Influential Women Essay, Research Paper

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Influential Women

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Introduction

There have been many women that have changed and shaped the role of women today. They opened the doors of opportunity for future women and made many contributions to our society. Some of these accomplishments have gone unnoticed. The reason that I chose to discuss the influential women of the past and present was because they are the ones that have given me a future. The purpose of the paper is to show the most influential women in different professions and movements. I want to share some of this information with you and show that women have come a long way and can outdo themselves. I think that it is very important that we learn about the history of women and the great ones. Learning about the past will help bury many of the stereotypes about women. Before doing this paper, I did not know much of women?s accomplishments that I am going to mention here. I feel very proud of being who I am and grateful for these women. I hope that at the end of this paper, you can be fascinated by the accomplishments of these women. The first part of my research was to see who were the influential women in history. I was able to obtain the names by making a survey and asking people what they thought. I took a survey and made some research to see which women people thought to be the most influential. Surprisingly, I found that the list of great women is a long one. One research paper is not enough to cover all these women so I shortened the list in order to present it. The list is compiled of many types of women, from religious leaders to doctors, chemists etc…

The first question that I have is, who are some of the influential women?. I found that among these women are,

Past Influential Women

The Virgin Mary (c. 1st century B.C-1st century A.D, mother of Jesus), our mothers, Mother Teresa (1910-1997), Cleopatra (69 B. C.-30 BC), Eleanor Roosevelt(1884-1962), Marie Curie(1867-1934), Margaret Sanger(1879-1966), Margaret Mead(1901-1978), Jane Addams1860-1935), Mary Wollstonecraft(1759-1797), Susan B. Anthony(1820-1906), Elizabeth Cady Stanton(1815-1902), Harriet Tubman(1820-1913), Georgia O?Keeffe(1887-1986), Frances Perkins(1880-1965), Jane Austen(1775-1817), Simone de Beauvoir(1908-1986), Queen Elizabeth I(1533-1603), Hellen Keller(1880-1968), Anne Sullivan(1866-1936), Sojourner Truth(c. 1797-1883), Queen Isabella(1451-1504), Florence Nightingale(1820-1910), Melanie Klein(1882-1960), Angelina Grimkle(1805-1879), Sarah Moore Grimkle(1792-1873), Elizabeth Blackwell(1821-1910), George Eliot(1919-1880), Ida Bell Wells-Barnett(1862-1931),

Rachel Carson(1907-1964), Dorothea Lynde Dix(1802-1887), Hannah Arendt(1906-1976), Karen Horney(1885-1952), Emily Dickinson(1830-1886), Golda Meir(1898-1978), Virginia Woolf(1882-1941), Queen Victoria(1819-1901), Martha Graham(1894-1991), Zora neale Hurston(1901-1960), Harriet Beecher Stowe1811-1896), Rosa Luxemburg(1870-1919), Mary McLeod Bethume(1875-1955), Charlotte Bronte(1816-1855), Emily Bronte(1818-1848), Catherine the Great(1729-1796), Ida Tarbell((1857-1944), Emmal Goldman(1869-1940), Coco Chanel(1883-1971), Dorothy Thompson(1894-1961), Grace Murray Hopper((1906-1992), Barbara McClintok(1902-1992), Joan of Arc(1412-1431), Indira Gandhi(1917-1984), Louise Nevelson(1899-1988), Emmeline Pankhurst(1858-1928), Dorothea Lange(1895-1965), Agnes de Mille(1909-1993), Sappho(c. 613 B.C.-c. 570 B.C.), Nadia Boulanger(1887-1979),

Maria Montessori(1870-1952), Marian Anderson(1897-1993), Anne Frank(1929-1945), Babe Dridikson Zaharias(1914-1956), Mary Cassat(1845-1926), Sarah Bernhardt(1844-1923), Barbara Tuchman(1912-1989), Amelia Earhart(1897-1937), Murasaki Shikibu(c. 978-1030), Jessie Redmon Fauset(1882-1961), Margaret Bourke-White(1904-1971), Frida Kahlo(1907-1954), Gabriela Mistral(1889-1957), Flannery O?connor(1925-1964),

Bessie Smith(1894-1937), Madame C.J. Walker(1867-1919), Diane Arbus(1923-1971), Wu chao(625-705), Billie Holiday(1915-1959), Julia Morgan(1872-1957), Rosa Bonheur(1822-1899), Mary Pickford(1893-1979), Maria Callas(1923-1977), Edith Head(1897-1981), Elsie de Wolfe(1865-1950), Lucille Ball(1911-1989).

Present Influential Women

Leni Riefenstahl(1902-), Katharine Hepburn(1907-), Rosa Parks(1913-), Gwendolyn Brooks(1917-), Katherine Graham(1917-), Betty Friedan(1921-), Helen Gurley Brown(1922-), Elisabeth Kubler-Ross(1926-), Margaret Thatcher(1926-), Joan Ganz Cooney (1929-),Sandra day O?connor(1930-), Ruth Bader Ginsburg(1933-), Jane Goodall(1934-), Billie Jean King(1943-), Hillary Rodman Clinton(1947-),

The second question, What did some of these women do that was influential? I found that there are so many influential women after the research. I selected some of the popular ones that I found interesting and those many in the survey wrote about. I chose to talk about seven great women that caused great impact in their time and are an inspiration to many today. The first one is Eleanor Roosevelt who was influential in politics. She was First Lady to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. She was a strong, independent, respected and a very admired women. She used her influence to advance the cause of human rights. During her husband?s presidency she traveled, lectured, observing conditions, and then reporting the needs and concerns of the Americans she saw and met to her husband. She was not a feminist but she worked and tried to bring more women into government. She worked for different causes such as day care, national health care, combating poor housing, unemployment and civil rights. She was the first presidential wife to host a press conference. After her husband?s death, she served as United States delegate to the United Nations and chaired the United Nations Commission on civil rights in 1946. Eleanor Roosevelt?s work on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was her greatest legacy. She was the most influential member of the UN?s Commission on Human Rights. Since she liked to get involve with people, her determination and concern for humanity made her the driving force behind the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ?Her leadership of the Commission on Human Rights led to the composition of a Declaration that has endured as a universally accepted standard of achievement for all nations. As our respect for and understanding of the Universal Declaration has grown, so too has our gratitude and admiration for this modest woman who passionately pursued what she imagined would become a cornerstone in the struggle for human rights and fundamental freedoms for everyone ? everywhere?. The second woman is Marie Curie for her influence in science. Marie Curie was a famous scientist. She is known for winning two Nobel prizes in physics and in chemistry. She developed the primary technique for exploring the interior of an atom. She was married to Pierre Curie who was also a famous scientist. They worked on radioactivity in the piece of uranium. With her hard efforts, they discovered lonium and radium. She revolutionized modern physics. In 1903, Marie Curie got the Nobel Prize in Physics with her husband and Henri Bequerel.. She received the Nobel Prize again in 1911. She is the only scientist to have won two Nobel prizes. Marie Curie founded the Radium Institute in Paris. She is remembered today for discovering radium and polonium, elements that can treat cancers, tumors and other things. The third woman is Elizabeth Blackwell for her influence as being the first woman doctor in the U.S. Elizabeth Blackwell was born in1821 and died in1910, she was the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States. She studied privately with male doctors who encouraged her to become a doctor and for the cause of women. After many rejections by medical schools, she was finally accepted and graduated from the New York’s Geneva College. After graduation she was unable to practice medicine for several years because no institution would hire her. She opened an office in 1853; four years later it became the New York Infirmary for Women and Children. With the help of her sister Emily Blackwell, (also a physician, and Dr. Marie Zakrzewska) In 1868 Blackwell opened the Women’s Medical College of the New York. In 1869, she helped establish the National Health Society in England. In 1875 she became a professor at the hospital of the London School of Medicine for Women. She was also a part of the anti-slavery society and a member of the Semi-Colon club. She opened the doors for future women who wanted to become doctors. The fourth is Margaret H.Sanger for her influence in protecting the right to practice contraception . She was the founder of the American birth control movement, Margaret H. Sanger fought for revision of archaic legislation which prohibited publication of facts about contraception. In her early career, Sanger practiced nursing among the impoverished families of New York’s Lower East Side. There she became aware of the interrelationships between overpopulation, high infant and maternal mortality rates, and poverty. In 1914, Sanger began publishing material about contraception. In Brooklyn, two years later, she opened the first American birth control clinic. She served 30 days in the workhouse in 1917 for “maintaining a public nuisance,” but this and other legal difficulties only served to garner public sympathy for her work. Sanger founded the American Birth Control League, serving as president for seven years. In 1927, she organized the first World Population Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, and was the first president of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. The fifth is Mary Wollstonecraft for her influence in feminist writings. She was the first great feminist writer. ?A Vindication of the Rights of Women? has been the cornerstone document of the women?s right movements, the first great feminist treatise. Many women who admire here see her as a feminist saint, Mary Wollstonecraft preached that intellect will always govern and was determined to persuade women to endeavor to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness. She stated, ? I wish to show that elegance is inferior to virtue, that the first object of laudable ambition is to obtain a character as a human being, regardless of the distinction of sex; and that secondary views should be brought to this simple touchstone.? The sixth person is Harriet Tubman She is known for being the first woman conductor on the Underground Railroad. She rescued over three hundred slaves. She also served as a nurse and spy during the civil war. She was a black woman born in 1820, Dorchester County, Maryland and died in 1913. She was a black woman that was born into slavery. Her parents were both slaves and as a child a white man threw a heavy sack that hit her on the head. After the incident, she had problems and would pass out on occasion. As a child she ran away to the North but returned because she got lonely. She had 10 brothers and sisters.

After many years, when she was 25, she ran away to the North again because her master died. If she hadn’t run away she would have been sold to another master. When she left the South she became a conductor of the Underground Railroad. That is where she escaped through. She also freed many other slaves, including her family. In 1908 she opened the John Brown Home for old and indigent colored people. Although her husband had remarried she was still willing to help him. She also raised money for poor schools. There is a school named after her called Harriet Tubman High School. Also,when she was doing this, no one was captured. She would say “be free, or die here.” While she was saying that she was pointing at them with a gun. The seventh person is Florence Nightingale for her influence in the Crimean war. Ms. Nightingale involvement in the Crimean War that consisted of England, France and Turkey who were allied against Russia forever change the course of nursing education. The second thing that also change the Crimean war was the correspondents at the battle sites and the telegraph new technology advancement),that helped communicate the war process and the wounded of the war. The news of conditions at Scutari, where the ill and wounded soldiers were barracked, was considered scandalous back home in London. Sir Sidney Herbert, Secretary of War, wrote to his friend Florence Nightingale asking her to lead a group of nurses to Scutari to care for the soldiers. At precisely the same time Ms. Nightingale wrote to Sir Herbert suggesting the same thing. Their letters crossed in the mail! In October 1854, at 34 years of age, Ms. Nightingale with 38 nurses that met her high standards, set out to care for the wounded and ill at Scutari. What the nurses found at Scutari was appalling! The soldiers lay on the bare and dirty floor of an abandoned barracks, some were on the bare ground. There were no supplies of any kind. With no forks or knives, the men ate their one meal a day with their hands. And there were times when they had no meal! There were no latrines and sanitation was impossible. The medical staff did not welcome the nurses and Ms. Nightingale would not allow the nurses to care for the soldiers until they were asked to do so by the doctors. In the week that followed she and the nurses set up a kitchen and fed the men from her own supplies. Finally when the situation was so bad that the doctors had to ask for help, Ms. Nightingale and her nurses took on the task for which they were trained. Ms. Nightingale enlisted the help of all the able bodied, including the wounded, camp followers and wives of the men. Soon, latrines were dug, the barracks were cleaned, laundry was done, soldiers were fed and the nurses, at last, were able to give nursing care. Ms. Nightingale was a powerful advocate for the soldiers.

These are only a few of the woman in history that have made changes. From the feminist perspective, science, politics, medicine and war impact, women are reshaping the roles of women today. If it weren?t for Elizabeth Blackwell, women wouldn?t be able to be doctors. Marie Curie led the march for every woman who aspired a career in science and wins Nobel prizes. The writings of Mary Wollstonecraft gave women the courage to begin standing up for themselves and speaking out. I admire these women because they had determination and perseverance. Many of the great ones have come and gone but there are many that have filled their shoes and have taking the torch. What I found from this research paper is that many women were behind the greatest accomplishments of men. Women were never credited for their accomplishments because they didn?t have a voice. I also found out that in any profession or movement there has been a women there leading the fight. Much of the information that I was able to obtain was too great and this paper only summarizes some of the findings of a research and survey but the rest is valuable information that I will always cherish.

References

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Appendices

Survey sample and female posters

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Gender\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Age\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What women have contributed to the women?s movement?

2. Who were the most influential women in the past?

3. Who are the most influential in the present?

4. What changes have women made today?

5. Do you think that women?s roles will be changed in the future?

6. What other women deserve recognition for their efforts that have not been mentioned?

7. Who are your top seven favorite women of all time?