
Abigail Adams: An Activist Pushing For Women's Rights

The American Revolution changed the nation. The Colonists went from being under the rule of the harsh government to being free, and creating their own government. Throughout history, women have been treated as inferior to men. After the American Revolution, the women of America started pushing for this to change. They argued that the way they were treated was due to prejudice and discrimination, and treatment caused them to not be able to receive all the luxuries that men receive, such as a good education (Independence Hall Association).

One of the activists that was pushing for Women's Rights was Abigail Adams. She was the wife of John Adams, one of our Founding Fathers. Abigail wrote a letter to her husband while he was away serving in the Continental Congress. Her letter stated to not forget the ladies, and to be more generous and favorable than anyone before. She then goes on to state that all men are tyrants, if their power is not restrained. Abigail also says that the women will not hesitate to rebel, and will not hold themselves bound to laws that they have no voice, or representation in (Abigail Adams Letter 1776). Her letter shows how much she pushed for equality for women. She knew that while they were writing the new laws, that this was the time to show that women will take a stand, and will not obey the new laws if they do not get the representation that they deserve.

Even though the women were not allowed to fight in battle directly, the women were still affected by the war. Battles took place only miles from their homes; they had to send their sons, brothers, and husbands off to war and pray that none of them would get killed. In some way, some form, the war affected women. Some women snuck onto the battle fields themselves to help, and some went just to be with their husbands but did not fight. A lady that was with her husband in the artillery. As she was walking, a cannon was shot from the enemy side, and the shot hit directly in between her legs. She was lucky, and the only damage that it did was ruin the bottom of her petticoat. She was unconcerned since it did no damage, and continued with her day (Martin 1778). Since the woman was not shook up about a cannon being shot at her, and the cannonball just missing by inches, shows that the ladies had to put up a fight of their own, because just to be with their husbands they were in imminent danger.

The American Revolution impacted women of all races. The African Americans were affected no less than the "white" people. They joined the fight in hope for their freedom as well. Phillis Wheatley was a former African-American slave that was living in Boston. She wrote a poem that was pointed at the new Secretary of State to the Colonies in government. She was hopeful that this Secretary of State would be sympathetic to Americas cause, he was also for abolishing slavery. In a poem Wheatley wrote, 'To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth', she talks about how she was taken from Africa, and how she had a cruel fate. At the end of her poem it states... "Such, such my case. And can I then but pray Others may never feel tyrannic sway?"(Wheatley 1773). She is trying to persuade those who read this that it is not ok to take people from their homes, and give them such a horrible fate. Phillis was the first African-American woman to write a book in America. She wrote her poems, and they had great influence over the people. This shows that women could have a voice, and were striving to make their voices heard.

Books were just as important as the poems that were written during this time. Books were capable of sharing stories that you otherwise would not have heard, and showing pictures of things that you were unable to see in real life. Martha Ryan's was a young girl that was learning mathematics, and in her cipher book, she decided to draw pictures of the patriotic flag, and photos in dedication of Washington, as said in Kim Tolley's book *Heading South to Teach: The World of Susan Nye Hutchison, 1815-1845*. Martha Ryan would also include different patriotic phrases, for example "Liberty or Death" (Martha Ryan's *Cipher Book 1781*). This shows how influential the war was on just an average woman. Martha wanted to show her patriotism by drawing different photos and different saying, and dedicating them to Washington. Instead of her sneaking off to the war to fight, this is how she showed her support.

The American Revolution is the war that shaped the United States into what it is today. Even though many believe that it affected just the men, it did not. It gave a new light to the women of America. They showed off their patriotism by drawings and poems, and they also found a new voice that taught them that it was ok to stand up for what you believe in, and push for equality. The American Revolution shaped the face of our nation, and led to a tough battle of equality for all.