the settling of assets and Friedan was now a star. However, it cannot be denied that women like Friedan were accused of having the time to be a feminist because their husbands did all of the work, just as women like Steinem, single with no children, had the time to be a feminist because they only had themselves to take care of. Either way, there was no perfect recipe for who was a feminist and who was not, and both women felt the backlash from society in their life decisions. However, Friedan’s ability to ignite progress and within that progression stay true to her own

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<sup>33</sup> Friedan, *Beyond Gender*, 98.

<sup>34</sup> Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and Making of the Feminine Mystique*, 225.

agenda, no matter who it upsets, reveals a woman who sacrificed a whole lot for a whole lot of people, and gave a voice to those women who wanted to be apart of the movement but were either afraid or denied because they did not fit a certain mold.

### Chapter 3: Gloria Steinem

The 1960s are known in American history to be a time of social unrest and massive change. The 1950s had brought stability to American life that was welcomed after the uncertainty of the Great Depression and WWII. American families were growing, jobs were not hard to find, and although there was the threat of a nuclear war with Russia, life in America seemed perfect. However, as the consumer market grew for goods that could make the home more comfortable and life easier, it freed up society to think about other things. The peacefulness of the 1950s created a space for new thoughts to emerge, and by the 1960s, these new thoughts had started a social revolution in America.

In 1963, the United States saw tremendous unrest in America and abroad. Along with the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, the United States saw racial tensions rise with the integration of southern schools, and the riots and bombings in places like Birmingham, Alabama, where openly racist governor George Wallace ran on a platform of "segregation forever". In response to the tiresome laws of the Jim Crow south, the African American community spoke up and acted out in peaceful protest as well as violent riots. 1963 was the year of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech and the March on Washington, lunch-counter sit-ins, and the eventual integration of the University of Alabama (with the help of federal officers). 1963 also saw the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and civil rights activist Medgar Evers, both gunned down. 1963 was also the year that a budding journalist named Gloria Steinem, released an expose revealing the misogyny in New York's famed

Playboy Club. Issues of race and gender were at the forefront of the American social agenda and would remain so for the next few decades.

Nearly a decade after the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* the first issue of *Ms.* magazine hit the newsstands. Steinem and her colleagues were pleasantly surprised when it sold out in just eight days. As successful as the magazine was and has been, *Ms.* was not the beginning of Steinem's career in journalism. Prior to creating *Ms.*, Steinem was best known for a 1963 expose on the New York Playboy Club, where she went undercover as a Playboy Bunny to reveal the inner workings of one of America's most exclusive clubs. The article was printed in *SHOW* magazine as a two-part series.<sup>1</sup> It revealed the misogyny and deplorable sexism that existed within the walls of the club and held a mirror up to America's male dominated society and asked why it treats women like sex objects for their entertainment? In the same year that Friedan was asking women to question their place in society and embarking on the second-wave of feminism, Steinem was asking society to question why it allowed these rich white men to create societal norms? While both women were pushing against societal norms, they were doing so in different ways. This pattern would continue throughout their generations of involvement with the women's movement; Friedan advocating for more and equal rights for women while at the same time demanding the women's movement reflect and include all woman, and Steinem advocating for society to change their views on women and their issues. Steinem put the pressure on society to change, not women.

The experiences Steinem had while working in corporate journalism were filled with experiences of sexism and misogyny, but it wasn't until later that Steinem understood the

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<sup>1</sup> Gloria Steinem, "A Bunny's Tale," *SHOW* (May 1, 1963 & June 1, 1963): 92, 94, 114 & 66-68, 110, <http://dlib.nyu.edu/undercover/bunnys-tale-gloria-steinem-show-magazine>.

ramifications of these actions and her inability to denote the addressors agenda. In her 2012 book, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, Steinem reflects on the definitive and divisive decades of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Her book is a collection of essays (that were mostly published in *Ms.* throughout the years), and her reflection of the time period they were written in. In the first chapter, Steinem discusses her work in publishing and her essays show the many differences she felt between publishing pre-feminism and after. At one point she was working for *Ladies' Home Journal*, “where I was an occasional consultant and writer, one if its two top editors (both men, of course) was so convinced that I was nothing like its readers (whom he described as ‘mental defectives with curlers in their hair’) that he used to hand me a manuscript and say, ‘Pretend you’re a woman and read this.’”<sup>2</sup> Her shock and awe at the way in which she was treated was enough to make her realize that working for men was not going to help her make a difference in the way that she hoped. It was not until after Steinem became a well-known journalist for her expose on New York’s famed Playboy Club that she realized a woman run magazine was her future in the movement.

Gloria Steinem’s move from the world of corporate journalism to feminist journalism happened in 1969 when she attended an abortion rights rally held by the radical feminist group, Redstockings, while working for *New York* magazine, “Suddenly, I was no longer learning intellectually what was wrong. I knew. I had sought out and endured an abortion when I was newly out of college, but told no one. If one in three or four adult women shared this experience, why were each of us made to feel criminal and alone? How much power could we ever have if

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<sup>2</sup> Gloria Steineim, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* (New York: Open Road Media, 2012), Chapter 1: Learning from Experience, eBook.

we had no power over the fate of our own bodies?”<sup>3</sup> Prior to this revelation, Steinem was living in New York and working successfully as a journalist for many major publications including *Help!*, *Glamour*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Esquire*, and *Show*. She reveals in her 2012 book, that she felt much of her early work, pre-feminism, was “schizophrenic” when compared to her life, “...sneaking endless pizzas and cigarettes to a group of Puerto Rican radicals called The Young Lords, which included some early feminists in spite of the groups name, while they occupied a church in Spanish Harlem, but writing about ancient Christmas traditional foods for *Glamour*.”<sup>4</sup> It was this very contradiction, which Steinem herself later realized, that made many women already involved in the women’s movement cautious of Steinem’s intentions after she burst onto the scene.

Steinem and Friedan became feminists by different means. Friedan’s evolution progressed from her 1963 publication of *The Feminine Mystique*, while Steinem was not touched by the iconic book as so many other American women were. Steinem’s biographer, Carolyn G. Heilburn, made note in her book about Steinem’s life that Friedan’s iconic work would not have reached Steinem due to the fact that Steinem was not a suburban housewife suffering from the challenges they were facing.<sup>5</sup> Steinem’s “a-ha” moment came when she was at a rally about women’s reproductive rights. Having had an abortion herself, this was something she could relate to, whereas the plight of the suburban housewife was not.

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<sup>3</sup> Steinem, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, Chapter 1: Learning from Experience, eBook. Amy Erdman Farrell, *Yours In Sisterhood*, 23.

<sup>4</sup> Steinem, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, Chapter 1: Learning from Experience, eBook.

<sup>5</sup> Carolyn G. Heilburn, *The Education of a Woman: The Life of Gloria Steinem* (New York: The Dial Press, 1995), 102-103.

In 1975, a few years into *Ms.* magazine's success, the radical feminist group called Redstockings, that was responsible for the inspiration that created Steinem's "ah-ha moment", attacked the magazine, and Steinem personally, with accusations that she was involved with the CIA and FBI to ruin the women's movement. Feminist publication *off our backs* reported in its May-June 1975 publication that, Redstockings held a press conference on May 9, 1975 at the Media Women's Conference, where the group presented a sixteen page document, "alleging that Gloria Steinem was working for the CIA for at least ten years (1959-69) and that *Ms.* magazine is not an authentic part of the liberal feminist movement, but is hurting the movement...they say the media installed her as a 'leader' of the women's movement and covered her past activities."<sup>6</sup> Redstocking further accused *Ms.* of being a CIA "parallel" organization that was built to undermine the agenda of the women's movement, "The Redstockings analyze the contents of *Ms.* and conclude that it really says that women are inferior and damaged."<sup>7</sup> Steinem refused to respond to Redstockings accusations, in fact, she even refused to read the statement, and *on our backs* reported that employees of *Ms.* were discouraged from reading it.<sup>8</sup>

After the Redstockings' accusations in 1975, the women's movement surged ahead with some people trying to create cohesion and inclusion while others created friction and factions within the movement. *Ms.* magazine was there in the 1970s figuring out how to function as an organization run by women for women, inclusive of all women, and avoiding advertising that was detrimental to the social changes *Ms.* and the women's movement were supportive of, "One of the editors pointed out that much of the hostility that women felt towards the movement was

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<sup>6</sup> Carol Anne Douglas, "Redstockings Assert Steinem CIA Tie," *Off Our Backs* 5, no. 5 (May-June, 1975), 7, accessed on June 14 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25772214>.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

generated not by feminists themselves but by “their image of the movement from the press.”<sup>9</sup>

*Ms.* magazine was seeking to change that. In Amy Erdman Farrell’s 1998 book, *Yours in Sisterhood: Ms. Magazine and the Promise of Popular Feminism*, the author clarifies the impact *Ms.* hoped to have and the impact it actually did have:

The focus on personal change differed from traditional women’s magazines in that it was rooted in an understanding of sisterhood, and underlying female culture and female cultural superiority that would help revolutionize our society...when writers in *Ms.* made assertions about others’ lives based on their own experiences as relatively privileged, white, economically secure, heterosexual women. In addition, the emphasis on the personal led to an inability to see the larger cultural and societal structures that do indeed shape one’s personal experiences.<sup>10</sup>

Erdman Farrell’s argument reflects the complications the women’s movement not only created but also had to figure out how to maneuver to be inclusive and make headway as a united front.

The contradictions of the women’s movement and those that were involved was not lost on one of its most influential leaders. Before Steinem led the next wave of the women’s revolution, she herself was a contradiction. Due to her late arrival at the movement, many younger feminists questioned her authenticity, as was shown by Redstockings’ 1975 accusations of Steinem’s connection to the CIA and FBI. However, as Steinem was joining the movement and simultaneously thrust into the spotlight, she was battling her own feelings of inadequacy and doubt that created her strong sense of rebelliousness towards a system put in place to make her feel that way:

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<sup>9</sup> Amy Erdman Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood: Ms. Magazine and Promise of Popular Feminism* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina Press, 1998), 75.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 61, 69.

It was self-conscious. It was wasteful. I berated myself for this idiotic inability to speak in public... That didn't help at all. After experiencing police riots at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, I got angry enough to try again, but only as a team with Jimmy Breslin, my colleague at *New York* magazine. That time, I got out about three sentences—but didn't have the confidence to resist false eyelashes that television makeup men then glued to female guests, thus making the medium contradict the message.<sup>11</sup>

Steinem's growing ability to communicate her message was as much of a fight for her as was her ability to break the social prose that dictated her self worth.

Steinem's work with the women who helped create *Ms.* magazine helped her find not only her voice but her identity as a feminist. *Ms.* magazine was created to show the world that women could run a successful, autonomous publication, and create their utopia of a female workplace, at the same time change the way in which advertising was created for woman and about women. According to Farrell's book, "The *Ms.* founders located themselves on the interface of two worlds—the feminist movement and the mainstream magazine industry."<sup>12</sup> This position allowed the magazine to be heralded as groundbreaking and enlisted millions of loyal readers, and at the same time created tensions and rifts within the movement and the country. *Ms.* early success was due to its consciousness-raising agenda to shift the minds of its readers to see women in a different light than they had been presented with before. This was done through articles and advertising. However, there were many feminists who did not agree with *Ms.*'s tactics and agenda. In 1975, a letter came into *Ms.* that highlighted this rift among women,

The reader pointed out that many women felt estranged from the movement, and from *Ms.* in particular, because they felt left out; and, more specifically, they felt their own

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<sup>11</sup> Steinem, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, Chapter 1: Learning From Experience, eBook.

<sup>12</sup> Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood*, 192.

decisions to take care of their own children were unfairly criticized by women who either hated their husbands or had selfishly chosen “careers,” often further burdening “stay at home” mothers with the care of others’ children.<sup>13</sup>

Steinem’s magazine could not get away from this dilemma that had plagued the women’s movement through the 1960s. Housewives either wanted to be part of the movement or they wanted nothing to do with it and did not support what it stood for.

Balancing the thin line between commercial magazine and feminist publication was difficult, and eventually just as Friedan was criticized for being outdated later in the movement, *Ms.* magazine was ridiculed for becoming obsolete and too mainstream over time.<sup>14</sup> According to Farrell’s book, “Martha Thurber, the editor of Boston’s feminist periodical *Sojourner*, commented that ‘the fact that [Ms.] was established at all was very important at the time, but it has come to represent middle-of-the-road feminism.’”<sup>15</sup> Commercialism was the very thing *Ms.* fought against, but it was commercialism of which they were eventually accused. In an article published in the *New York Times* in March of 1972, the changing media portrayal of women and the women’s movement was at the forefront of social change in regards to feminism and *Ms.* magazine was attributed with creating the influence, “At the other end of the spectrum, probably, is the most celebrated of the new women’s magazines, *Ms.*, sleek-sophisticated and skillfully polemical, appealing directly to an audience of the converted or at least the willing prospects...Subscriptions, on the basis of the first issue, have reached 30,000.”<sup>16</sup> Along with *Ms.* many other commercial and feminist publications emerged in the 1970s as well as veteran

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 104-105.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 104-105.

<sup>16</sup> Linda Charlton, “Feminist vs. the Media: Signs of Change,” *New York Times*, March 14, 1972, 38.

women's magazines that shifted some of their focus around the changing social and cultural demands of their readers. The March 1972 issue of *The Ladies' Home Journal* highlighted on the cover the inequality in women's labor unions alongside makeup tutorials and articles about decorating.<sup>17</sup> Big commercial magazine, *McCall's* not only created a monthly newsletter directed towards women called "Right Now", they also selected Gloria Steinem as "Woman of the Year" in 1972.<sup>18</sup>

In the early days of the magazine, it was covered by other periodicals and publications for not only its groundbreaking mission but also its methods. *Ms.* was not only a female owned and run major publication, but its purpose behind advertising and its communal approach to its organizational structure were newsworthy. According to a *New York Times* article from August 1974, which compared *Ms.* magazine to *Cosmo*,

Finding funding for a national feminist magazine was hard enough, but when the women who founded *Ms.* told potential backers that the staff must retain the controlling interest in the magazine, that advertising would be scrutinized for demeaning inferences about women, and that 10 per cent of the magazine's profits would be donated to the women's movement, they were laughed out of the board rooms.<sup>19</sup>

Eventually, *Ms.* would find its funding from *Washington Post* publisher Katharine Graham, *New York* magazine publisher Clay Felker, and Warner Communications. However, the magazine's unconventional approach to advertising would continue to be a newsworthy and difficult issue for the editors and provided another avenue for criticisms of the magazine. As much as Bovary's article showed the evolution of the magazine as a legitimate feminist publication, it compared it

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>19</sup> Emma Bovary, "Two Faces of the Same Eve: *Ms.* versus *Cosmo*," *New York Times*, August 11, 1974, 216.

to *Cosmo*, a magazine born of the feminist revolution but offering very different commentary and advice. This is yet another example of the scale the feminist movement had to traverse.

As the 70s progressed, Steinem continued her work with the magazine and the movement yet it was not always smooth. Along with the struggle to find advertising that was not degrading to women, the egalitarian tone in the office was difficult for some writers to work under, “To facilitate a sense of inclusivity, [Patricia] Carbine and Steinem installed bleachers and floor-to-ceiling carpet in the editorial meeting room. By choice, neither Steinem nor Carbine sat at the center conference table, in order to avoid dominating the discussions. Everyone was encouraged to have a voice in the editorial meetings.”<sup>20</sup> However inclusive Steinem and Carbine sought to make the writers feel, the lack of structure was for some was a difficulty. According to Bovary’s 1974 article covering *Ms.* and *Cosmo*, some writers saw the lack of structure as hindering to their writing and a mask the magazine was trying to wear, while the editors attribute the feelings of disorganization to a learning curve as the magazine was starting up.<sup>21</sup> Regardless of the internal struggles the magazine went through as it went through its start up, its circulation grew steadily and the magazine’s success was inevitable. *Ms.*’s popularity of the 1970s was replaced with growing sentiments of the magazines inability to deliver what it had promised. The success of *Ms.* came at a price. And just as Friedan had moved on from the movement, *Ms.* would move on as well. 1989 marked the last commercial issue of *Ms.* magazine.

The complexities and contradictions of the women’s movement were not lost on the women who led it. Freidan started the movement unknowingly by questioning her own position in life as a housewife, and then a decade later criticized more radical women in the movement for

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<sup>20</sup> Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood*, 43.

<sup>21</sup> Bovary, 216.

ridiculing the housewife at the same time she herself was being ridiculed for not being more radical. Steinem, an unmarried career woman living in New York City entered the women's movement when it was already gathering steam, and quickly became the face of the feminist, all the while being criticized for being too feminine and radical. These two women are important to the women's movement not just because they both had messages that inspired but also because their contradictions within themselves give a glimpse into the larger complexities involved in leading a revolution and fighting for real change. The discussions, disagreements and rhetoric used by Freidan and Steinem reflect the deeply ingrained social roles that would have to be broken down to make any type of cultural shift in America. Feminism was caught up in what many historians consider The Culture Wars. Historian Andrew Hartman, describes identity like this,

Identity was something to be stressed; it was something to grow into or become. Only by becoming black, or Chicano, or a liberated woman, or an –out-of-the-closet homosexual—and only by showing solidarity with those similarly identified—could one hope to overcome the psychological barriers to liberation imposed by discriminatory cultural norms. Becoming an identity—identifying as an oppressed minority—meant refusing to conform to mainstream standards of American identity.<sup>22</sup>

The identity of the women's movement was shifting and changing and the women involved must shift and change with it or be pushed out. Steinem's ability to shift and change with the tide of the movement has kept her in the forefront of women's issues not just in the United States but she is an advocate of women's rights all over the world.

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<sup>22</sup> Andrew Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 21.

## Chapter 4: Building Tensions

One of the major contradictions regarding the feminist movement in America is its ability to simultaneously demand the inclusion of women into the larger context of American politics, economics, history, and social and cultural changes; while at the same time forming within itself exclusionary groupings that fundamentally reject the very inclusion the movement itself is fighting for. In the 1970s and 80s, Friedan and Steinem were among those feminists responsible for this paradox. Although both Friedan and Steinem were involved in the women's movement, Steinem embraced the radical side of women's liberation much more than Friedan. Friedan lit the flame, but refused to radicalize or progress without involving everyone. While the women's movement eventually turned its back on the housewife, Friedan was left standing up for housewives and refusing to leave them out of the movement. However, this became difficult, as many housewives did not want to be part of a movement that did not want them. As Friedan continued to stand up and demand the movement remain mainstream and less radical, Steinem helped to push the movement in a more liberal and radicalized direction. This push and pull between the factions of women that Friedan and Steinem represented within the movement becomes the story of the movement itself. These two women, although fundamentally did not agree with how the revolution should move forward, they forced the movement to critically reflect on what and who it was representing and whether it was doing so in a way that included as many woman as possible.

If Betty Friedan was the voice of the moderate, middle-class white woman, Gloria Steinem was the voice of the more progressive, radical, next generation of women coming into

the movement. However, it did not go unnoticed by those involved in the movement that Steinem was also white and middle class. Her later entry into the women's movement allowed for further criticism by many women who were turned on to the movement at much younger ages, that she was an FBI plant whose sole purpose was to tear down the movement from within. The Redstockings' event of 1975, when the radical feminist organization publicly accused Steinem of being a CIA spy planted within the women's movement in order to bring it down, was perpetuated by other feminist groups and leaders, at different times when it was convenient for them to blame someone for the difficulties the women's movement was having. Steinem was not the reason the movement was having difficulties. A movement that represented over half of the population of the United States was bound to fracture due to its enormous size. Creating unity around social and political ideologies became the breaking point for many women's groups as they could not all agree on policy as well as methodology. Steinem and Friedan represented different factions within the movement.

In 1973, Betty Friedan published an article in the *New York Times* entitled, "Up From the Kitchen Floor." In this article she remembers the movement's beginnings, and her role in inciting the revolution, as well as criticizes its future direction and speculates on corruption from within. In this article there is much coverage given to how the movement was being infiltrated by women who sought to do harm, including lesbians and CIA and FBI agents. In this article, Friedan names Gloria Steinem as one of the women responsible for creating fractures in the movement,

The disrupters who are viciously promulgating, or manipulating, this man-hate may be very few. (Others, like Kate Millett, Shulamith Firestone, Robin Morgan, Ti-Grace, Flo Kennedy and – somewhat more subtly – Gloria Steinem, seem to be honestly articulating

the legitimate and too-long-buried rage of women into a rhetoric of sex/class warfare, which I consider to be based on a false analogy with obsolete or irrelevant ideologies of class warfare or race separatism.)<sup>1</sup>

This article shows how Friedan distrusted Steinem and the other leadership of the movement. Although she was happy to claim responsibility for starting the movement, she did not want to claim responsibility for the direction that it was going during this time period.

Friedan was not the only faction of the women's movement to fear the infiltration of the CIA and FBI. In the 1975 September-October issue of *off our backs* was a letter from Steinem, in direct response to the Redstockings' public accusations of her fraudulent participation in the movement. In this short letter, Steinem accuses Redstockings of perpetuating the common rhetoric that, " 'see-how-women-can't-get-along-with-each-other', or 'there's-a-rift-in-the-Women's-Movement', " along with Redstockings' advertising for monetary donations in ads directly next to this inflammatory argument.<sup>2</sup> Steinem's desire to keep the different factions of the movement cohesive is apparent in her uncommon response to these flagrant accusations. However, ironically, while Steinem is accusing Redstockings of trying to pit women against women, she lashes out at Betty Friedan for speaking of this rift within the movement on a public stage, "Of course even a few quotes may result in another round of 'see-how-women-can't-get-along' stories, as when Friedan discussed it at press conferences. (Without well-known women willing to comment on its existence, the regular press hasn't generally felt its libelous content

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<sup>1</sup> Betty Friedan, "Up From the Kitchen Floor," *New York Times*, March 4, 1973, 240.

<sup>2</sup> Gloria Steinem, "Statement From Steinem," *Off Our Backs* 5, no.8 (September-October 1975), 6, accessed July 14, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25772314>.

was worth covering).”<sup>3</sup> Steinem’s and Friedan’s responses to the Redstockings’ 1975, sixteen-page accusations showed how the women’s movement was at its core a revolution that sought to change the hearts and minds of not just men but also women. The complexity of this revolution was apparent in the disagreements among its leadership.

The issue of race was another problem that both women faced. Both Friedan and Steinem were middle-class, white, educated women. They did not represent every woman in the United States that their movement sought to include. Friedan’s book, *The Feminine Mystique*, is often criticized as being one-dimensional regarding race. Ruth Rosen revealed that even before Friedan published her book, Gerda Lerner, an activist and soon-to-be women’s historian, read the book and gave Friedan praise as well as criticism. Lerner noted that Friedan’s exclusion of, “black, poor and working women” would not be received well, and it wasn’t.<sup>4</sup> The women that were interviewed for the book were Friedan’s classmates from college, and were white, educated, and middle class. White women started the beginning of second-wave feminism, inspired by the civil rights movement, while ironically leaving out women of color. Until more radical women like Steinem pushed to include women of all races and ethnicities.

Steinem met the issue of race involvement in the movement with vengeance. Once she joined the movement, she began touring the country and speaking at different venues with women activists of color. She remembers feeling overwhelmed and shy when she would have to speak after Flo Kennedy or Dorothy Pittman Hughes, who were charismatic and enthralling.<sup>5</sup> But

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open, How the Modern Women’s Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> Steinem, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, (New York: Open Road Media, 2012), eBook, Chapter 1.

the audience these women drew was diverse and initiated more women of different demographics into the movement and gave them hope for what the future could bring. Even Steinem's time at *Ms.* was met with the purposeful integration of all types of women into the conversation that would move the revolution forward, including hiring an all female staff, as well as "they hired the only black, female-owned company in New York to do the carpeting [in the offices]; they had a feminist carpentry class build the bookcases...".<sup>6</sup> *Ms.* was not only selling the revolution they were living it, and Steinem was a driving force behind this inclusion.

Aside from race, another limitation of the women's movement was that the older feminists were having difficulty involving younger generations of feminists. Issues with the lack of diversity as well as conservative methods did not attract women who grew up in the civil rights and anti-Vietnam movements of the 1960s. According to her biographer, Steinem tried to show her support for both conservative and radical feminists. Friedan did not always identify as a housewife but she never forgot that the plight of being a housewife led her to start a revolution. Friedan stayed committed to involving housewives in the movement even when the movement did not want them.

The racial inclusion of the women's movement did not go untested. Not all black women believed they were being oppressed just as not all white women believed they were. On October 29, 1971 a professor from South Carolina State, Mary E. Mebane (Liza), published "An Open Letter to Gloria Steinem" in the *New York Times*, where she argues that black women have been equal to black men, "for nearly four hundred years, ever since we stood in some Southern sun

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<sup>6</sup> Amy Erdman Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood: Ms. magazine and Promise of Popular Feminism* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 44.

and chopped cotton from morning to night.”<sup>7</sup> Liza’s argument was followed up with backlash from both men and women arguing that women’s liberation was more than women complaining about being bored staying at home while the men went to work. Loyle Hairston, a black man from Brooklyn, wrote back to the editor of the *New York Times* and his response was published on November 15, 1971, “As a black man I find such black bourgeois narrow-mindedness depressing. Why hasn’t the black man ‘made more money’? The answer to that question won’t be found in an argument with Gloria Steinem but by recognizing that our social system victimizes both ‘groups’—blacks and women.”<sup>8</sup> As Hairston was arguing for race and gender to fight oppression together, the women’s liberation movement was fighting for gender equality free from racial discrimination. Women like activist Margaret Sloan also came to Steinem’s defense in the *New York Times* with letters that brought awareness to women not yet enlightened to their own oppression. In December of 1971, the *New York Times* published a letter from Sloan directly to Liza, where she argues that black women cannot allow black men to oppress them the same way white men have done to white women. She further defends Steinem and her work in saying, Gloria Steinem happens to be one woman involved in the Women’s Movement and the broader struggle for the liberation of all people. She fights her oppression where she feels it, not as a white—liberally saving black people, but working for all women. She talks about sexism and racism whenever she speaks. She almost always speaks with Dorothy Pittman Hughes, Flo Kennedy, or myself because we are black women who have lived that dual oppression all our lives, and the parallel that is ‘the deepest truth in American life.’<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Mary E. Mebane (Liza), “An Open Letter to Gloria Steinem,” *New York Times*, October 29, 1971, 41.

<sup>8</sup> Loyle Hairston, “Far From Liberated,” *New York Times*, November 15, 1971, 40.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret Sloan, “What We Should Be Doing, Sister,” *New York Times*, December 8, 1971, 37.

White women everywhere in America were also not convinced that women were being oppressed in American society. In the following Spring (1972), the *New York Times* published an article highlighting the women's movement's lack of reach by looking into how the revolution was impacting Small Town, U.S.A. In an article, written by Judy Klemesrud, entitled "In Small Town, U.S.A., Women's Liberation is Either a Joke or a Bore," the author interviews women from Hope, Indiana, and how they feel about the movement. Her findings were meant to showcase one of the major weaknesses of the women's movement, "to reach the boondocks." Klemesrud observes that the women in the town of Hope get their women's lib news from shows like, "Johnny Carson and read about it in their favorite magazines, Life, Redbook, and Good Housekeeping. It's just that they don't care enough about it, to want to know more of the specifics."<sup>10</sup> These same publications that Friedan had criticized a decade previous for creating the social pressures that made women feel their purpose in life was as a wife and mother, were now responsible for showing women how to break that mold? The women of Hope, Indiana that were interviewed for this article were split between women who wanted equal pay for equal work, but did not have the time to fight for it, or they were happy as housewives, and did not see the need for change, "Like most Hope women, she [the gray-haired Mrs. Taylor, one of the more liberated women of Hope, although she doesn't see herself this way] is vociferously in favor of equal pay for equal work. But the first words that come out of her mouth when asked about women's lib are: 'What does burning bras have to do with making things equal?'"<sup>11</sup> The disconnect between women within the movement was reflective in the women the movement represented.

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<sup>10</sup> Judy Klemesrud, "In Small Town, U.S.A., Women's Liberation Is Either a Bad Joke or a Bore," *New York Times*, March 22, 1972, 54.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

Friedan and Steinem both represented and fought for women's rights, but what those rights should be, whom they represented, and how they executed their fight were representative of the multitude of women the movement represented. Before Steinem and Friedan disagreed on the direction and mode of persuasion the movement adopted, they agreed that women should lead the fight. In 1971, after Friedan left NOW, both women, along with other well-known feminists, started the Women's Political Caucus as a means to "increase the representation and influence of women in existing political institutions."<sup>12</sup> In 1971, *The New York Times* published a special highlighting the caucus and its members, stating that it was racially and politically diverse, as well as containing women of diverse ages.<sup>13</sup> However, it made note that younger, more radical feminists were waiting to see the methods that the caucus would use to gain more power, "Paula Page, a representative of the National Student Association, who is the only under-30 member of the council, said today that she did not yet know whether the radical young women that she represents would decide to remain a part of the caucus."<sup>14</sup> Just one year in to its existence, the caucus ran into issues that drove at the heart of its foundation including ways to gain money, and split along political party lines without splitting the caucus apart. Politically, some of the members, "believe the caucus should set up two separate political arms, one Democratic and one Republican, for the duration of the campaign."<sup>15</sup>

Even though much of the history of the movement centers on the differences among the women involved, there were fundamental issues that the women agreed on, such as magazines directed towards women. As both Friedan and Steinem sought to expose and change the media

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<sup>12</sup> "Goals Set by Women's Political Caucus," *New York Times*, July 13, 1971, 37.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>15</sup> Eileen Shanahan, "Women's Unit Broke And Split on Future," *New York Times*, August 28, 1972, 36.

surrounding women, about women, and geared towards women, they did so in very different ways. Friedan's book identified those publications that used marketing to vie for female consumerism, while at the same time creating a stereotype of women that became a very trap for their existence. Later, once the movement was rolling, Steinem joined the fight and created a magazine that would be different. So, even though these two women did not see eye-to-eye on all aspects or avenues towards women's rights, they could agree that the media's portrayal of women was not only incorrect, but also detrimental. With the writing background both women had, they worked and work diligently towards changing that through speeches, articles, and books.

The passage of the ERA was another common fight that Friedan and Steinem both passionately agreed on. Both women worked diligently to encourage the country to accept the ERA and finally pass a law that stated women and men are equal. Their work together on the board of the Women's Political Caucus as well as their coming together in Houston in 1977 at the National Women's Conference (NWC) showed their continued commitment to the cause and their ability to put the cause above their own personal struggles with the movement. Friedan's speech at the NWC showed members of the movement as well as the country at large the importance of this amendment. The anti-feminist and anti-ERA campaign held their own rally in Houston led by conservative and anti-feminist Phyllis Schlafly and her Stop ERA campaign. Feminist and historian Ruth Rosen who wrote in her book covering the second wave of feminism, "But it was the plank that affirmed lesbian rights that created the greatest drama. To everyone's surprise, Betty Friedan unexpectedly lent her support to the resolution to eliminate

discrimination based on sexual orientation and preference.”<sup>16</sup> For a woman who had spent so much time and energy fighting against the inclusion of sexual freedom into the women’s movement, it was monumental that she finally spoke in support of it. Friedan, the starter of the second-wave of feminism had given her blessing to include lesbians in the fight for equality. This was something Steinem could agree with Friedan about.

Steinem’s feminist evolution was very different than Friedan’s. Friedan was a housewife and a mother, repressed by her husbands and her own inclinations of societies expectations for her life. Steinem was a single, professional woman trying to make something of herself in the male dominated world of journalism. Although both women experienced forms of oppression, one chose to see her self as a victim of pop culture and political agenda, and the other chose to see herself empowered by her womanhood. It can also be argued however, that Steinem’s views of empowerment were due to Friedan’s observations that women were being taken advantage of and repressed in society. Prior to entering the women’s movement, both women had reflected on their lives and what had been denied to them, however, the difference in their reaction, the reason Steinem was more radical than Friedan lies in the way they each viewed their own experience. Friedan saw herself and other suburban housewives as victims of their circumstances, not really taking responsibility for the role she herself played in her position as a housewife. On the other hand, Steinem later acknowledged her anger at not seeing the signs of her own repression within her career earlier.

Both women were on the same side of the fight but in different battalions. Steinem spent her time surrounding herself with women who believed in the same things she did and who could

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<sup>16</sup> Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 294.

help the revolution move forward. Friedan, as historian Daniel Horowitz points out, remained somewhat of an outsider to the movement she is credited with beginning. Whether Friedan sought to keep herself on the outskirts or whether she was pushed there by her unwillingness to evolve with the movement, it is difficult to say. However, both women remained in the forefront of the movement through the 1960s and 1970s. Each woman represented her own beliefs and methods and although at times attacked one another, they kept the conversation going. They kept each other considering how was the best way to move forward and enact positive change for as many women as possible. Although Friedan no longer considered her profession to be housewife, she never abandoned those women who did and who looked to her to keep them a consideration for the more radical wing of the revolution. Steinem's opposition to women identifying themselves as housewife, even if that was what they chose to be, reflects a portion of the movement that was afraid of moving backwards. As inclusive as Steinem was, she had no time or energy to waste on women who would insist on living like it was 1955. In the end, if it was not for Steinem and Friedan's passionate belief in a woman's right to choose for herself the life that she wants, we would all be worse off.

## Conclusion

Many historians seek to find the inconsistencies in history and exploit them as negative occurrences on a path that would have otherwise been straight. However, there is not much in history that is not complicated, messy, and non-linear. The women's movement is no exception. One of the complaints of feminists was the exploitation of disagreements within the movement, by the media, as a means to reflect poorly on the revolutionaries as well as the movement as a whole. However, disagreement does not always equal dysfunction, and Friedan and Steinem are an example of how people can be involved in the same mission but disagree on how to get results. It would be unfair to regard Friedan and Steinem's impact on the movement to their differing methodologies as only creating chaos and unrest. When in reality it was their disagreements that forced the movement to revolutionize not only how society viewed women but also how the movement itself viewed the women who were involved. Friedan started the second-wave of feminism by revealing the lack of fulfillment of housewives in their everyday existence, and by the 1970s, housewives felt the movement had no place for them and no longer represented them. Friedan's staunch position that these women not be left behind was evident until her last days. Steinem's fight for more radical forms of equality has put her back in the foreground of the movement today, as she was present and spoke at the Women's March on Washington in January 2017.

During the second-wave of feminism, the word "feminist" was often accompanied by visions of hairy, unkempt, man-hating, angry women. The reality was very different. Even into the 1980s this stereotype that the media created around the word "feminist" was a part of peoples

lives, “in a 1989 study, only 33% of women surveyed indicated that they considered themselves to be feminists despite overwhelming support for the issues the movement addresses and the widely-held perception that it has helped the status of women overall.”<sup>1</sup> It was not just the image that many women were avoiding when denying the label of “feminist”, it was the fact that the country did not take women’s issues seriously. The media’s choice to portray an event or a movement or a set of ideals, and then how they choose to portray it can influence the way in which the mass public sees it.<sup>2</sup>

The questions asked at the beginning of this research were focused around the movement and sought to use Friedan and Steinem’s work to provide a deeper understanding of the impact of the movement on American society. Neither Friedan nor Steinem’s fight was with each other. The movement was too important to both of them to jeopardize with a personal vendetta. However, each did question how the movement was moving forward and including as many women as possible. Friedan’s eventual exit from direct involvement with the leadership of the movement was a result of her personal beliefs that she could be better used elsewhere. Her dedication to the inclusion of housewives in the rhetoric of feminist became difficult for other leadership to accept, so Friedan left the movement to lecture, write and teach about women’s rights. Her involvement in the movement became more indirect, however her ideologies directly affected the women who would become involved later on. Steinem evolved with the movement as much as she influenced its evolution. She demanded that the women’s movement represent all women, and eventually called for the social evolution of men. These demands gave the

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<sup>1</sup> Debra Baker Beck, “The ‘F’ Word: How the Media Frame Feminism,” *NWSA Journal* 10, no 1(Spring, 1998), 140, accessed on April 13, 2017, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4316558>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

movement places to grow and incited discussions around the mission and methods of the revolutionaries.

The media controlled much of the way in which the women's movement was portrayed and progressed in America. *The Feminine Mystique* as a means to make the argument that women were trapped in their lives as mothers and wives, placed blame on commercial publications for creating and perpetuating the role of housewife, which women felt pressure to fulfill. *Ms.* sought to be a voice for women among the many male voices of the media machine. Steinem and her colleagues embarked on a journey that would change the way women and the country saw and spoke about women. Through *Ms.*, Steinem changed the rhetoric of a generation. Although Friedan, at times, gave into the media by publishing articles that tore at the movements core and created factions that may not have been necessary, she facilitated conversations that otherwise may have gone unrealized. The media in the 1950s created an image of the American family, placing the woman in the home and the man in the workplace, that to this day is difficult to break. The media in the 1960s and 1970s created an image of the feminist in a negative light that is also still present today. However, Friedan has enlightened generations to the possibility that not all women and men fit into the roles society created for them.

Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan worked tirelessly to ensure women would stay in the spotlight and that their lives would improve by being granted more opportunities. On the surface these women seem very similar, but when their actions analyzed and their true intentions exposed, these women cannot be defined by simply being called feminists. Their work and their perspectives took them in different directions within the movement. They represented and fought for different groups of women at the same time pushed for equal right for all women. As the

years passed, Friedan continued her work on creating change in social roles of men and women as a means to change family dynamics but also create cohesion that would allow women to not feel trapped, men to not feel the pressure of being the only breadwinner, and children to emerge from childhood unscathed by their parents “unconventional” roles. Steinem, after spending many years looking introspectively, continues to speak, and write on behalf of women’s rights all over the world. Even in her eighties, her delivery may have softened but her message is just as mighty and clear. Generations of women will owe Friedan and Steinem, and the countless other women who led the charge against oppression during the second-wave of feminism.

The unrest of the 1960s bore a generation that was willing to answer the questions that society was screaming. They put themselves on the front lines of social, cultural and political progression through the civil rights movement, anti-Vietnam protests, and the women’s movement. Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem grew up in a world where they were told their life would be defined as wife and mother and nothing more. Both women, unbeknownst to each other started down a path that led them in a very different direction than they were told to go. Both women ended up on the front lines of a war that has yet to be won. They fought for women to have control over their own bodies, as well as their own sexuality. They fought for women to be viewed by society as equal to men. And although they did not always agree on the path, they always agreed that women were worth the fight

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