Georgia State University
ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

History Theses | Department of History

1-12-2006

Searching for Sisterhood: Black Women, Race and the Georgia ERA

Jennifer Powell Gonzalez

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/history_theses

Recommended Citation
Gonzalez, Jennifer Powell, "Searching for Sisterhood: Black Women, Race and the Georgia ERA" (2006). *History Theses.* Paper 3.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of History at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

SEARCHING FOR SISTERHOOD:

BLACK WOMEN, RACE AND THE GEORGIA ERA

by

JENNIFER P. GONZALEZ

Under the Direction of Michelle Brattain

ABSTRACT

This Thesis is a local study employing new definitions of political activism and using oral histories, personal records and organizational archived material to debunk the myth that the feminist struggle surrounding the Equal Rights Amendment was separate from issues of race. Black women were involved in the fight for the ERA although not necessarily in the ways that White men and women might expect. Additionally, even when not obviously present, proponents and opponents of the ERA argued over the idea of Black women and race. Concern about Black women, overt racism and coded race language were all a part of the struggle by Georgia ERA Inc. advocates as well as Stop-ERA members. Race is intimately tied to the struggle for the ERA in Georgia.

INDEX WORDS: Equal Rights Amendment, ERA, race, Black women, feminist, political, Georgia ERA Inc., Stop-ERA, women's history

SEARCHING FOR SISTERHOOD:

BLACK WOMEN, RACE AND THE GEORGIA ERA

by

JENNIFER P. GONZALEZ

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Georgia State University

Copyright by

Jennifer P. Gonzalez

2005

SEARCHING FOR SISTERHOOD:

BLACK WOMEN, RACE AND THE GEORGIA ERA

by

JENNIFER P. GONZALEZ

Major Professor: Michelle Brattain
Committee: Clifford Kuhn

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
August 2005

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to a whole bunch of people who helped me write this thesis. That it is finished is a testament to the dedication of my family and friends over several years of hard work and support. First I would like to thank my inspiration; Ginger Renee Gonzalez whose birth and growth encouraged me to show her that strong, women can be active and intelligent while being good mothers. Next I must thank my husband Dale, who has read every paper, every version and every scribble of an idea throughout my graduate school years. He is the reason I have succeeded. Marisa Chappell was not my official advisor on this work, but her continued guidance, encouragement and editing made it intelligible. She is my personal example of "lifting as we climb" because she helped me though graduate school as she completed her own work. Peter McDade was my complete relief. When I needed an extra push, reader or positive voice Peter encouraged me to keep going. These were people made up my unofficial thesis team and they deserve my humblest thanks.

My official advisement team made up of Dr. Michelle Brattain and Dr. Cliff Kuhn were also essential in this work. Through classes, meetings and strolls through the park the ideas of this work became clearer and accomplishable. Additionally, I want to thank those people who granted me interviews; Janice White Sikes gave me a hint of encouragement on a rough day and then opened my eyes to a whole knew world with a frank interview. Cathey Steinberg generously gave me time to rehash the inner workings of the Georgia State Legislature. Mary Long is a fascinating woman who opened up her home and life to my questions and who gave me a vision of a history previously ignored by ERA historians. Julian Bond granted me an interview on a subject about which he is not often interviewed. His dedication to women's activism as well as African American activism speaks to a genuine reformer's heart. Finally, my thanks go to the courageous, intelligent women who make up the Georgia Women's Movement Project. Their tireless efforts to document the ERA movement in Georgia continue to make the ERA much more than a vote by legislators but a movement by women of all races and creeds all over the state.

Finally I would like to recognize my new twins Jada Reade Gonzalez and Jacob Foster Gonzalez whose timely arrival lost me time but not joy during the writing of this work. I would trade the smiles of my three kids for a page of writing any day.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ……..	iv
INTRODUCTION …….……	1
Historiography…….…….……..	1
Purpose of the Study …….…….……	12
Preface on Race and Feminism …….…….……	18
CHAPTER 1: THE APPEARANCE OF BLACK WOMEN……..…….…..	25
Appearances Can be Deceiving …….	25
“In Their Own Way” …….	47
Loud Voices, Deaf Ears …….	51
CHAPTER 2: THE IDEA OF BLACK WOMEN …….....	61
Concerned but not Committed ……	62
Voicing Racial Thoughts …….....	79
CHAPTER 3: THE TARGETING OF BLACK WOMEN …….....	93
Not Hidden but Not Recognized …….	94
Mean what you say and say what you mean ……	98
Much more than Baking Bread ……	106
CONCLUSION ……..	120
The Appearance ……..	122
The Idea ……..	126
The Language …….	129
Implications …….....	132

WORKS CITED ……..…… 135

Introduction

> "Hundreds of men, women and children carrying green balloons and 'ERA Yes' signs gathered on the steps of the state Capitol in near freezing weather Monday [February 9, 1981] to demonstrate their support for the Equal Rights Amendment. They were from as near as Cobb County and as far as Savannah, Valdosta and Rome, according to green-and-white signs held aloft by many of them, and they were 'Freezing for a Reason,' according to another sign in the crowd...Atlanta mayor Andrew Young's wife, Jean, said she thought 'the great thing about this gathering is that we are men and women and children,' because the ERA 'is about families, not just about women."[1]

There were ERA rallies every year at the Georgia Capitol from the 1970s through 1982. The newspaper coverage spoke of men and women from all over the state; this article explained that ERA Georgia was "the state's largest lobbying coalition, with more than 40 members," and it even quotes Jean Young one of the many Black women speaking out about the ERA. However the long, intertwined history of the connection between race and the ERA has yet to be explored. The history of this period was white-washed and the diversity of people involved in the struggle and the complexity of the issues on both sides were reduced to a squabble between affluent White women[2].

Like the local Georgia coverage of the ERA, traditional histories of Second Wave Feminism treated the women's movement as inspired by, but separate from, the fight for racial justice. Historians posited that feminism was reawakened when White women learned activism in the Civil Rights Movement and broke away from their interest in race in order to forward their

---

[1] Carol Ashkinaze, "Hundreds Back ERA at Capitol," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 9, 1981

[2] Throughout this thesis the words "White" and "Black" will be capitalized when in reference to race. The focus of this work is to emphasize the strong role of race in the history and analysis of this era. By capitalizing references to race (Black and White) I hope to bring attention to race throughout the language of the paper.

own "personal" political gains. The culmination of this fight expressed itself in the 1970s and 1980s in the fight through courts for *Roe v. Wade* and in politics for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The traditional narrative of Second Wave Feminism and the struggle for the ERA was based on the belief that this was a fight for and by middle-class White women. However, race was in fact central to the struggle both for and against the ERA in the South. This thesis will contribute to a nascent revision of the narrow traditional views of Second Wave Feminism as separate from racial issues and will enhance the view of "race" in southern politics.

****

Historians in the late 1970s and 1980s were the first to recognize the value of the history of women within movements that were previously dominated by men. Feminist activists like Mary King and historians such as Sara Evans wrote of the new women's movement as born of the civil rights struggle. Women and future feminist leaders like Sandra Cason (Casey Hayden) and Sue Thrasher worked under the watchful eyes of Black women like Ella Baker and Fannie Lou Hamer to develop a sense of purpose and self while advancing the struggle for Black civil rights.[3] Within organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) women realized their own oppression and addressed it in a series of memorandums beginning with the "SNCC Position Paper (Women in the Movement)."[4] Evans portrayed this White women's movement as partially a reaction to the rise of the Black power movement. She explained that White feminism "ricocheted off the fury of Black power and landed with explosive force in the northern, white new left."[5] Unfortunately her narrative began a tendency

---

[3]Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, (New York: Knopf, 1979) 33-51.

[4] Sara Evans, *Personal Politics* 84-87, see also Mary King, *Freedom Song: a Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement*, (New York: Morrow, 1987) and Constance Curry, *Deep in our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement*, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2000).

[5] Sara Evans, *Personal Politics*, 101.

by historians to accept the Black and White women's movements as separate and even in opposition to each other.

Historians such as Cynthia Harrison and Susan Hartman challenged Evans' concept of the inception of feminism during Civil Rights Movement, and wrote about women's long history of involvement in politics. In *On Account of Sex: the Politics of Women's Issues,* Harrison examined "the evolution of policy concerning women's issues in the period between WWII and the rise of the Women's movement in the 1960s" and specifically addressed the long debate over the ERA. [6] Her assertion was that "important policy changes can occur given an appropriate political and social context and savvy political actors, even if no widespread social movement demands them." [7] In *From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics since 1960* Susan Hartman examined feminism from 1920s through the 1980s and the struggles for feminist issues in politics.[8] Such contributions encouraged historians to recognize the long and rich political history of women and their continued struggle through various periods. However, neither historian challenged ideas about what should be considered "political" nor did either recognize the contributions of Black feminists or multiracial feminist groups in furthering mutual goals.

In the early to mid-nineties, historians like Robin D.G. Kelley and Glenda Gilmore questioned the accepted definition of "political," especially in its application to the history of working class African Americans and Black women. This bold act caused the field to rethink the definition of political action looking beyond formal electoral politics or organizational power. They both studied the Jim Crow South and realized that Black political action and resistance was

---

[6] Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: the Politics of Women's Issues, 1945-1968*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) xii
[7] Ibid
[8] Susan Hartmann, *From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics since 1960* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989).

a powerful force that had been overlooked by historians. Kelley explained that traditional political action as practiced by White men, and even Black elites during Reconstruction, ignored the very potent political action of the Black working class. He explained that,

> these daily, unorganized, evasive, seemingly spontaneous actions form an important yet neglected part of African-American political history. By ignoring or belittling such everyday acts of resistance and privileging the public utterances of Black elites, several historians of southern race relations concluded that Black working people 'remained silent'. [9]

However, he maintained that the "appearance of silence and accommodation was not only deceiving but frequently intended to deceive. Beneath the veil of consent lies a hidden history of unorganized, everyday conflict waged by African-American working people."[10] Meanwhile Gilmore exposed the political actions of women like Sarah Dudley Pettey in *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*.[11] Her exploration of politics as exemplified by Black men, White men and Black women expanded the understanding of race in the South. Further, her recognition of a stealthy resistance of Black women caused historians to redefine political action. Gilmore examined women working within the auspices of education, religion, health and welfare and thus exposed a new and impressive understanding of political action. She maintained that African Americans were highly political even when they were excluded from electoral politics.

Rethinking the political action of Black women continued with sociologist Belinda Robnett and historian Kathy Nasstrom who applied their analysis to the Civil Rights Movement. Nasstrom explained that women's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement included

---

[9] Robin D.G. Kelley, "'We are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South," *Journal of American History*, Vol 80, Issue 1, June 1993, 76.
[10] Ibid
[11] Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: women and the politics of white supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

"citizenship education and neighborhood organizing" that "paved the way for actions that brought male leaders to prominence."[12] She maintained that, "women were more active in local movements than in the more intensively studied national organizations and campaigns."[13] Thus she suggested that the "question of women's leadership can be examined as a problem of historical memory and narrative." She explained that because political action had been so narrowly defined, the actions of Black women did not garner attention during the period, and thus had not been examined by historians.

Nasstrom recognized that the historical memory of the Civil Rights Movement, which historians and citizens have inherited, is bound to a composite portrait of a male leader. However, she maintained that, "In the gap between participants' definitions of leadership and those that are still widely recognized today lies the history of women's leadership in the Civil Rights Movement."[14] Nasstrom posited that women's leadership was not recognized because historians looked at a very generalized and public record of the Civil Rights Movement. This version of history did not include community building which was the focus of Black women during the period, and left the story only half told.

Likewise, sociologist Belinda Robnett's work, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* advocated a broader notion of activism. She examined the style of leadership most often associated with Black men in the Civil Rights Movement, which she called "formal leadership", and contrasted this method to that most often exhibited by women in the movement, referred to as "bridge leadership." Whereas formal leaders received outside recognition and usually held titled positions within a primary movement organization,

---

[12] Kathryn L. Nasstrom, "Down to Now: Memory, Narrative, and Women's Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, Georgia," *Gender & History* 1999, 11 (1): 114. Hereafter Nasstrom, "Down to Now"
[13] Ibid
[14] Ibid 115

bridge leaders fostered ties between the social movement and the community and between prefigurative strategies and political strategies.[15]

Robnett further conceptualized bridge leadership in three parts. There were "professional bridge leaders" who used their prior experience with civil rights, "community bridge leaders" who worked through a specific organization to bridge the gap between the grassroots groups and the formal leadership, and the "indigenous bridge leaders" who worked with a variety of organizations without a formal title.[16] Such roles were essential in the formation of lasting social change. Throughout the Civil Rights Movement, Black women fulfilled these leadership positions without recognition for their own brand of activism. Thus Robnett's acknowledgment of bridge leaders uncovered a plethora of Black women activists who led the Civil Rights Movement from behind the scenes. Redefining political action and recognizing the contributions of Black women could likewise significantly change the historical narrative of Second Wave Feminism and the history of the ERA.

On another front, Black and Hispanic feminists and historians have recently begun to criticize the previously White-centered view of feminism. Following the lead of feminists like bell hooks, historians such as Patricia Collins, Sheila Radford- Hill and Chela Sandoval all produced works in 2000 criticizing historians for feminist narratives which ignore Black women's feminism or "womanism."[17] hooks explained that,

> White feminists act as if Black women did not know sexist oppression existed until they (white women) voiced feminist sentiment. They believe that they are providing Black women with 'the' analysis and 'the'

---

[15] Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 19.
[16] Ibid 20.
[17] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, (Rutledge: NY, 2000); Sheila Radford-Hill, *Further to Fly*, (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2000); Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2000).

> program for liberation. They do not understand or cannot imagine that Black women know about it and have methods of resistance of their own.[18]

White women did not recognize the bridge leadership, which Robnett explained was an enormous contribution of Black women and thus discounted their activism. Historian Becky Thompson labeled the historians' conception of feminism as "hegemonic feminism" which she characterized as feminism that was White-led, marginalized women of color, focused on the U.S., and treated sexism as the ultimate oppression. It de-emphasized or ignored class and race analysis, saw equality with men as the goal of feminism, and had an individual rights-based vision rather than justice-based vision for social change.[19] The rise of Black feminist history was counter to the narrative drawn by Sara Evans and others, which either ignored Black feminism or positioned Black feminism as a reaction to a White feminist movement. Further it included political action that would have been ignored under standards set by White or Black men.

The narrow view of feminism as a White movement is still prevalent in recent historiography. In 2002, historian Nancy Mclean explained that,

> Recent accounts of the rise of modern feminism depart little from the story line first advanced two decades ago and since enshrined as orthodoxy. That story starts with white middle-class women triangulated between the pulls of liberal, radical/cultural and socialist feminism. Working-class women and women of color assume walk-on parts late in the plot, after tendencies and allegiances are already in place. The problem with this script is not simply that it has grown stale from repeated telling. It is simply not accurate…[20]

In fact, Black feminism was not merely a secondary reaction to the White movement but rather had a basis of its own during Reconstruction and subsequent decades as highlighted by Gilmore and expanded during the Civil Rights Movement as described by Nasstrom.

---

[18] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*, (Southern Press: Boston, 1984), 10.

[19] **Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave** Feminism," *Feminist Studies* Summer 2002, vol 28, Issue 2, p. 337.

[20] Ibid.

Although these historians expanded notions and visions of Black activism and leadership, they still foster an underlying assumption that women of color worked separate from White feminists who may have been active during the same period. Historian Becky Thompson addressed this problem in her article "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism." She explained that the traditional narrative of feminism judged the rise and fall of feminism by White middle class standards. She argued, "Coinciding with the frequent assumption that 1969 to 1974 was the height of 'radical feminism,' many feminist historians consider 1972 to 1982 [years of the ERA ratification struggle] as the period of mass mobilization and 1983 to 1991 as a period of feminist abeyance. 1972-1982 were years when ideological differences divided and helped to dissipate the movement from within."[21] This traditional timeline forced Black feminism out of the picture and ignored portions of the movement where multicultural feminism flourished.

Benita Roth argued that this artificial division of feminism into Black and White camps was based on definitions of inclusion. Once historians deconstruct the idea that feminism was a White movement that Black women were expected to join, feminism can be recognized as a fully multicultural endeavor. She stated, "If we dispense with "model making" and stop expecting large numbers of Black feminists to flock to white organizations, we can see that Second Wave Feminism was *at its roots* the creation of Black and white women."[22] Thus previous narratives involving feminist movements have missed the multicultural and racial implications of the movement, because they have treated White feminism as the traditional feminist narrative and

---

[21] Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism", 6.
[22] Benita Roth, "The Making of the Vanguard Center: Black Feminist Emergence on the 1960s and 1970s" in Kimberly Springer, ed. *Still Lifting Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, (NYU Press: New York, 1999), 73."

Black feminism as an entirely separate venture. They have not recognized evidence of an integrated movement initiated and controlled by diverse groups of women.

Along these same lines, historians who focused on the ERA movement were plagued by a limited view of "political history" and ignored the role of race in relation to efforts to ratify the amendment. Activist and political scientist Janet K. Boles published while the ERA debate was still alive in 1979. Her book set the tone of others in their exploration of why the ERA failed. She asked, "Why did the ERA, seemingly supported by traditional political bases of power, encounter such strong opposition in many state legislatures?"[23] In an effort to remain objective in her analysis of this movement despite her personal involvement, Boles focused on a very narrow idea of the "politics" of the movement. She thoroughly analyzed the *structure* of both the proponent and opponent organizations but her focus was clearly on the effect of the women's movement on predominantly male state legislators. Although Boles recognized gay rights as a divisive issue among proponents, she failed to address the issue of racial diversity in the examination of the movement.[24] Such an analysis ignored a key factor in the political debate: culture. She did not look at the effect that race and class had on the political decisions of the period. Nor did she acknowledge the importance of race in the social movement surrounding the political debate.

Like Boles, Mary Frances Berry and Jane Mansbridge admitted to the struggle of writing about a history in which they were directly involved. Berry began her introduction explaining that her own experience testifying in legislative hearings left her frustrated with the process.[25] Mansbridge addressed the difficulty and recognized the "reasons not to write while a part of a

---

[23] Janet K. Boles, The Politics of the Equal Rights Amendment, Conflict and the Decision Process (New York: Longman, 1979) 3.
[24] Ibid 76-77.
[25] Mary Frances Berry, *Why ERA Failed* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) 5.

movement" or "combine personal activism with scholarly disengagement."[26] Again like Boles they focused on the failure to pass the ERA and not an analysis of the movement itself.

Berry, one of the few Black women who wrote about the ERA, included a cursory analysis of race, but her examination was brief and continued to promote the idea of race as a divisive issue only. She essentialized racial positions and maintained that; "White women were focused on discrimination within the family where Black Women were more concerned about labor issues."[27] Such an analysis ignored working, White women who were concerned about work conditions and Black women who sought equity within their households. Berry recommended that in order to create a more inclusive movement, "White women could examine their roles in contributing to racism and non-white women could begin to exercise greater activism and leadership on sex and race issues."[28] Such a statement ignored two important issues that deserve attention. One is the cognizance of White women and their roles in social stratification and second is the activism by Black women both within the Civil Rights Movement and women's movements that remained invisible until recently.

Jane Dehart and Donald Mathews greatly complicated the analysis of the ERA in *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA: a State and the Nation* published in 1990. Their scholarly work included extensive oral interviews as well as documentary analysis. It provided a much more in-depth look at the ERA while focusing on North Carolina as a model of the national conflict. North Carolina was the home of the ERA's most vocal, national legislative opponent, Senator Sam Irvin. They argued that the debate in North Carolina reflected the national conflict, as Senator Irvin's arguments were often the basis of the Stop-ERA campaign. This moved the historical analysis from a broad national issue to a regional discussion. Their efforts to interview

---

[26] Jane Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) ix
[27] Mary Francis Berry, *Why ERA Failed*, 77
[28] Ibid 78

and examine local documents made their study of the ERA much more focused on the women involved than previous works.

DeHart and Mathews expanded the traditional political narrative by examining terms like "manhood," "gender," "sex," and "masculinity" which allowed for an analysis of the Equal Rights Amendment as more than a political policy to be passed by the state legislatures.[29] They expanded the political analysis to recognize social mores and culture. Because of their distance from the debate, these historians were able to recognize the impact of the ERA on the mobilization of women beyond the passage of the amendment. Despite this expansion of ideas, their focus was still on traditional notions of "politics" as they sought to find the impact of the ERA on legislators as opposed to the women themselves. Even when historians clearly focused on the cultural issues underlying the debate, they ultimately returned to a narrative that privileged the political process itself. Their ultimate conclusion rested in the internal working of the legislature not in the society at large. Further, their analysis centered on gender using race as a background that was symptomatic of a more general southern conservatism. A new analysis that fuses the political narrative with the cultural story could consider gender, race and class as prominent factors in the history. Additionally, such a study should end not with the vote on the ERA by White, male legislators, but the implications regarding women involved in the movement.

Following Mathews and DeHart's example of a regional or state study, historian Jeffrey Jones chose to focus his analysis of the ERA on Georgia. However, whereas Mathews and DeHart made the argument that the national debate and North Carolina debates were similar, Jones posited that Georgia and the "deep-South" were unique and caused the failure of the ERA

---

[29] Donald G. Mathews and Jane Sherron De Hart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA: a State and the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) 3-5, 220-224

nationally. He argued that, "deep-South Legislators opposed gender equality or relinquishing political power to the federal government." He explained that proponents and opponents operated under the "constraints imposed by southern culture" which included perceptions of "ladylike" behavior.[30] Essentially, however he addressed this cultural discussion in terms of male legislators' roots in southern, political culture, again reducing the movement to the failure of ratification. Although Jones referred to issues like "desegregation and busing" he did not push his analysis to intensely analyze the function of race in the movement and examined its role only in the opposition camp, not in the efforts of proponents. Thus, ERA historiography has been constricted both by a limited view of race and a narrow definition of what is political.

The historiography of Second Wave Feminism has limited its understanding of political to focus only on what affected state legislators and has ignored the role of race in the national movement. A new analysis of the history of the ERA should use a broader understanding of political activity as Gilmore and Kelley used in their reexamination of the Jim Crow South. Further, it should recognize the role of Black women and race in the ERA struggle. Finally, it should include a local or regional, narrative study as prescribed by Nasstrom, Robinett, Mathews and Dehart which is more likely to include both an expanded definition of political action and the role of Black women and race in the struggle. Given this new application of historical research and a wealth of archival materials, public records and personal interviews, this thesis will uncover a previously hidden narrative which exposes a clear relationship between race and the struggle for the ERA in Georgia.

****

The purpose of this work is to address those gaps left in the historiography of the ERA. Specifically, it will consider a broad understanding of political action to uncover a narrative of

[30] Jeffrey G. Jones, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment" (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 1995) 4.

feminist history that is multicultural and feminist in nature. The ERA movement in Georgia involved Black women, constantly referenced race in its discussion within the White community, and was both promoted and opposed by politically savvy women who used a variety of traditional and nontraditional methods to advance their causes. To succeed, this thesis must also address questions about the reasons why such a compelling narrative was previously lost.

In order to render the traditional narrative into a more complicated study, several terms must be addressed. Kathryn Nasstrom used the term “historical memory” to indicate the ideas that were preserved and reified by historical study. She notes that “historical memory” often has reified inaccurate information. This thesis will use “contemporary record” to indicate methods of recording history at the time. Sources such as public newspapers, congressional reports or public announcements which were all recorded during the struggle to ratify the ERA reflected flawed assumptions of this period. This can be contrasted with “historiographical record” which includes the work of historians studying this period that should be corrected through a detailed analysis. In addition, this thesis will use the term “collective memory” to indicate a collective understanding of an event by both experts and contemporaries based on a limited comprehension of either political action or the role of women.

When the contemporary record, such as a newspaper, reports an event, it is more likely to focus on dominant male or White characters rather than women or Black people involved in a struggle. This created a public perception of the dominance of White men or women in and event such as the fight for the ERA. When historians then research an event the role of women and Black people subsequently appear absent or inconsequential because they do not appear in the contemporary record. Even historical interviews of individuals present during an event may focus on perceptions or individuals that were reinforced by the contemporary record. Both the

impartial historian as well as the person interviewed may tend to reiterate public record because they have been influenced by contemporary descriptions in newspapers or public accounts. Historians must be vigilant to extend their research to narrative studies in which the roles of women and Black women in particular appear. Regional studies can help uncover these previously unrecognized roles due to the ability of the historian to focus more closely on individuals and provide a more detailed context for their research.

The ability of regional and local studies to uncover a more complex, accurate and inclusive understanding of social movements is the basis for this thesis. In order to discover a detailed narrative of previously overlooked political action, this work will focus on the ratification efforts in Georgia. Kathryn Nasstrom made a firm case for an in-depth analysis of previously overlooked material. She explained that local studies have a "greater representation of women" because they allow historians to look beyond the national composite of a movement.[31] The ERA was not a battle between two national figures such as Gloria Steinam and Phyllis Schlafly, but rather a daily struggle made by various women using everyday acts of political engagement to create social change.

Belinda Robnett explained that because bridge leaders worked in grassroots settings to build communities, their actions are not likely to be recorded in a national forum and have thus been tragically overlooked. [32] In order to reexamine the real participation and range of participants in the ERA movement, a regional or state approach is necessary. This work will use oral histories collected locally, personal interviews, archival materials including personal papers and autobiographies, and local newspapers in addition to national sources in order to create a more balanced view of the ERA movement.

---

[31] Nasstrom, "Down to Now" 113.
[32] Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long,* 4-5

Specifically, this analysis will focus on Georgia as representative of the Southern region. As Jeffrey Jones asserted, there is something different about the "deep South" that was particularly affected by struggles for equal rights.[33] First, the struggle to ratify the ERA was most keenly felt in the South as it was the only regional block of states to vote against the amendment. Northern states such as Illinois and Western states such as Utah were more of an aberration as their neighboring states ratified without the same level of conflict or debate. Second, Southern culture and mores were significant in the political methods and reactions to both national and local efforts regarding ratification. Finally, the language of the South is at once more overt and more subtly coded than other regions. The ERA opposition movement felt perfectly confident having an avowed racist testify in the legislative hearing on ratification. Meanwhile, terms like "ladylike," and "states' rights" were used to make indirect racial arguments that did not need to be explicitly drawn out in the South.

In 1968, Georgia was hotly embroiled in the implications of the *Brown* decision and the protests associated with the Civil Rights Movement. Therefore, at that time and in that context, racial implications could be left unsaid because contemporaries understood that they were there. Use of certain words or phrases carried deep racial implications that were not expressed explicitly because they did not have to be.[34] Thus analysis of southern language can help clarify the role of race in the discussion of the ERA.

Finally, this thesis will fill those gaps left by previous scholars of the ERA. Using historians like Gilmore, Nasstrom and Robnett as scaffolding, this thesis will build a broader and more nuanced idea of "political," which will include bridge leadership and informal political action. Further, it will apply the insights of Thompson and Roth and treat Second Wave

---

[33] Jeffrey G. Jones, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment", 4.
[34] Dan T. Carter, *From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich: race in the conservative counterrevolution, 1963-1994*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996).

Feminism as a multiracial movement as opposed to two separate groups acting only in conflict during the same period.

Using this new methodology and focus, this thesis will show that race was indeed a key factor in the ERA movement. Black women were directly involved in groups supporting the ERA and they used the ERA movement as a venue for other conversations. Further, even when Black women were not directly engaged in the debate, the idea of Black women and race did not leave the room. In fact, both the opposition and proponents used race, race language and "southern culture" in their strategies.

Chapter 1 will show that the ERA movement did include Black women and multicultural organizations. In fact, Black women who came out of the club movement joined groups like NOW, the League of Women Voters, and the Feminist Action Alliance in the late 1960s and 1970s and supported efforts for the ERA. Additionally, because "ERA Georgia" and "Georgians for the ERA" were umbrella groups, Black women became involved through other organizations, such as unions and Black women's groups like the National Council of Negro Women. Their participation was minimized because they were not listed as activists/lobbyists for ERA, but were associated with their primary activist group. Finally, organizations such as the Georgia Commission on the Status of Women, Georgia Forum and International Women's Year Conference made specific efforts to both focus on the ERA and include a diverse group of women. These groups in fact represented the strongest link for the ERA struggle and the women's movements.

Chapter 2 will address the significance of race within proponent groups of the ERA. Even predominantly White groups were concerned with the role of race and used racial language to support their positions. Both groups and individuals deployed race as a political tool and sought

support from women of color. Despite accusations from historians like Patricia Collins and bell hooks, proponent groups acknowledged the small numbers of Black women in traditional political roles within predominantly Black groups.[35] They attempted to address the needs of Black women and families and finally used racially laden language in their attempts to win support for the ratification of the ERA. Although these attempts were often flawed or unsuccessful, efforts were made and should be acknowledged to provide a complete picture of the importance of race. Proponents courted Black women and lamented the racial divide while continuing to drift away from issues concerning Black women. Further, both sides argued specifically about whether or not the ERA would help or hurt Black women. These efforts resulted in a series of targeted organizations, which were intentionally multiracial.

It is also very significant that these interracial groups became the target of the New Right, specifically Stop-ERA Georgia. Chapter 3 will deal with race and the opposition. However unlike previous studies, this thesis will examine the much more nuanced role of race in their efforts to derail the ratification. It was not just a matter that constituents who opposed desegregation or civil rights also opposed the ERA. Race was in fact central to the opponents' efforts. The New Right groups, who were savvy, political women, identified the networks that would garner the most support and which had been the most politically successful for women. After exerting tremendous pressure on the Governor's office, they succeeded in dismantling the most successful multiracial feminist organization in Georgia, and reconstituting it without its funding or its focus on ERA. Finally, as chapters 2 and 3 demonstrate, whether the networks connecting White and Black women were destroyed either by the racism of ERA proponents or the efforts by their opponents, race was present in all facets of the ERA debate. It was, in fact,

---

[35] See Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, (Rutledge: NY, 2000) and bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*, (Southend Press: Boston, 1984)

central, if often unspoken or implicit, coming on the heels of the Civil Right's Movement's dominance of political discussion; it could not be understood by contemporaries in any other way. When opponent groups continued to make references to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, various civil rights court rulings and "states rights" in their arguments against ERA they were implicitly mobilizing secondary but well understood arguments about race.

****

Before rethinking the interaction between Black and White feminists, it is important to note that during the last era of the ERA struggle there was a recognized difference between the way that Black feminists and White feminists conceived of community, family, feminism and womanism during this period. Just as historians like Harrison and Hartmann expanded the understanding of the ERA movements in the early 20th century given different goals and strategies used according to class, the analysis of the late ERA movement must consider the different perspectives and situations according to race. Many women's groups believed that they needed to function separately in order to support their own separate struggles and maintain their cultural integrity. Whether or not this division was based in fact, the perception that Black and White women functioned differently regarding non-ERA issues is significant in examining the relationship between them. White women of all classes received certain privileges that shaped their assumptions and goals. The goals of many Black women did not reflect these privileges and thus their principles were not informed by the same experiences.

First, Black women have a long history of framing their activism around the family as opposed to a separatist notion of activism for the benefit of women. Groups like the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) were founded in the early twentieth century as Black women's clubs that were dedicated to the advancement of the Black family. Mary McLeod

Bethune, child of slave parents, distinguished educator and government consultant, founded the NCNW in 1935. She saw the need for harnessing the power and extending the leadership of African American women through a national organization. This group's mission is the same today as it was then; "Improving the quality of life for African American women and their families."[36] If the African American club movement is taken as an example, Black women historically detailed their goals in terms of family unity rather than in terms of a struggle for power within the home

Janice White Sikes, a historian and librarian of African American history, was raised in a Black middle class tradition of "lifting as you climb." This motto implies that it was the responsibility of Black women to raise the standard of living for all people, not just themselves. Sikes referred to it as the creed of "Finer womanhood," where a woman stood up for self, community and family. Based on this philosophy, the advancement of women could not be separated from the advancement of men or the family.[37]

The philosophy of finer womanhood contrasted with a strain of traditional White feminism's belief that the patriarchy must be challenged. White men were known as the oppressors of White women, and men and women of color. Thus women of color could see Black men as colleagues in the fight against oppression, whereas women often saw White men as the people from whom control must be captured. Historian Sherna Gluck directly addressed this conflict within the women's movement: "White women thought that Black women should

[36] http://www.ncnw.org/index.htm
[37] Janice White Sikes, interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., July 2, 2003.

openly criticize Black men and that widened the gap between white and Black women. Even though they pursued the same goals etc." [38]

In some cases, however, their specific goals were also different. Noted Black activist Dorothy Height stated that, "Black women and white women are searching for different things in family." White women wanted to destabilize the family, challenging their roles as sole caregivers of children with limited career potential. Meanwhile Black women wanted stability for their family, including an economic, social and political safety for women, husbands and children.[39]

An excellent example of this paradox is a struggle over the names on credit cards. Eliza Paschall, former Civil Rights Activist and feminist recalled that the needs of Black women and White women were different regarding recognition of family.

> One of NOW's Atlanta projects was to persuade department stores to issue a credit card to a married woman in "her" name, i.e. Jane Doe rather than Mrs. John Doe… We called one of our prominent Black members to make this request and she told us she had just gotten the store to issue her a card in her husband's name, "Mrs. John Doe." In the South the triumph had been to have Black women recognized as wives.[40]

White women were trying to break out of a middle class mold as non-working dependents of their spouses while Black women were attempting to have their status recognized as middle class wives.

White women and Black women were in some cases working on opposing sides of an issue as a result of the difference in their historical struggle and how they each perceived the family. Benita Roth explained that, "While many white women experienced family obligations as

---

[38] Sherna Berger Gluck et. al., "Whose Feminism, Whose History? Reflections on Excavating the History of (the) U.S. Women's Movement(s)" in Nancy A. Naples, Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class and Gender, (Rutledge: New York, 1998), 33.
[39] "Women's Lib Touches Nerves" *Atlanta Journal*, October 6, 1970.
[40] Eliza Paschall, *More Ups Than Downs*, unpublished autobiography, Box 76, Folder Writings "More Ups than Downs", Eliza Paschall Papers 1932-1988 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University. Hereafter Paschall, "More Ups Than Downs"

exploitation, most Black women found that the family was the least oppressive institution in their lives and constituted a refuge from white domination…"[41] Thus White women were perceived as often in opposition to their husbands while Black women saw their marriages as a sanctuary. As a result of this disparate view of marriage, Black women were often unwilling to join White feminist organizations. bell hooks said that "White feminists who speculated about the feminist movement leading to the abolition of the family were seen as a threat by Black women." [42]

Patricia Collins explained that some White women interpreted Black women's commitment to Black men as a sign that they were submitting to the patriarchy. However, she contended that, "Just because Black women accept subordinate roles in Black organizations does not mean that we wield little authority or that we experience patriarchy in the same way as do white women."[43] According to Midge Wilson and Kathy Russell, "Black women believed in the ideals of feminism, but 'Black women opposed the label *feminist* which they equated with man-hating lesbians, and the perceived, and in some cases actual, racial prejudice of the white women running feminist organizations'"[44] Many Black women concluded that the conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed made White women lash out at all men. This philosophy of "man-hating" was antithetical to the community-based tenets of Black feminism.

Thus, even though Black women and White women both wanted to fight against oppression, their misperceptions of each other caused an ideological division within the women's movement. Many Black women were threatened by a perceived attack on the stability of the family, while many White women mistakenly saw their Black sisters as complicit in the

---

[41] Benita Roth, "The Making of the Vanguard Center", 77
[42] Ibid
[43] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 7. Also see discussion of bridge leadership earlier in this introduction.
[44] Midge Wilson and Kathy Russell, *Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap Between Black Women and White Women*, (Anchor Books, Doubleday: 1996) 202.

oppression of the middle class patriarchy. Nancy A. Naples maintained that, "White women thought that Black women should openly criticize Black men and that widened the gap between white and Black women even though they pursued the same goals." [45] Many Black women saw speaking openly about the sexism of Black men as threatening to the family. That does not mean that they did not address sexism within the home, but they did not attack their own family members publicly. Atlanta Civil Rights activist and feminist Mary Long explained that, "In the Black community there is a lot of Black women leadership, sorority leadership, church leadership but they would never embarrass another Black male or family. Black women are less likely to speak out in disagreement with Black men. I guess they felt like they came out of the slavery movement. You can't put yours down."[46] Women clearly had positions of leadership in the community, but Black men were colleagues, not the enemy in the fight against oppression. Attacking Black men publicly meant losing half of one's force in fighting for the advancement of the family. Plus, opening Black men up to criticism made them vulnerable to attacks from White people and put the family at risk. The call to challenge the patriarchy had great risks for Black women and put their agenda at odds with feminists.

Perhaps the best way to contrast the ideas of White women and women of color is to address the philosophy of "womanism," as coined by native Georgian Alice Walker, in juxtaposition with traditional notions of feminism. According to Walker womanists address the notion of the solidarity of humanity and not just women. In her words: "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender." One is a womanist when one is "committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. A womanist is committed to the survival of the

---

[45] Nancy A. Naples, *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class and Gender*, (Rutledge: New York, 1998), 33.
[46] Mary Long interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., July 18, 2003. Hereafter "Long Interview"

entire group, is serious, "loves struggle, loves the folk and loves herself."[47] Former U.S. Representative Shirley Chisholm addressed the activist nature of womanism by saying that in "working toward our own freedom, we can help others work free from the traps of their stereotypes. In the end, antiBlack, antifemale, and all forms of discrimination are equivalent to the same thing—antihumanism…"[48] The shrill call of national feminism to throw off the yoke of the patriarchy was seen as contrary to the notions of humanity, family and community.

Some Black women in Georgia saw the fight for feminism and the ERA as competing with their ideas of a communal struggle for the family in conjunction with Black men. One Black Atlanta woman commented that "I don't think that Black women can afford to be competitive with their men, especially now…Black women have been able to find work when their husbands couldn't…." She explained that there were bigger issues such as crime, and childcare and maintained that she did not have enough time for "middle class causes."[49] The perception that feminism was antifamily and did not address economic issues made the movement less attractive to Black women who were historically concerned with lifting the entire community while they climbed out of economic disparity.

This commitment to community advancement meant that Black women's groups focused on a multitude of issues: welfare, childcare, education, employment, housing, and health. All deserved equal consideration. Thus the idea of an organization solely focused on one issue or one group did not fit with their concepts of reform. According to Height, Black women saw value in some of the reforms-- abortion, child care and other women's issues. But they believed that the elimination of racism would help stabilize families, and "then Black women can work on

---

[47] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* 42, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought* (The New Press: New York, 1995) 19.
[48] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* 42
[49] "Women's Lib Touches Nerves" *Atlanta Journal,* October 6, 1970

elimination of sexism."[50] In contrast, women fighting for the ERA attempted to focus their issues on narrow goals. They wanted to limit discussions of abortion and lesbianism for example, so that legislators would not conflate those controversies with their fight for equal rights.[51] The idea of addressing all issues at once was perceived by White women as overwhelming and counterproductive for the ERA movement.

****

Given these assumptions and misconceptions it is understandable that previous discussions of the ERA treated it as a "White" issue and separated out references to race. However, these previous works benefit from an analysis of the role of Black women and race in a racially and politically charged movement. By uncovering the role of race in one of the most "political" areas of feminism, the ERA, this thesis aims to provide an example for historians who continue to reexamine periods when race and Black women have been excluded from feminist history.

---

[50] "Women's Lib Touches Nerves" *Atlanta Journal*, October 6, 1970

[51] During a committee meeting of the GERA, NARAL (the pro-choice organization that supported the ERA) and ALFA (Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance) were asked not to sign a legislative petition. The issue of the Georgia ERA movement and their relationship with the nascent lesbian movement is extremely important and deserves more discussion that I can give in this work. I believe that treating it with a sentence or two would do more damage than good and thus I am leaving that discussion for a more in-depth study.

Chapter 1
The Appearance of Black Women

Traditional Second Wave Feminists and Black Feminists alike constructed a narrative in which Black women did not appear active in the struggle for the ERA. However, these constructs have more to do with the way terms have been defined than historical reality. In order to move beyond these constructs, three changes in approach need to be made. First, what constitutes the "appearance" of Black women should be reevaluated, realizing that appearance is dependent on perspective and vantage point. Second, the term "active" should be redefined and expanded to encompass the leadership styles of Black women. Finally the voices of Black women should be reassessed given that their motives regarding the ERA debate differed from those expected by White women or White men. In order to fully analyze activism from 1972 to 1982, historians must also examine the reasons that Black participation has been neglected in previous histories of this period. An evaluation of past mistakes and a new analysis of Black women's appearance, activism and voice is the focus of the first chapter.

Appearances Can be Deceiving

Historians' experiences with people, groups and indeed movements are not necessarily observed first hand but are reconstructed out of the written and oral records. Unfortunately, these records reflect the inevitable biases of authorship, cultural norms and the location of power both during the writing of the narrative and the event itself. Kathryn L. Nasstrom, in "Down to Now: Memory, Narrative, and Women's Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, Georgia," explained that women's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement was ignored because it didn't

meet the same criteria as traditional (male) versions of leadership.[52] The contemporary record of that period consisted primarily of media reports, which focused on male leaders and ignored the community organizers who were mostly women. Thus the "appearance" of women in history depends on their perceived value to a predominantly White, male press.

Nasstrom explained that the history of the Civil Rights Movement was presented to the mainstream press by Atlanta's Black, male leaders who used based their definition of relevant action on their own methods of activism. The press then condensed and disseminated these accounts.[53] Historians were left without a written or oral record that included Black women's activities because they were filtered out by the source material.

Further collective memories were skewed by the contemporary situation. David Thelen in his article "Memory and American History," suggested that memories "shared by smaller groups may be shaped by larger groups and processes." He maintained that, "formal organizations selected and interpreted identifying memories to serve changing needs."[54] As the early Civil Rights activism was used as a backdrop for male elected officials in the 1970s, the historical emphasis was on these male politicians instead of activist women in the Civil Rights Movement. The need for former Civil Rights activists (mostly men) to be elected political offices to some degree changed the collective perception of the history of the Civil Rights Movement. Thus, the collective memory de-emphasized the roles of women and exalted several individuals in order to propel them into a new realm of public service.

The leadership styles of Black women had been ignored through Civil Rights history because it was used to reify Black male status and standards. This invisible role of Black women carried over to the ERA struggle as the involvement of Black women in the ERA movement became limited in

---

[52] Kathryn L. Nasstrom, in "Down to Now: Memory, Narrative, and Women's Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, Georgia," *Gender & History* 1999, 11 (1): 113-144. Hereafter "Nasstrom, Down to Now"
[53] Nasstrom, "Down to Now"116
[54] David Thelen, "Memory and American History," *Journal of American History* 75 (4): 1123.

contemporary record. Nasstrom and Thelen's insights offer several instructive lessons for reconsidering the records of leadership and participation in the women's movement. As in the Civil Rights struggle, the collective perception was shaped by a larger, traditionally defined role of activist and leader; however this limited definition did not accurately reflect the involvement of Black women. Historians then reified this omission from history by basing their interpretations on historical memories and contemporary records that were biased by male- dominated perceptions of leadership.

According to Nasstrom, however, this once lost history could be uncovered. To locate the previously ignored history of Black, female activism, Nasstrom recommended a "narrative approach" as opposed to a history of specific chronological events.[55] When historians ask about specific chronological events, they have already chosen the important markers of history and will most likely reify the traditional narrative. However, when individuals tell their own story they are more likely to include the activities of women, and unintentionally challenge the traditional narrative.

Acknowledging Nasstrom's warning that historians should use narrative history to look beyond a traditionally constructed role of leader, this chapter will add individual stories that challenge the traditional narrative. When this method is applied to the ERA movement, it uncovers not just the role of women but also the role of Black women, which has been ignored by the traditional historiography. By examining oral histories, conducting oral interviews and focusing on narrative accounts as opposed to event-driven public reports, this thesis uncovers a rich world of feminist leadership by Black women, multiracial cooperation in the struggle for ratification, and the significant role of race in the fight for the ERA.

Of course, oral accounts have inherent problems of their own. These retellings must be analyzed in light of both the motives of the person being interviewed and the influence of hindsight.

---

[55] Nasstrom "Down To Now" 130

The most complete view must tread carefully between extremes of "documented" history, which is inherently event-driven, and "oral history" which is subjective and narrowly focused. However, this thesis will rely on an exploration of newly opened records and several oral histories. In this reexamination, it uncovers a narrative in which Black women appear in the ERA struggle in Atlanta and thus changes the historiographical record of this period.[56]

****

The picture that emerges from this reexamination of women in the 1970s includes Black women who were involved in movements previously labeled "White." Historian Becky Thompson explained that, "During the 1970s, women of color were involved on three fronts—working with white dominated feminist groups; forming women's caucuses in existing mixed gender organizations; and developing autonomous Black, Latina, Native American and Asian feminist organizations."[57] The actions of Black feminists in Atlanta paralleled this national trend. Specifically, women of color appeared in the southern feminist movement and even served as officers in the Atlanta chapter of NOW.

Newspapers and other forms of contemporary records often wrote about the women's movement without acknowledging the participation and leadership of women of color. They chose instead to highlight conflict between Black and White woman surrounding issues of women's rights. For example, in an article about feminism the *Atlanta Constitution* described activist Louise Watley as a Black women, "who works in the record department of a downtown store, never finished high school and polled 16 thousand votes running for alderman last year.

---

[56] Historiographical record is the collection of writings by historians, which make up our historic understanding of a period or event.

[57] Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism," *Feminist Studies* Summer 2002, vol 28 Issue 2, p. 337.

She is also the mother of two teen-age sons."[58] The article failed to note that Watley (whom it referred to as Louise) was the first president of the Atlanta NOW chapter who would run for a regional director position at the national NOW conference one month later, in March of 1970.[59]

The *Constitution* did, however, highlight and possibly exacerbate the rift between the White women's movement and Black women. They quoted Watley as saying, "Black women have risked their jobs and lives to fight racial discrimination. White women aren't ready for it yet- they aren't willing to risk scorn and ridicule."[60] As a result of the bias in the contemporary record, the historiographical record of women's rights included the division that certainly existed between White women and women of color, but it omitted the points at which these women sought unity and the reality that Black women fought against sexism as well as racial discrimination. Based on this contemporary record, historians have concluded that Black women did not appear to be involved.

The apparent absence of women of color can also be explained by their physical absence from the public spotlight or their association with other groups. Mary Long, a dedicated activist, feminist and African-American woman, explained that many Black women were, "members of NOW. You would join, but sometimes you wouldn't go… a lot of Black women worked," whereas, "a lot of white women didn't work outside the home."[61] Although this statement is laden with assumptions about the economic status of White women and Black women, it offers an explanation for the overwhelming perception that lobbyists and protestors for the ERA were

---

[58] "Women Oppressed, Exploited in Man's World" *Atlanta Constitution*, February 5, 1970.

[59] Sarah Jane Stewart, "Report of the NOW National Conference" March 20-22, 1970, NOW Atlanta Chapter, AC# 75-443 Box 2 Folder 4-04, Loc. # 2455-11 Georgia Department of Archives and History (GDAH); Eliza Paschall "More Ups Than Downs" Unpublished Autobiography, Box 76, Folder Writings "More Ups than Downs", Eliza Paschall Papers 1932-1988 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University. Hereafter Paschall, "More Ups Than Downs"

[60] "Women Oppressed, Exploited in Man's World" *Atlanta Constitution*, February 5, 1970.

[61] Mary Long interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., July 18, 2003. Hereafter "Long Interview"

White. The physical body of activists during daily lobbying or rallies may not have included a plethora of Black women, but that does not mean that Black women had no affiliation with feminism or the ERA.

Some Black women did appear on the steps of the capital, in the offices of legislators and within organizations like ERA Georgia Inc.[62] Mary Long was an excellent example of the reality of Black women in the Georgia ERA movement and the poor historical treatment of Black women. Long grew up in Kentucky with strong female role models. Her grandmother in particular was a formidable member of the community and she taught her granddaughter to become personally involved in community struggles. She moved to Atlanta and trained as a nurse at Grady Hospital. In the early sixties, Grady was segregated, and Long's first race work was helping to integrate the hospital's nursing staff. As a member of the Georgia Nurses Association, she began an active career lobbying and working to advance the goals of nurses in the state. According to Long, "nurses are just a bunch of feminists anyhow."[63]

Long began her involvement fighting for the ERA in 1972. When the previous Nurses Association representative was too busy to attend the Georgia Council for the ERA (later ERA Georgia, Inc.) meetings, Long volunteered to go. She recalled that her grandmother had always told her to "do the right thing."[64] She was the first African-American woman to lobby the state legislature, she was appointed to a number of commissions during the 1970s and 1980s, and continues with feminist work today. She was the only Black woman on the board of ERA Georgia Inc. and was listed as its secretary throughout the struggle.[65]

---

[62] There were over 40 organizations that claimed affiliation with the ERA and several that claimed to exist for the purpose of ratification. In an effort to focus on the people of this narrative rather than the organizations, this thesis will not discuss all of those groups, their interactions, conflicts or origins.
[63] Long Interview
[64] Long Interview
[65] "ERA GA. Inc. Board of directors" undated, Jeff Jones Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collections Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University; Long Interview.

However, throughout the ten-year period that the *Atlanta Journal* and *Atlanta Constitution* covered the ERA struggle (1972-1982), her name never appeared. Historians could only note her involvement if they knew that she was also the representative of the Georgia Nurses Association, which was often included in lists of pro-ERA groups. Even then, it would be unlikely that historians would know that she was Black based on contemporary records. Likewise, when feminists went to the capitol to lobby, they did not necessarily register as feminists or even ERA proponents. Many individuals who were associated with other groups (such as unions) listed those as their primary affiliation even though they included ERA in their discussions with legislators.[66] Thus the contemporary record did not always associate Black women with the lobbying for ERA despite their public appearance in support of ratification.

Human rights activist Jean Davis had a similar experience. She grew up in poor and Black in segregated Newnan, Georgia, and began her advocacy work by running for office at the age of six in the Young People's Department of the AME church. Her parents were community activists and her cousin, a member of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, was a major influence. She was very active in the Civil Rights Movement working with other students for non-violent protests such as boycotting Rich's department store and participating in sit-ins at Woolworth's.

As a teacher, she joined the Atlanta Federation of Teachers and eventually ran for an office. Through that union she discovered the A. Philip Randolph Institute which was registering voters. According to Davis it was "an organization that does voter registration and political action in the community to help educated Blacks who are in a union to be more involved in their

[66] Cathey Steinberg interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., May 22, 2003. Hereafter Steinberg interview; Long Interview.

union and to advocate justice and peace all over the country."[67] She continued her labor work as the Georgia AFL-CIO Minority Affairs Coordinator. Davis explained that in this role, "I was able to work with different organizations in the community to build that bridge, build that relationship between labor and the community."[68]

Davis' connection to the ERA came through the union and made her an influential connection between union women, Black women, and women's rights activists. First, however, she had to overcome her own prejudices and assumptions. Butler explained,

> As I came to understand that it was a human rights issue, I was able to convince other people that, yes, this is something that we ought to be involved in. And it wasn't on a large scale. It was on a small scale. Because a lot of people had the same mentality about…where were they [white women] when we were doing civil rights? Why didn't they come out and hold banners with us? So it was like, okay, if they didn't give, I'm not going to give. But that was not the right process. And I found that out and I was glad that I did that. I was able to get out there and to do the same thing that I've been doing for other issues that were unjust. After I got involved it was like, oh yeah 'This is (laughs) another human rights issue,' and I'm so glad I did because that was another part of me as a whole person. I did a lot with the ERA, the Capitol, doing things to help other people come along. Because you had to convince people that this is something you wanted to get involved in.

Union Black women, like Long and Davis, who fought for the ERA were joined by more "elite" women like Vivian Jackson, wife of then-Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson and Jean Young, chairperson of the International Year of the Child, civil rights activist and wife of Civil Rights leader Andrew Young. Although critical of past efforts to involve Black women, Jean Young did "not believe it would be difficult to convince Black women- deep in their gut- that they have bonds with white women, including a tradition of fighting together for their mutual benefit…In

---

[67] Jean Davis interview January 22, 2005, unprocessed, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University. Hereafter Davis Interview.
[68] Davis Interview

November [of 1981], Jean Young notified the ERA Georgia leadership, that she planned to get campaign workers and friends to work with ERA Georgia, lobbying the state for the amendment."[69] Despite their obvious commitment, these elite activists for ERA did not appear regularly in the historiographical record of the struggle either. Activist, historian and feminist bell hooks warned historians that, "College educated Black women were dismissed as mere imitators. Our presence in movement activities did not count, as white women were convinced that 'real Blackness' meant speaking the patois of poor Black people, being uneducated, streetwise…"[70] Such prejudice could explain why these notable women did not appear in our history of the ERA.

Some may argue that the participation of Long, Davis, Young and Jackson do not represent the Black, female community at large. Mary Long herself recognized her role as a token in the ERA movement: "They were organizations who were trying to find a token, and I was it. I don't mean that negatively. But I was like the Black representative to a lot of these, which in some ways was good." Such recognition would seem to support the assumption that White women's groups were exclusionary and insensitive to women of color, certainly insensitive to racial issues. Long, however did not describe this as a part of her experience. "I think that a lot of the women who were a part of ERA Georgia and what we did was sometimes the first time that a lot of women had ever seen and worked with an African American woman. But everybody acted as if we were on the same playing field and that was great."[71] Although "token" Black women cannot represent any group as a whole, the activism of people like Long, Davis, Jackson and Young should not be discounted.

---

[69] Emma Edmunds, "Women in Waiting" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, November 22, 1981, 8.
[70] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*, (Southend Press: Boston, 1984), 11. I would note that White women are not the only group to suffer from this selective view of Black women.
[71] Long Interview

Black women were also involved in the struggle for ERA outside the city of Atlanta. However, the appearance of women of color in contemporary record was limited by the geographic scope considered by both historians and contemporary reporters. Records focused on Atlanta, ignoring the involvement of women of color in other parts of the state. However, according to the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, "Throughout the State, ERA Georgia leaders cite examples of biracial cooperation—in Athens, Milledgeville, middle Georgia – but in Atlanta, a city over 60% Black, there has hardly been a real coalition." Despite events being held across the state, the paper chose to give a two-sentence recognition of these efforts an then dedicate a significant amount of the article to the absence of diversity in Atlanta. The paper discounted the activism of women in other parts of the state because they were not in Atlanta. For example, four Black women were organizing a "people of color conference" in Augusta in December of 1981.[72]

However, the traditional narrative gives less credence to activities in smaller towns and rural areas. The article barely mentions events that could be considered extraordinary: multiracial cooperation in support of the ERA in areas where women's networks may not have access to state or national resources. Black women participated in the movement, but the paper seemed to ignore "Athens, Milledgeville, middle Georgia and even Augusta" and instead focused on the perceived lack of coalition in Atlanta. It is also notable that most of the reflection on multiracial action regarding ERA was authored by Emma Edmunds, one of a few Black writers for the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*. Further, this one-of-a kind article was not published until 1981, near the end of the ERA struggle. Thus, the majority of the contemporary records denied Black women's feminism and activism and ignored their efforts to fight for ratification.

[72] Emma Edmunds, "Women in Waiting", 11

Likewise, historians examined the preponderance of evidence and omitted these multiracial efforts from the historiography of the period.

****

In addition to the women of color in "White" feminist groups, Black women appeared behind Black, male representatives in the state Senate. Further evidence of the activism of Black women can be gleaned from the involvement of then state senators Horace Tate and Julian Bond. In 1975, Tate and Bond preempted lieutenant governor Zell Miller's intent to spearhead the ERA in the Senate by introducing it with a coalition of their own. Their move was bold and political, but it was also representative of the desires of the Black community. "Well it just seemed to be the right thing," remembered Bond, "This was a hot issue across the country. It was during the push for ratification. Georgia could have been one of those states and I thought that not only was this the right thing to do and it was the right thing to do right now."[73]

Along with a more general justification for championing the ERA, Bond believed that he was representing the needs of his constituents who were mostly Black women. "The majority of Black people are women." He recalled, "So in a sense I thought I was supporting the majority of my immediate constituency who were female and a majority of all Black Georgians who were female. This was an easy decision for me."[74] He saw the ERA as helping Black women who could then more effectively fight for the civil rights of all African Americans.

The press addressed the involvement of these Black activist men in negative terms. The *Atlanta Journal* reported that, "The introduction of the measure by the two liberal Black Atlanta senators…may hurt the bill's chances of passing."[75] Likewise the *Atlanta Constitution* voiced concerns "that many senators might balk at identifying themselves with an issue supported by the

---

[73] Julian Bond telephone interview by author, tape recording, September 21, 2003. Hereafter Bond Interview
[74] Ibid
[75] "Three Senators Dodge Miller Effort for ERA" *Atlanta Journal*, January 21, 1975.

liberal-leaning Bond."[76] The Constitution ignored the significance of Bond and Tate as representatives of Black women in Georgia and focused on them as symbols of controversy. In hindsight Bond agreed with the paper's assertion that his involvement may have hurt the bill's chances; however he added a sexual element to the association of Black men and the ERA. He explained, "I have to think that some of my colleagues were turned off by two Black men supporting a measure which was supported in the hallways by white women and all the old bugaboos about Black men and white women I'm sure danced through some of those heads." The implication of sexual intimacy between White women and Black men has long been an unnamed fear, which caused many senators to "balk" at ratification.

Despite the reality that the ERA did not pass, Tate's comments at the time make clear that he was behind the philosophy of the movement. He said, "The Equal Rights Amendment is not designed to make people equal. It is designed to bring about equality of opportunity for everybody."[77] These men not only spoke for themselves, but as representatives of constituents, and more to the point, the Black women in their community.

Historian and librarian of African American Studies, and activist, Janice White Sikes explained, "You must understand that Black women's coalitions are having conversations at church with Maynard [Jackson], Julian [Bond] and Dr. [Horace] Tate. It is different in Black culture. You must pay attention to private conversations. When you live in a community, you don't function on your own. There is no disconnect. There is a lot happening behind the scenes."[78] Mary Long elaborated, "Horace Tate and the rest would never have introduced it if there had been too much pressure [against the ERA] from the Black community. It would just not have been done. Julian would not have done it, but those were three people [Bond, Tate and

---

[76] "ERA Public Hearing Set for Feb. 11" *Atlanta Constitution*, January 23, 1975.
[77] "The Legislature Speaks… ERA killed in Senate" *Atlanta Constitution*, February 18, 1975.
[78] Janice White Sikes, interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., July 2, 2003.

Jackson] who were opened and exposed." This exposure led to the apparent involvement of Black men, but contemporary record did not acknowledge the Black women supporting the ERA movement.

Bond claimed that most of the women in his constituency were not "political" regarding the ERA or any other issue. He explained, "my constituency was low income, low education level, probably many not extremely literate. As a consequence, although very active politically…[they were] not the kinds of persons who would or could take time off work, come down to the capitol and stand in the lobby all day, write letters, make telephone calls. Not at all political in that sense."[79] However, Bond seemed to limit his understanding of "political" to a very narrow scope of activity. Although they were not political in a traditional sense, other sources and interpretations of political suggest that Black women were very involved in their community and they depended on their representatives to meet their interests.

Bond also noted that he did have the support of some strong political Black women who spoke to him about the bill. "I did hear from Black women not in my constituency who were in favor of it." He explained that his constituency was primarily made up of "working-class Black women who did not have time to address him on political issues… The crowd of white women supporters was largely professional women of Atlanta and the Black women who would speak to me would have been of that same class." Bond's recognition of class as a factor for style of political activism is significant. He explained, "Atlanta has a big middle class Black community and there were many women who were active in this [ERA], in comparative numbers, many fewer Black than white women, but nonetheless there were Black women who were active in this."[80] He implied that the political style of most of his constituents depended on electing

[79] Bond Interview
[80] Ibid

politicians who could represent their interests while they worked on their day-to-day survival. In contrast he recalled a more actively engaged group of middle-class Black women were concerned with the ERA.

There is a danger of thinking of the Black community in monolithic terms and in allowing the presence of Black men to disguise the presence of Black women. It is incumbent on historians to look behind the scenes and note where Black women actually appeared.

****

The traditional historical narrative of Second Wave Feminism constructed a women's movement that originated inside the Civil Rights Movement when White women lashed out against the sexism within activist groups. These women, who were allegedly not joined by the Black women in the movement, eventually ended their fight against racism, and began the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. [81] A Southern example of just such a transformation was the experience of Eliza Paschall. Paschall, a White southern woman born in 1919 was reared in the South on an idea of "justice" which questioned racial discrimination. She attended Agnes Scott University in Decatur, Georgia and participated in an interracial panel of college students at a "Peace Meeting" in 1937. This activity prompted a local White racist woman to send newspaper clippings and a warning to her parents about her "unladylike" behavior.[82] She was later heavily involved in the Civil Rights Movement through the King family, Atlanta's city council, The Atlanta Council on Community Relations, and several grassroots organizations.[83] In 1968 she went to work with the newly organized Equal Employment Opportunity

---

[81] Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, (New York: Knopf, 1979) 101.
[82] Paschall, "More Ups Than Downs"; Letter to Mr. And Mrs. King April 25, 1937 Box 29, Eliza Paschall Papers 1932-1988 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.
[83] Eliza K. Paschall, *It Must Have Rained* (Atlanta, Ga.: Center for Research in Social Change, Emory University, 1975). This work focuses on her civil rights work and can give much more detail.

Commission (EEOC) of Georgia and discovered that the EEOC was not enforcing title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which required the federal government to fight discriminatory practices against women.[84] She became a founding member of the Georgia and Atlanta NOW chapters and served on the national NOW's Board.[85]

In the early 1970s, Paschall became a key actor in the fight for the ERA despite the fact that she came from an older generation than most ERA leaders. Her story is an excellent example of the transition women made from fighting for civil rights to women's rights in the late 1960s as described by Sara Evans. But it would be a mistake to stop investigating and focus simply on a woman such as Paschall or the leaders of NOW. Her story not represent the entire history of the period and distorts the process of women's activism. Such an interpretation of history seems to imply, for example, that leaving the Civil Rights Movement was a necessary first step toward feminism and in doing so denies Black feminism as an entity in itself. The traditional narrative has also suggested that Black women who were discontent with the White women's movement branched off in reaction to both the sexism of the Civil Rights Movement and the racism of the women's movement. In doing so, the traditional story suggested that there were two separate strands of feminism that shared similar roots, but did not interact cooperatively. It denied the existence of multiracial feminism.

In fact, there were several racially diverse groups in Georgia whose focus was the ratification of the ERA, including the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women and the Georgia Coordinating Committee -- a support organization for the International Women's Year conference held in Houston in 1977. Paschall, a typical example for the usual subjects of second wave feminist histories, went on to play an important leadership role in these multicultural

---

[84] Paschall, *More Ups Than Downs* 36
[85] ibid, 39

organizations. But what is equally important, and has been overlooked by historians are the women of color who worked with "traditional" feminist leaders like Paschall. When these organizations are considered, it becomes clear that, Black women played an important role in multiracial organizations fighting for the ERA.

In November of 1963 newly elected Governor Carl Sanders appointed 112 women to the first Governor's Commission on the Status of Women (GCSW) which he modeled after the Presidential Commission established by John Kennedy two years before.[86] Just as many historians have emphasized the essential role of the Presidential Commission in 1963 nationally in building networks of activist women, the Georgia Commission played a similar role in gathering women of all groups to coordinate and establish common goals. The initial agenda of the Georgia Commission was led by chairman Mamie K. Taylor, who had been a political force in Georgia since the days of Roosevelt's visits to Warm Springs.[87] In May of 1965, the GCSW submitted recommendations to Sanders "directed at the legislature (equal pay for women), others at state agencies (improved educational opportunities), and still others at women themselves (increased attention to nutrition)."[88] Sanders referred to the GCSW as a "vital force for action as well as studying."[89]

Although the GCSW languished under the subsequent leadership of Governor Lestor Maddox, under governor Jimmy Carter's direction with leadership from his wife, Rosalynn, the GCSW was reformed into an extraordinary diverse women's. By July of 1972, Jackie Lassiter, a

---

[86] Jeffrey G. Jones, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment" (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 1995) 27. Greg Fullerton to Jim Parham, Deputy Commission of the Department of Human Resource (DHR), 27 June 1972, folder "Commission on the Status of Women, Box 44, record groups 80-1-6: "Department of Human Resources Commissioner's Subject files, " Georgia Department of Archives and History, GDAH.

[87] Mamie K. Taylor, "Progress Report: Governor's Commission on the Status of Women in Georgia," 18 March 1966, Box 1 of 3, unprocessed papers of Maime K. Taylor Georgia, GDAH; Mamie K. Taylor, interviewed by Janet T. Paulk, August 1981, ERA Georgia, Inc. Records #662, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

[88] Jeffrey G. Jones, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment", 29; *Report of the Governor's Commission on the status of Women*, April 1965, Box 1 of 3 unprocessed papers of Maime K. Taylor, GDAH.

[89] Maime K. Taylor, "Progress Report: Governor's Commission on the Status of Women in Georgia," 18 March, 1966, Box 1 of 3, unprocessed papers of Mamie K. Taylor, GDAH.

political advisor to the governor, was charged with creating a new and much more ambitious commission which included "more concerned Black women and nonconventional 'activist' women. A consensus existed for a more heterogeneous commission composed of Black and white, rich and poor, young and old."[90] Lassiter's vision of an active commission representing a multiracial, multi-class constituency came to fruition. The GCSW was a diverse group of women, married, single, Black, White, both over and under thirty. They noted the challenges to including working class women in meaningful ways as, "blue collar (Union) workers couldn't take time off from work."[91] The commitment to a newly energized and multiracial organization was an innovation in Georgia, which was largely ignored by the contemporary record of the time and has been subsequently overlooked by historians.

The GCSW included several notable Black women in the Atlanta community. Carolyn Long Banks, a former Civil Rights activist on the Clark Atlanta campus who later became the first African American woman elected to the Atlanta City Council, served as one of the three officers on the Commission.[92] Dr. Johnnie Clark, who was both a legislator and a leader at Spelman College, made significant contributions in bringing in the Black community.[93] With such members, this coalition of women had the potential to effectively address issues concerning women of color, White women and feminists.

From its inception, the GCSW's focus on the ERA was clear. An announcement after their first meeting declared that, "On September 19, 1972, twenty-seven (27) members of the newly reactivated Commission voted unanimously to make ratification of the ERA the

---

[90] Jeffrey G. Jones, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment"; A list of 35 names identified 4 Blacks, 6 singles, 4 students, some professional women and some homemakers. List, Folder "Commission on the Status of Women," box 44, record group 80-1-6, GDAH.
[91] "Commission on the Status of Women," Box 9, Folder 22, Martha Gaines Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.
[92] "Minutes The Commission on the Status of Women Meeting, Commission on Status of Women", RG 80-17-47 Box 1 Folder "Mailings, Meetings, Minutes, 1972"GDAH.
[93] Jeanne Cahill interview, August 25, 1998, 19 Box 1 Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.

immediate top priority and a task force steering committee chaired by Mrs. Mamie K. Taylor was appointed."[94] The GCSW published the nation's first study on state law and the ERA, "The Equal Rights Amendment and the Georgia Law" by Barbara Bent and Rose Higby, and a flier by newly appointed commissioner Eliza Paschall highlighted segments of that study. Members tried to get their own representatives and senators to pledge support for ERA ratification and handed out forms throughout the community. They provided information for other ERA groups and met with those groups to discuss the legislators who pledged for or against the ERA. They participated in a letter-writing campaign after the amendment was introduced in the legislature and sponsored eight public meetings of the ERA coalition to talk about the opposition. "Commission and other coalition members lobbied at the Capitol and were interviewed on radio and television almost daily," according to Commission records.[95]

There is no doubt that despite the traditional view of the ERA as a purely "White" concern, this multiracial feminist organization was actively and publicly involved in the ERA debate. In fact they, more than any other group, influenced the legislative path of the ERA during the early years. In February of 1973, it looked doubtful that ERA would pass. "Unnamed members of the Commission" (most likely Mamie K. Taylor) advised Representative Andy Roach, the bill's sponsor, not to let it out of committee in an effort to protect it from a public defeat. Other feminist groups were not advised of this decision and were both vocal and angry that the bill had been stifled. The newspapers reveled in headlines such as "View Falsely Given, ERA Backers Assert" and "Women Feel Tricked; Rights Bill not Dead." Despite this outcry

---

[94] "Struggle for Ratification of the ERA," Report Commission Status of Women, RG 80-17-47 Box 316 Folder 1, GDAH

[95] Ibid

from organizations such as NOW and the Feminist Action Alliance, the will of the GCSW was obeyed.[96]

Given the centrality of this multiracial group in the struggle for the ERA, it is remarkable that its role was not recorded in the in the collective memory of that struggle. It is possible that the contemporary record's failure to report on multiracial activity in support of the ERA or its demise in 1975 at the behest of anti-ERA forces could be responsible for its absence. In any case, it is clear that a failure to recognize the GCSW is one factor that has contributed to the invisibility of Black women's feminist activist. The GCSW was a significant example of multiracial feminism and once its efforts for the ERA (in addition to other projects) are considered, then Black women's actual role becomes clear.

Like the Commission on the Status of Women, the Georgia Coordinating Committee for the National Commission on the Observance of the International Women's Year (Committee for IWY) was created with the intent of bringing together a diverse and powerful group of women to influence modern legislation and philosophy. After Governor George Busbee bowed to pressure and dismantled the GCSW, Mamie K. Taylor reminded him that Georgia would be asked to send representatives and agenda suggestions to the International Woman's Year conference in 1976. Kathleen Crouch of Georgia State University was charged with appointing a diverse group of women that could represent the state.

At the first meeting of the Committee for IWY in December of 1976, members posed the following questions to be addressed by the next meeting; "What demographic groups/clusters of individuals should be reached? i.e. Appalachian, Indians, bi-lingual Spanish speakers,

---

[96] "ERA Backers Decide to Wait in Georgia" *Atlanta Journal* Feb. 20, 1973, "View Falsely Given, ERA Backers Assert" *Atlanta Journal* February 22, 1973, "Women Feel Tricked; Rights Bill not Dead" *Atlanta Journal* Feb 25, 1973. Members of the Georgia ERA Coalition were unaware that Taylor had requested that the bill be held and believed that the legislator had betrayed them.

Vietnamese, rural, aged, youth. What groups/organizations should be included in an invitation to participation list in order to get complete coverage?"[97]

Delores Crocket, a Black woman, Project Director of the Minority Women's Employment Program, and member of the GCSW, chaired an outreach subcommittee dedicated to looking after the interest of minorities. Rosa Stanback, a Black woman, member of the American Association of University Women, and National Vice President of the Continental Societies planned a special segment to deal with minority issues, and Josefina Cross, a Latina, Assistant Director of the Latin American Association, served as one of the Committee for IWY's officers.[98] Former Civil Rights leader and feminist Eliza Paschall, attended the "Spirit of Houston" Conference in 1977 as a general observer and the Committee for IWY even went so far as to include Katherine Dunaway, a middle class, White, conservative who headed Georgia's Stop-ERA campaign. These obvious intentions to create a coalition that was inclusive of all women resulted in one of the most diverse representations of women in Georgia.[99]

The 1977 national meeting in Observance of the International Women's Year in Houston and its predecessors garnered a great deal of publicity. Women addressed issues of age, employment, race, sexual orientation and of course the ERA. The *Atlanta Journal and*

---

[97] Minutes Coordinating Committee December 1, 1976 Box 13 Folder 8 Martha Gaines Collection Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University; Press release from the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year Box 5 Folder 9, unprocessed Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

[98] Press release from the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year Box 5 Folder 9, unprocessed Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University; Letter from Dorothy Bolden to Kathleen Crouch April 20, 1977, Box 37 Unfoldered Eliza Paschall Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Coordinating Committee List of Members, Box 13 Folder 7 Martha Gaines Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University; Press release from the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year Box 5 Folder 9, unprocessed Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

[99] The Nominating Committee Slate Information Sheet, Box 36 Folder IWY Georgia Committee #2, Eliza Paschall Collection Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University. This sheet breaks down age, race (13 Black, 19 White and 3 other), Income (7 rich, 15 middle class and 13 poor), Religion, union, dependents, handicapped, regional distribution, students, and occupations. The committee even went so far as to include Katherine Dunnaway, head of the Stop-ERA campaign.

Constitution covered the conflict between feminist proponents of the event and those who opposed both the ERA and the meeting in general. In addition to showing the conflict between pro ERA and Stop-ERA groups, editors highlighted Georgia women's objection to the sexual preference plank of the national resolution. The headlines emphasized the divisions, rather than the unique inclusiveness of the gathering: "Are Federal Funds Used to Lobby for the ERA?", "'Women's Year' Plans off to a Shaky Start," "Women Interrupt Meeting," "'Push for Rights', Women Urged," "ERA Opponents Rail Against Women's Meeting," and "In Houston, ERA OK Seemed Just a Matter of Time." [100] Thus the mainstream press presented a conference full of confusion, which came down to conflicts between pro and anti ERA factions. Historically, however, what seems remarkable about the meeting was the diversity of women and women's views it attempted to include.

Only the *Atlanta Daily World*, the most conservative Black newspaper in Atlanta, remarked on the unity that connected the Minority Resolution and the ERA. "The National Women's Conference already on record favoring the Equal Rights Amendment staged an emotional show of support Sunday for the rights of minority women."[101] The 1977 National Women's conference declared that,

> Minority women share with all women the experience of sexism as a barrier to their full rights of citizenship. Every recommendation of this National Plan of Action shall be understood as applying equally and fully to minority women. But institutionalized bias based on race, language, culture and/or ethnic origin or governance of territories or localities has led to the additional oppression and exclusion of

---

[100] "Are Federal Funds Used to Lobby for the ERA?" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, February 26, 1977, "'Women's Year' Plans off to a Shaky Start" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, March 3, 1977, "Women Interrupt Meeting" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* April 5, 1977, "'Push for Rights', Women Urged" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, May 7, 1977, "ERA Opponents Rail Against Women's Meeting" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, May 14, 1977, "In Houston, ERA OK Seemed Just a Matter of Time" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, November 26, 1977.

[101] Anne Arnold, "Support for Minority Women's Rights Highlights National Women's Conference" *Atlanta Daily World*, November 22, 1977, sec 1 pg 1

> minority women and to the conditions of poverty from which they disproportionately suffer. Therefore, every level of government action should recognize and remedy this double-discrimination and ensure the right of each individual to self-determination. [102]

The conference highlighted issues of involuntary sterilization; monolingual education and services; high infant and maternal mortality rates; bias toward minority women's children, confinement to low level jobs; confinement to poor, ghettoized housing; and culturally biased education.

When the minority resolution came to the floor for adoption, Coretta Scott King, Jean Young and others described a "'burst of spirit' from the delegates who later joined hands and sang "We Shall Overcome."[103] The *Atlanta Daily World* focused on the role of minorities in the feminist movement and on the unity present during this portion of the conference. As a result of the diverse community present at the IWY, women of all races connected to concerns of equality for all. By focusing on controversy, the mainstream contemporary record overshadowed the very important work that this multiracial feminist organization accomplished, including work for ERA and minority rights. As a result the collective memory has been skewed by the overwhelming coverage by the mainstream press, which presented White women in conflict with each other, and did not even address the involvement of Black women in the IWY drama.

Closer examination of the CSW and IWY beyond the barriers of mainstream source and revealed Black women as an essential part of the ERA struggle. Despite previous reports, women of color were involved in the previously labeled "White feminist" organizations, and they participated specifically in the fight for the ERA, although they identified with groups other than ERA proponents. They supported the efforts of Black, male legislators who fought for the

---

[102] 1977 National Women's Conference Plan of Action Box 4 Folder 9 unprocessed Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.
[103] Martha Fleming, "Coretta King Hails Women's Conference Minority Resolution," *Atlanta Daily World* November 24, 1977, sec 1 pg 2.

ratification of the amendment and they helped mold several multiracial organizations which forwarded ERA as a major concern. All of these examples, however, deal with women using traditional, political methods. Women held public meetings, served on committees, lobbied state legislators, and held press conferences. A more inclusive view of the participation of Black women, however, must also recognize various brands of leadership including those most often associated with women's activism.

"In Their Own Way"

In her work *How Long? How Long?* Sociologist Belinda Robnett acknowledged that women like Septima Clark and Ella Baker were leaders in the Civil Rights Movement without receiving the public recognition or historic praise as did Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Stokely Carmichael or John Lewis. Robnett used the term "Bridge Leader" to recognize individuals who formed relationships within communities, incited grassroots support for social change, and laid groundwork for national movements.[104] Without headlines brandishing the names of individual women, historians lost the role of Black women and their fight for civil rights. Robnett's work suggests that if historians value bridge leadership they would also discover the feminist activism of Black women in support of the ERA movement in Georgia.

Prominent White Georgia women in the ERA movement modeled their activism on those strategies they learned from the Civil Rights Movement.[105] They established organizations, placed women in leadership positions and selected titles to make themselves appear legitimate in the public eye. They even went so far as to incorporate ERA Georgia. Those White women who chose positions of formal leadership or titled positions in women's organizations, were easily recognized by the public whose knowledge of activism was based on Dr. King and John Lewis

---

[104] Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 19, 20. Also see more in-depth discussion in introduction.
[105] Evans, 38-58.

(formal leaders) as opposed to the leadership of activists such as Septima Clark and Ella Baker (bridge leaders) whose experiences continued to provide a model for African American women.

Understandably, historians have a better record of the involvement of the formal leaders in a movement because their actions can be easily traced. The paper trail of bridge leaders can be more difficult to locate. These networks were informal connections to the community and therefore were often not included in the formal documentation of a movement. However, once historians recognize the value of such individuals or groups, the participation of Black women can be reinserted into the collective memory.

Mary Long exemplified these sociological theories in her own life as she says, "Black women were involved in supporting ERA in their own way."[106] ERA was clearly the most political and formal portion of the women's movement agenda and as such primarily recognized only formal leadership. However, Midge Wilson and Kathy Russell claimed that despite "Black women's less visible involvement in the women's movement in general, surveys indicated that as a group, Black women were actually supporting feminist issues more than White women were."[107] Black women's activism was inherently more often located in the community than on the capitol steps and more likely to be discussed at church than in the press, but that should not discount the authenticity of feminism that Black woman employed.

According to historian Benita Roth, one key difference between the activism of White women and Black women was that, "from the beginning of their feminist activism, they [Black women] argued for opposition to gender, race and class oppression and resistance to prioritizing

---

[106] Long Interview

[107] Midge Wilson and Kathy Russell, *Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap Between Black Women and White Women*, (Anchor Books, Doubleday: 1996). 202

any one of the three above the others.[108] Delores Crocket explained her reasons for supporting the ERA in 1978: "Whatever benefits women (as a whole) get as a result of the movement, we (minority women) are going to reap some benefit…I feel we should be involved [in the fight for ERA ratification]."[109] Black women did not think of feminism as a goal in isolation, but rather looked at feminism as a tool to advance other causes. Documentation of such activity would be found in organizations centered around family and race instead of groups dedicated to feminism as a single issue. Thus in order to appreciate Black women's contribution to the ERA movement, historians must also examine groups whose purpose was not solely to advocate for ERA or even women's rights. Again, this has been more difficult for historians to locate. When previous historians examined existing lists of "ERA groups," Black organizations often did not appear because they were not solely dedicated to the ratification project. However their participation in the movement was extremely important.

The YWCA, an interracial women's group, is a good example of the limitations of such a narrow definition of "ERA groups." In July of 1981, Jewel F. Graham, the YWCA national president explained that the YWCA focused on issues that would strengthen the family. Education, health, and parenting were major issues that received time and effort from Y members. Graham also declared that, "The YWCA has committed itself to give primary attention to racism as one of those major issues. Ratification of the ERA will strengthen the position of women, and therefore, our effectiveness."[110] Because groups like the YWCA and the National Council on Negro Women were not primarily focused on ERA, they were not recognized as a

---

[108] Benita Roth, "The Making of the Vanguard Center: Black Feminist Emergence on the 1960s and 1970s" in Kimberly Springer, ed. *Still Lifting Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, (NYU Press: New York, 1999) 83.

[109] "Minority women- 'They have to deal with racism and sexism,'" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* August 7, 1978

[110] Joe Brown, "More Support by Blacks Hailed by Ga. ERA Leader," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* July 20, 1981, 1-c.

part of the movement. However, groups such as these were named among the 40 member organizations of ERA Georgia Inc. and their participation deserves recognition. Cathey Steinberg verified the significance of their participation: "Black support in Georgia is critical and to see active Black women make public commitment on behalf of the Equal Rights Amendment is awfully exciting, I think we'll gain a lot from it."[111]

Black women and Black women's groups rarely worked on one sole issue, but rather addressed problems of the community as a whole. Black women integrated gender work into their fight for human rights through church, civil rights organizations and labor associations. Jean Davis folded her work in women's rights into her work with the AFL-CIO and the A. Philip Randolph Institute. She explained,

> I did incorporate it [women's rights] into building the A. Philip Randolph Institute and helping out people to understand that this was a right issue to get involved in…I was able to convince a lot of people, who we coalesced with, that this was a right issue to get involved in. Even in little workshops that we did, we had people to come in and speak. They gave out information, reading information inviting people to come to the Capitol when that was happening. Even on the radio… we had a public television that we were able to do stuff…I think that was a big part of what I had to do in my role as Minority Affairs coordinator. It didn't say 'Black people.' It said 'minorities' and women are in the minority when it comes to jobs, when it comes to promotions, when it comes to recognition, when it comes to elected officials. We see more women doing that today, so that was a big incorporation of that.[112]

Davis and others brought the ERA to their organizations rather than leaving those positions to focus solely on the ERA or women's rights. Contemporary reports looked for and noted labor's participation in the ERA movement, but neglected the effect of the women's rights movements

---

[111] Steinberg Interview
[112] Davis interview

within the labor organizations. Historians then miss the multiracial connections forged in this sphere.

Black women were working in the context of communities. Their focus was on creating a bridge between the legislative good and the practical advantages that could be gained for their families. Thus Black women's activism in the ERA closely resembled the bridge leadership that Robnett claims was a byproduct of the Civil Rights Movement. These women did not need individual recognition, they fought to advance their community and they accepted any tool available to them, including the ERA.

Black women who supported the ERA did so with the knowledge that the enhanced access to power provided by the ERA would benefit Black women and the Black community. However, if historians examine the language of Black women during the debate for the ERA, they will see that Black women found another use for the publicity given to this women's issue. Black women used the ERA as a talking point to critique the women's movement. The amount of coverage that the ERA received was unprecedented in the public record on women's issues.[113] Black women used that spotlight and pointed out the different needs of Black and White women, thus highlighting their own needs in contrast to the White majority. They used the ERA to bring attention to the racism evident in the White women's movement. Listening to the voices of Black women allows historians to see that Black women were involved in the ERA, but not necessarily in the way intended by either the pro or anti ERA forces.

Loud Voices, Deaf Ears

Becky Thompson maintained that it is important to dispel "the common notion that women of color feminists emerged in reaction to (and therefore later than) white feminism." She

[113] The ERA coverage lasted from 1971 to 1982 and beyond and was addressed on a weekly if not daily basis. Only the attention given to the abortion issue (beginning in 1973) rivals the ERA.

declared that, "The timing of Black feminism is about the same as white feminist activism."[114] Black women merely used the access provided to White activists to assert their own views, needs and history. Jean Young inserted just such a history lesson in her statement of support of the ERA. She said, "It really annoyed me that the women's movement has never highlighted the role of the Black woman in the suffragette movement. In none of the rallies, none of the literature, none of the appeals to the Black women are the references made. I think that's one of the reasons the movement, in the minds of many women, has been identified as predominantly white and middle class."[115] Without reinforcing a history that includes Black activists, the historiographical record reified a narrative of White women fighting alone for the equality of women. However, as Young pointed out, this narrative is a myth. Black women's feminism did not suddenly develop in opposition to the White movement of the 1960s and 1970s. They had a history of activism through the abolition, suffrage and club movements.[116] But, as the history of these movements suggests, Black women often combined activism on behalf of women with other activist goals.

In a similar fashion, Black women often used the ERA debate to contrast their position relative to the position of White women. They did so, not simply because they opposed the ERA or White feminists, but often with the hope that their influence would broaden the scope of activists concerns. Black activist Brenda Sanford explained that, "It is a mistake to think that Black women and white women are the same, because they aren't. Show me ghettos, the short life span the low-income conditions and high unemployment rates of white women, then we can talk about similarity."[117] Specifically she pointed out the economic impact of employment to

---

[114] Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism", 337
[115] Emma Edmunds, "Women in Waiting", 8
[116] For a review of such activity see Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods eds. *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Pub., 1990.
[117] Steve Wright, "'Racism Hurts ERA Movement,' says Douglass," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Intown Extra, October 4, 1979, 11.

Black women. “For white women, employment opportunities and advancement are more a matter of choice, but for Blacks they are a matter of necessity.”

Sanford’s statement categorized all Black women as lower class and all White women as middle class. Such assumptions problematically ignored diversity of economic classes in order to emphasize the differences of race. Although treating White feminists as a monolithic group was just as serious a mistake as stereotyping Black feminists, Sanford’s observation highlighted the needs of her community beyond the consciousness raising that was associated with the White women’s movement. She used an article titled “Racism Hurts ERA Movement” as a call to White and Black women to “get together in the very near future and have some extensive dialogue.”[118] Her criticism was not about the effect of the ERA, but rather a critique of White feminists who solely focused on their own issues and needs.

In retrospect, Julian Bond agreed that the criticism of White feminists was general, not specific to the ERA. When asked, “was there uneasiness between White feminists and Black women?” He responded, “yes, but not on ERA. It is rather a much more generalized unease and it’s relatively complicated. I think that what it comes from is that it was largely a middle class women’s movement populated by women with professional degrees and decent jobs, where Black women including those with degrees and professional jobs saw their main task not as fighting for women’s rights, but rather fighting for Black rights and thought as Black people generally progressed, they would progress too.”[119] This generalized conflict based on both race and class played a significant role in the creation of the historiographical record of Black and White feminism as mutually exclusive.

---

[118] Ibid
[119] Bond interview

Black activists Delores Crocket and Jan Douglass joined in the critique of the women's movement with the same goal in mind. Crocket claimed that Black women, "feel that once sexism is whipped out, they are going to still have to deal with racism. So naturally you find some reluctance to join the women's effort." Brenda Sanford advised White women that "to effect change, you have to be aware of problems (peculiar to Black women)." Douglass contrasted Black women's feminism that of with their White counterparts and maintained that, "We have a larger view (than most white women's groups) of what we are responsible for. Black women have another mandate. They have to deal with racism *and* sexism."[120] Thus Black women used the ERA as a venue to move the mainstream or "White feminist" movement closer to the goals and needs of the Black community.

In addition to contrasting their own plight with that of White women, Black women used discussions of the ERA to openly attack racism within the White feminist movement. Douglass acknowledged, "the strong feeling across the country that white women are racists."[121] Such a categorical statement undoubtedly erred in treating White women as a monolithic whole. However, Douglas' statement addressed the common perception held by many Black women. White women were historically perceived as paternalistic, racist and unwilling to see Black women as their equals.

White women were paternalistic in their treatment of Black women, which was rooted in both racism and classism. White women were also accused of having difficulty dealing with working class women. Dorothy Cotton, national education director for the Southern Christian Leadership conference warned that, "It will take an awareness by middle class women to prevent them from treating lower income women, who are often their housemaids, as second class

---

[120] "Minority women- 'They have to deal with racism and sexism'" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution,* August 7, 1978.
[121] Steve Wright, "'Racism Hurts ERA Movement,'"

citizens."[122] Some middle class White women could not accept leadership from women of blue collar or lower class backgrounds. White middle-class women assumed that union members had to work and this assumption served as an excuse for their limited role in the ERA struggle. Additionally, for many Black women the ERA represented the most middle-class, and White of feminist concerns. bell hooks explained, "White feminist demands for work privileges did not resonate strongly with Black women, who had never been excluded from the privilege of working to support their families."[123] Thus the needs of White women were seen by many as short sighted, and insignificant. One student described the women's liberation in 1970 as "trite, trivial and simple…"[124]

Black women often claimed that White women had difficulty dealing with middle class, educated Black women too. Janice White Sikes described her experience with such paternalistic treatment of middle class Black women as if she was an external observer: "It is a challenge even today. White women seemed to be more comfortable with articulate and well informed, but perhaps not educated or land-owning [black women] and so the paternalism of the 70s was interesting to watch."[125] Despite her observation, and her middle class background isolated from the concerns of poor White or Black women, Sikes and her friends found their personal experiences in NOW frustrating enough for them to leave the organization.

When middle-class, White feminists finally recognized that there were women who were their economic and educational equals, they often denied the unique position of these Black women. Sikes was particularly offended when White feminists defined her as middle-class and intimated that she should not think of herself as Black. It was as if the recognition of her class

---

[122] "Parallels Seen for Lib, Negroes," *Atlanta Journal* June 25, 1972
[123] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*
[124] "Women's Lib Touches Nerves" *Atlanta Journal* October 6, 1970
[125] Sikes Interview

status negated her racial identity. She recalled, "In 1970 there was a push to say that you are not really Black, you are upper middle-class but, culture is key for me. I felt that it was disrespect to [ignore] cultural specificity."[126] Black women needed to be recognized as different and yet treated as equals.

Obviously these assumptions cannot be applied to all White women. There were a significant number of White women who acknowledged the dual role of Black women and reasoned that this additional burden caused their "absence" in the ERA movement.[127] Regardless, there was certainly the perception among women of color that White women discounted the reality of middle-class Black women *and* demeaned the working class Black women who attempted to work within the feminist movement. Discussion of the ERA therefore often served as a venue for Black women to voice their discontent with the women's movement.

The history of racism throughout the South was difficult for Black women to overlook. Ethel Smith, who had been an activist for women's issues in predominantly White organizations, expressed her resentment in a language that harkened back to slavery when the White plantation wife (stereotyped as Miss Anne) was at least complicit in crimes against slaves and at most a vicious embodiment of the cruelty of racism. Smith explains, "Who is worse to you than Miss Anne? You don't have any worse enemy than Miss Anne. Then Miss Anne wants to join hands with you. 'Let's be happy. ERA. Yes. Yes. Yes.' So that when Miss Anne decides she wants to go to work, she can. Self fulfillment is the big word."[128] Black women used the ERA as an opportunity to address racism, historically and from within the women's movement, but this qualification should not hide their genuine participation in ERA itself. Jan Douglass did not

---

[126] Ibid
[127] This idea will be explored in depth in Chapter 2
[128] Emma Edmunds, "Women in Waiting", 8. It should be noted here that there is a serious contradiction to criticize White women for categorizing Black women as "Mamie" or "Jezebel" while stereotyping White women as "Miss Anne".

exclude the possibility of working for ERA or the women's movement in general, but she did however recognize that, "If we are going to form an effective coalition, we are going to have to deal with the reality of racism in the women's movement."[129]

Finally, Black women also voiced specific concerns about the ERA and its impact on the Black community. Historical experience led many women's to suspect that "the sweat from her [the Black woman's] brow kept the white woman ensconced."[130] The concern was that due to the recession and shrinking job market of the 1970s, White women were fighting for jobs that Black men were striving to obtain. Thus, the advances of White women would negatively impact the Black family. Douglass asserted that the, "gains of white ERA women are gong to be made on the backs of Blacks."[131]

Judith Lightfoot [Cormack] who was both involved in the Georgia ERA fight and a regional representative of NOW recognized the possibility that, "limited economic opportunity meant that white women were taking jobs away from Black men."[132] Black women perceived the ERA as creating competition in which Black men would suffer. Noted Black activist Dorothy Height expressed concern that she did not "think that Black women can afford to be competitive with their men, especially now…Black women have been able to find work when their husbands couldn't… Some of these Women's Lib girls are asking for jobs that Black men haven't been able to get."[133] Some Black women did not see any benefit in the promotion of White women to their personal family income and thus, had no incentive to fight for the advancement of these

---

[129] Steve Wright, "'Racism Hurts ERA Movement,'"
[130] Emma Edmunds, "Women in Waiting", 8.
[131] Steve Wright, "'Racism Hurts ERA Movement,'"
[132] Judith Lightfoot Cormack interview, August 8, 1998 and August 18,1998 Box 1 Judith Lightfoot Cormack, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.
[133] "Women's Lib Touches Nerves," *Atlanta Journal*, October 6, 1970.

women while others joined in to both fight for and shape the ERA with their own world experiences.

When Black women's voices are included in historical research, analysis reveals a narrative in which Black women were certainly not absent from the debate regarding ERA. In addition to raising concerns about the impact of the ERA on the Black family, they used the press coverage of the legislative debate to shed light on their own plight, and address concerns of racism within the women's movement. Despite their distrust of the proponents of the ERA, however, they did not actively work against its passage in great numbers.[134]

Although historians have been slow to note the role of Black women in the ERA movement, it is clear that Black women were not oblivious to the issues surrounding the ERA and they were not silent about their role in its implementation. As historian Benita Roth advised, "If we stop expecting large numbers of Black feminists to flock to white organizations, we can see that second-wave feminism was *at its roots* the creation of Black and white women."[135] Regardless of the roles they played, Black women profoundly affected the ERA debate.

****

Historians have reported that Black women did not appear in the ERA movement, but upon closer examination Black women held both an interesting and important role in the fight for ratification. This thesis revises that historiographical record to include the presence and leadership of Black women. Black women were directly involved in the ERA either through superficially White organizations, in support of Black male legislators or in multiracial women's

[134] Despite my best efforts using both narrative interviews and archival research in Stop-ERA files, there are no records of women of color joining the Stop-ERA forces. There are no indications that diversity was something sought by the Georgia Stop-ERA group and there are no records showing attempts to coordinate or gain support from predominantly Black organizations.
[135] Benita Roth, "The Making of the Vanguard Center", 73

groups that all actively fought for the ERA. If historians look beyond the contemporary reports, Black women suddenly reappear as a part of the picture.

Black women and predominantly Black women's groups were also involved in the ERA movement, although not necessarily in a way that historians easily recognized. Based on the pattern established by early accounts of the Civil Rights Movement, citizens, and historians have become accustomed to looking for the single formal leader who would "represent" the cause of a movement. Thus for every Dr. Martin Luther King, there needed to be a Gloria Steinem. Unfortunately in both the civil rights and the women's movements, individuals cannot accurately represent an entire movement. If historians look beyond the formal leadership of Black males or White females respectively, they will locate the integral role of the bridge leader who was concerned with a multifaceted approach to bettering a community. Black women were, in this way of "seeing", deeply involved in the ERA, although they did so within organizations that were not solely focused on ERA, and they often did so without recognition or title.

Finally Black women's voices were heard all around the ERA movement. They subverted the coverage of women's liberation to highlight their own oppression, they forced White women to examine their own racism, and they openly criticized the Equal Rights Amendment and the potential damage that it could have on the Black family. Black women were not a monolithic group that could be easily categorized as either for or against the ERA. It is impossible to deem them absent from this very important historical discussion. In an effort to recognize the multiracial nature of Second Wave Feminism, historians should reexamine the compilation of previously labeled "White feminist groups," uncover multiracial organizations, and reexamine the methods used by Black women's groups and the public voices of Black women. Once

historians look beyond the traditional narrative, Black women appear vividly and actively involved in the picture of Second Wave Feminism.

Chapter 2
The Idea of Black Women

The traditional narrative of Second Wave Feminism makes a clear delineation between feminist women of color and White feminists. Historian Sherna Berger Gluck challenged this separatist approach in her chapter, "Whose Feminism, Whose History? Reflections on Excavating the History of (the) U.S. Women's Movement(s)." She maintained that, "for the most part, the early history of feminist activism remains, at best, particular and separate, and does not challenge the accepted paradigm of 'second wave' feminism."[136] The conventional historical wisdom has been that White women left the issue of race when they broke away from the Civil Rights Movement and focused solely on sexism or advancement of their own personal politics.[137] However, that assumption is flawed.

Kimberly Springer explained, "Previous studies looked at only white women out of the Civil rights movement. We need to reframe our discussion of the emergence of second wave feminism in terms of a plurality of feminisms."[138] In fact, especially in the South, the women's liberation movement surrounding the ratification of the ERA was much more complex than a dialogue between White women about White women. The struggle for the ERA was laden with discussion of race using both overt and coded language.

---

[136] Sherna Berger Gluck et al, "Whose Feminism, Whose History? Reflections on Excavating the History of (the) U.S. Women's Movement(s)" in Nancy A. Naples, Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class and Gender, (Rutledge: New York, 1998) 10.
[137] Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, (New York: Knopf, 1979).101.
[138] Kimberly Springer, ed. *Still Lifting Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, (NYU Press: New York, 1999) 8.

Even when Black women were not perceived as directly active in the movement, the *idea* of Black women was present throughout the struggle to ratify the ERA. In order to further locate the role of women of color in the ERA, historians should examine both explicit and implicit discussions of race by proponents of the ERA. First, historians should analyze the ways that White women spoke explicitly about women of color. They lamented the absence of a strong coalition with Black women, but commonly understood that Black women had a call to fight racism that took precedence. Proponents and opponents of the ERA also vehemently argued about what would be best for Black women, placing great import on how the ERA would affect Black families. Second, historians should examine the language and subtext used in the ERA debates. The use of coded words such as "states' rights" and ideas like the "Southern Lady" reveal that the struggle for and against equal rights was a struggle about both race and gender.

Concerned but Not Committed

In the traditional narrative, Black women struggled with the double burden of sex and race while many White women were only concerned with their own advancement. This collective memory is limited by a paradigm which presents White and Black women only in opposition. The reality is that White women cared about the inclusion of women of color and spoke explicitly about their role in the movement. Georgia's White feminists lamented the lack of diversity in the movement and made attempts to reach out to the Black community. The reality that ultimately White women had a number of failures in their efforts to create a coalition with Black women should not obscure the many attempts they made toward inclusion.

Early NOW meetings indicated that race was an issue for women in Georgia and that general concerns for community were not solely the purview of Black feminists. Unfortunately, these concerns did not necessarily translate into action. Georgians reporting back from the

National NOW conference in 1970 expressed, "dismay about the amount of time given to business, the bickering among women, the lack of appeal or sensitivity to Black people, youth and people of lower economic status..."[139] Contrary to the traditional narrative there were people, specifically Georgians, who were concerned about race and broader issues that affected the community. However, the general or more national trend did not reflect those concerns.

Although White women may not have been effective in changing the national philosophy of NOW, the myth that they did not care about racial diversity, or issues of concern for the lower economic class is clearly false. Cynthia Hlass, former president of Atlanta's NOW Chapter explained that, "One of the big areas in NOW where we had problems was that the vast majority of feminists and NOW members were White."[140] Such concerns of Georgians however have often been subsumed by the national story and trends in NOW that ignored issues of diversity and concentrated on a narrowly defined mission. However, the Atlanta NOW Chapter recorded an ongoing discussion about diversity in 1972 and 1973. Georgians brought up the issue of race and gender again at the national level in 1974.

By 1975 the issue was still being addressed locally as a problem, which leaders categorized as "racism within NOW."[141] Unfortunately collective memory reflects the national voices of the movement, where women were less likely to examine the interconnection between race and gender as opposed to the local, Southern voices which expressed deep concerns about diversity and the fight against racism. Obviously, there were problems both at the local and

---

[139] Sarah Jane Stewart, "Report of the NOW National Conference" March 20-22, 1970, NOW Atlanta Chapter, AC# 75-443 Box 2 Folder 4-04, Loc. # 2455-11 GDAH

[140] Cynthia Hlass interview, February 18, 1999, Box 2 Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.

[141] Minutes for August 16, 1972, AC 75-443, NOW Atlanta Chapter, Box 1, Folder 2-01, Loc. # 2455-11 GDAH; Board Meeting Minutes 1971-1973, Minutes for March 23, 1973, AC 75-443, NOW Atlanta Chapter, Box 1, Folder 2-01, GDAH; Board Meeting Minutes 1971-1973, Report, AC 75-443, NOW Atlanta Chapter, Box 2 Folder 4-02, GDAH; Internal Correspondence with National and other Chapters, 1971-1974, Proposal to address Racism within NOW, NOW, Box 3, Folder 7-23, GDAH .

national levels, but White women were not ignorant, oblivious, or apathetic about the connections between race and gender.

Many of the White women associated with the ERA Georgia movement regretted the absence of Black women from direct participation in their struggle. Activist Polly Simpson recognized the culpability of the local movement. She said simply, "I don't think that we have done a very good job of being inclusive."[142] Cathey Steinberg, the sponsor of the ERA bill in the Georgia house, explained that, "We had a fair support from Black men and women, but the commitment from Black women was difficult."[143] She acknowledged that Black men and women were involved, but wanted them to be much more visible in their support of the ERA. She explained, "I think one of the things unfortunately that has hurt us in Georgia and around the country is that black women never identified with the way we needed it to be."[144] Steinberg and Simpson's comments suggest how a limited understanding of activism has skewed the historiographical record. As was documented in chapter one, Black women were active in the struggle surrounding the ERA; however their participation did not take the form that White women expected. Black women's participation was not retained in the collective memory because their support did not mimic the leadership roles of either Black men or White women. But Steinberg and Simpson's comments also show that in spite of the misperception that Black women were not involved, White women were not apathetic to the perceived absence of women of color.

Another facet of the myth of apathy about diversity is the assumption that White women did not understand the unique position of Black women. A reexamination of local movements

---

[142] Polly Simpson interview, September 22, 1997, Box 3, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University. Hereafter "Simpson Interview"
[143] Cathey Steinberg interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., May 22, 2003. Hereafter "Steinberg Interview"
[144] Ibid

reveals that White women were not only concerned about the inclusion of Black women, but that they were empathetic to the concerns, burdens and struggles of women of color. Simpson, who was involved in the Civil Rights Movement in addition to feminism, believed that Black women "were still fighting so many battles in terms of race that it was like they didn't even have time yet to even get to this other."[145] Apparently, not all White women were oblivious to the dual pull of racism and sexism on women of color.

Political scientist and ERA Georgia activist Diane Fowlkes explained that the reason that women of color did not directly participate in the ERA struggle was "because Black women were still thinking that the most important thing for them was to work on racial justice."[146] Fowlkes' statement shows that she understood that Black women were concerned primarily with race. Thus, counter to the traditional narrative, White women were aware and concerned about the lack of diversity in the movement, but reasoned that Black women were too consumed with the struggle against racism to help with ERA.

Jeanne Cahill, who served as the GCSW's executive director, was aware of the tremendous burden these women faced. "I think they had an even tougher job than we [White women] did because, though there were so many strong Black women, they somehow thought they shouldn't <u>present</u> themselves as being so strong, because they needed to support the <u>men</u> to make them stronger. So, they had that kind of 'dual pull' on them—things that they <u>wanted</u> to do, and things they <u>felt</u> they should do."[147] White women recognized that women of color had a complicated position, but Cahill implies that whereas White women were free to present themselves as strong, Black women had to avoid the appearance of strength in order to support men. White women

---

[145] Simpson Interview

[146] Diane Fowlkes interview, March 10.1998, Box 1, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.

[147] Jeanne Cahill interview, August 25, 1998, Box 1, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University; underlines were present in the transcript form of this interview.

clearly saw that there were real barriers which kept Black women from participating in the movement in the same way that they did. What they were not always able to see was that Black women did participate in their own way. Their different vantage points produced different memories of this period, leaving historians who base their work solely on White accounts with a very limited view of the movement.

Mary Long offered a different explanation for the lack of direct involvement of many women of color. She maintained that, "Black women were missing from ERA Georgia mostly because they weren't asked." She remembered that a call for diversity went out to a number of organizations but explained that White women did not know who the Black women's groups were or who to ask.[148] The *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* was critical of what it perceived as an all White movement and reported: "members that do not appear as a part of the coalition include the NAACP and SCLC, Black groups that in the South 20 years ago learned how to mobilize the nation's consciousness to accomplish their political goals. At this night's meeting there were no Black faces."[149] Long attributed the lack of inclusion to the ignorance of White women, and did not excuse their elitism.

The legacy of segregation in the South effected the development of both Black and White women. Women's rights activists, now in their twenties or thirties grew up separated from Black people their age and friendships were rare across color lines. Sherri Shulman [Sutton] who served as the second president of ERA Georgia recalled growing up with racism:

> There was one time I went in – and we were looking for Halloween costumes, actually – and I went in the back bedroom where nobody ever went and was rummaging through [things] and I found this sheet and everything. And I thought, "Ghost! This will be wonderful!" and my mother was sitting out on the steps talking to a neighbor, and I go rushing out with the whole thing [on]. And she just about had a fit and

[148] Mary Long interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., July 18, 2003. Hereafter "Long Interview"
[149] Emma Edmunds, "Women in Waiting" *AJC Magazine* November 22, 1981, 8.

> rushed me back inside, which let me know at the time it was not something to be proud of, you know? Because she obviously did not want people to know that my daddy had a Klan outfit.

Her experiences led to an epiphany one night at a Klan rally;

> One thing that was really, when I looked back on it during my life [that] was transformational for me when my Daddy took me to a Klan [rally], a cross-burning one time at Stone Mountain. And so you're there, and it was very dark and it was cold. And all, everybody, had these masks on so you couldn't really—you didn't know whose hand for sure you had a hold of. I mean I thought I had my Daddy's hand and I don't think for some reason, I don't think my sisters were there. And I remember standing there and feeling the heat of that cross and feeling the hate of those men and thinking, "this is wrong, this is wrong."[150]

Shulman's determination to break away from her family's history of racism did not give her the skills or contacts to reach across the color line to join forces with others fighting for human rights. Her ignorance limited her outreach and stunted ERA efforts to create a more inclusive movement. Although her family's direct involvement with the Klan may not have been the experience of all or even many White women in the Georgia ERA movement, her position as President of Georgia ERA makes her experience significant.

Despite this lack, it is clear that even when Black women did not "appear" to be involved in the struggle of the ERA at the time, their presence or absence was still a large concern for those fighting for the ERA. Many White women remember that the concerns of Black women were discussed and their absence was counted as a failure for the movement. However, it could be argued that the White women involved in the ERA did not come to miss the diversity within their movement until they examined it in hindsight. As many of the interviews in the Women's Project at Georgia State occurred at least eight years after the fight for the ERA ended, they may be skewed by the more inclusive nature of historical study today. It may also be true that when

---

[150] Shulman [Sutton], Sherri, interviewed November 8, 1998 and March 7, 1999, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

women spoke about the need for diversity in the 1970s, their actions may not have reflected those words.

This work examines the actual efforts of ERA groups at the time. Comparing their expressions of concern to their actual commitment to racial diversity, this chapter suggests that in addition to a discourse of concern, White women did in fact make many attempts and several successful efforts at a multicultural coalition supporting the ERA.

****

Despite the traditional narrative, which charged that the ERA was a movement including only White women with the intent to benefit only White women, the Georgia groups that fought for the ERA did, in fact, both intend and attempt to address a diverse group of people with a breadth of concerns. First, the Atlanta NOW Chapter made its initial intentions to address a breadth of issues and its concern with people of color very explicit. In 1970 the Atlanta NOW Chapter stated that it believed that, "an equal emphasis should be placed on discrimination in hiring practices of both Blacks and women."[151] Moreover, the existence and activism of multiracial groups such as the GCSW and the Committee for IWY challenges the traditional myth that the ERA was intended to help only White women.

In fact, pro ERA forces did not just *intend* to address a diversity of concerns and people, but actually included the needs of Black families, working women and women of color in their justification for ERA. A coalition of Georgia groups determined that the ERA would benefit both middle and working class people, including White families and those of people of color. The ERA would be used as a tool to fight both racism and sexism. A pamphlet entitled "Equal Rights Amendment: *What's in it for Black Women?"* compared the ERA to the 14th amendment,

[151] Press Release: National Association of Manufacturers meeting, July 30, 1970, NOW Atlanta Chapter, AC# 75-443 Box 2 Folder 4-04, Loc. # 2455-11 GDAH.

depicted the opening of the military to women as a possible route out of poverty, and explained that protective legislation didn't cover service occupations like those most often held by Black women. It posited that sexism had always been worse against minority women, and explained that the ERA could help increase job opportunities by giving equal access to Federal training programs.[152] Although the pamphlet indicated assumptions about the employment needs and opportunities of Black women, the distribution of this text indicates that ERA groups both recognized some of the needs and concerns of the Black community and actively attempted to create a diverse coalition in support of the amendment.

Some of the attempts by White feminists at inclusion were well-intended but took an ineffective, paternalistic approach. bell hooks was critical of White feminists' attempts at diversity. She explained that "Many White women have said to me, 'we wanted Black women and other non-White women to join the movement,' totally unaware of their perception that they somehow 'own' the movement, that they are the 'hosts' inviting us as 'guests.'" [153] This kind of "us" and "them" mentality was the wrong approach. An excellent example of the same kind of paternalism was Betty Friedan's journey to Atlanta in the early 1970s.

Betty Freidan came to Atlanta to write a book about Black women in the Civil Rights Movement, so one of the NOW representatives in the area, Sara Parsons, gathered a number of women at Jane Moore's house. Moore was Julian Bond's sister and knew a lot of politically involved Black women. Parsons recalled this potentially important meeting:

> So I pick up Betty and go to Jane's house, and she has about 12 women there, and they're young women, and they have kids that are running all around, and it worked out all right because, you know, we just talked over their [the children's] heads. And Betty asked them a lot of questions which I have forgotten now, but I do remember this, that she was disappointed, and the reason she was disappointed was because these women told her that their men had been put down politically and socially for so long, that now they [the men] could get

---

[152] Frankie Muse Freeman, *"Equal Right Amendment: What's in it for Black Women?"* 1973, Mamie K. Taylor RG 48-01-001, Box 4, Folder 2, Location 2453-07- GDAH.
[153] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*, (Southend Press: Boston, 1984), 53.

> involved in the Civil Rights Movement and they needed this- I mean they needed to be active and to be head of it; and the wives agreed to play second fiddle.[154]

Parsons recalled that Freidan acknowledged that Black women engaged in activities such as addressing envelopes, getting phone calls and organizing neighborhood events but referred to those actions as playing "second fiddle" or meaningless. Friedan's attempt to invite these Black political women into the feminist movement may have been a failure because she did not recognize the importance of their contribution or affirm their understanding of their efforts. Those activities that Freidan called "second fiddle" were the basis of the community building which made bridge leaders so effective. The book was never published and a great opportunity for cooperation with the Black community was lost.

In Georgia, pro-ERA groups attempted to engage in dialogue with Black feminists about their concerns. One of the many offshoots of the ERA Georgia groups was "A Woman's Place"[155] which held dialogue programs called "Six by Six." Representatives of the White feminist movement attempted to bring leading women of color and White leaders together to discuss their differences and similarities and to recommend goals for the movement. A Woman's Place invited six White and six Black women to attend a dialogue. They complained that although they found success with this format in dealing with six White, straight women and six White, gay women, they had difficulty getting Black women to attend.[156] Simpson explained that, "we didn't know [Black people]. I didn't, nobody else did. We just didn't mingle that much. You didn't have a long list of people that you could call."[157] The lingering effects of years of segregation had an impact on proponents' efforts to reach out to Black women in the community. However, women like Sarah Parsons continued to try to create a multicultural dialogue in support of the ERA. Those attempts might have been paternalistic or another misguided attempt to "invite" women of color to the movement, but those efforts must still be recognized.

---

[154] Sara Parsons interview May 5, 1999, Box 2, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University, 19-20.
[155] "A Woman's Place" was a clearinghouse for women's resources which was run by Polly Simpson and other volunteers from 1980-1983. They held meetings, art shows, films, discussion and support groups as well as workshops. Polly Simpson's A Woman's Place, Records 1980-1983, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.
[156] Simpson interview, 20
[157] Simpson Interview, 21

Women in the movement also had some successes reaching out to women of color. Jean Davis, a black women and activist for "human rights" was influenced by Sarah Butler, a white feminist who worked with Davis at the AFL-CIO. Davis explained that there were hurdles to overcome, but Butler's enthusiasm eventually won her to the cause;

> I had some struggles working with ERA. The struggle was, is that; I couldn't see how I wanted to be a person who advocated for white women; when white women weren't advocating human rights for everybody. And as I looked at it, it was like…Oh! But it's all the same. It was a struggle. I want you to know that it was a struggle for me. Sarah Butler is the person that helped me to understand. This is about us as human beings. It is not about black, white, yellow or green, women against blacks. It was about humanness. And Sarah Butler was the person that helped me to see that. If I hadn't had a Sarah Butler, I might not have seen it. I might have been still very angry and not wanting to participate. Sarah was a banner waver for human rights (laughs), you know what I'm saying? You couldn't be with her and it not become contagious. She would talk about what was going on with the ERA and I would go, 'unhunh, unhunh,' But she's also listened to my point of view, which was very helpful to me. [158]

Butler and Davis worked together fighting for laborers' rights and Butler's inclusion of women's rights issues in her daily lunchroom chats convinced Davis to overcome her prejudices about "feminists." This interaction was not contrived for the purpose of recruitment, but came out of friendly banter and shared experiences.

Like many other southern ERA women, Sarah Butler was raised in a segregated South, however, her personal experience with integration helped her to form organic relationships with African Americans as opposed to those contrived for the purposes of recruitment. Butler recalled, "Being born and raised in Atlanta, I had never had much contact with black people."[159] However when Southwest Atlanta began integrating in the 1970s, Sarah and her husband Bob

---

[158] Jean Davis interview January 22, 2005, unprocessed, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.

[159] Sarah Butler interview, October 23, 2004, unprocessed, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.

began attending and then running SouthWest Atlantans for Progress (SWAP) meetings. SWAP was a group started by activist Xernona Clayton to help ease the transition into an integrated neighborhood and reduce the significant white flight from the area.[160] Butler explained, "We lived in Southwest Atlanta which was the first area of Atlanta to be integrated. We joined an organization called SWAP (SouthWest Atlantans for Progress). If our friends the African Americans wanted to live in our neighborhoods and go to our schools they should have the right. We had good schools and beautiful homes out there. And they deserved to have access to it."[161] Butler's experience in the PTA with Jean Young (wife of soon to be Mayer Andrew Young) and her husband's experience integrating the elevator constructors' union forged her dedication to "human rights" which included fighting for the rights of people of all races, genders and social classes.

As the secretary to the Georgia president of the AFL-CIO, Butler certainly had the ear of many people. Her personal discussions with many workers convinced future leaders like Jean Davis to join the women's movement and her professional position meant that every union conference in Georgia had a session on the ERA. In her first act as an ERA activist, she had fun and raised money. She described the event,

> The first big thing we did was more fun and made the women feel so good. We planned to have a meeting, but yet, we were gonna have refreshments and we were gonna have dancing and well anything to show how strong women could be. Well the Georgia ERA people from Marietta joined us and the best part of all was these big tough building people, building trades union said "ok, we'll help you." And we put the cutest little cocktail aprons on them and made them cocktail waitresses. And they served cocktails for us. And we told

[160] Clayton, Xernona, *I've Been Marching All the Time: An Autobiography* (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1991)
[161] Bulter interview

> them you can dance any time you want, just get someone to wear your apron. We had the greatest turn out. We made $1,500 to turn over to the Georgia ERA.[162]

In this case Butler's work was hidden because she was reaching across the color line, but within the confines of the labor movement. Her efforts went largely unrecognized by the mainstream media because the newspapers only reported the financial contribution of the AFL-CIO, not the personal efforts to bridge the racial gap. Additionally, Butler's efforts brought the ERA to the union, not the union to the ERA. The women that Butler worked with did not necessarily join groups like ERA Georgia, but networked within their individual unions bringing back information from conventions and fundraising events.

Sue Millen who worked with Jean Davis and Sarah Butler explained, how this worked, "the labor organizations and ERA worked very well with black organizations that were lobbying for similar things. Like, I know that there was a group called People of Color for the ERA, and when they came to town, they wanted to organize a conference, and it was basically for people of color to talk about the Equal Rights Amendment. And they came to the AFL-CIO. They asked for names of women workers who were black and Hispanic so that we could meet – and we worked with them very well. We worked a lot with the King Center because the King Center supported the Equal Rights Amendment, and they were very supportive of those kinds of things. You know, I though that those kinds of groups worked pretty well together."[163]

The reason for the historical misperception about the obliviousness of White women however is understandable given that the intent of White women to be inclusive has been evaluated primarily in terms of their subsequent failures to make it happen. White women's attempts to deal with race, whether misguided or appropriate, show that while many Black

---

[162] Bulter interview

[163] Sue Ann Millen interview July 7, 1999, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.

women may not have been on the rosters of ERA Georgia, the idea of Black women was important to those organizations. The goals of the ERA were perceived as central to the concerns of Black women and the inclusion of women of color was important to the movement's success. The historiographical record of White women concerned solely with their own benefit must be expanded to include their actual, contemporary concerns about and interactions with women of color and Black families.

****

Patricia Collins has warned historians that, "Another pattern of suppression is paying lip service to the need for diversity, but changing little about one's own practice." She claimed that, "Currently, some U.S. White women who possess great competence in researching a range of issues acknowledge the need for diversity; yet omit women of color from their work. Others include a few safe, 'hand-picked' Black women's voices to avoid criticisms that they are racist. Both examples reflect a basic unwillingness by many U.S. White feminists to alter the paradigms that guide their work."[164] Collins criticized the academic world for its tokenism and empty intent to include women of color in historical research. The same criticism has been levied against activists during the struggle for the ERA. The fact that White women intended, tried, or even selected token women of color to join "their" movement proves that they were concerned enough to acknowledge issues of race and their intersection with gender, but it may also reflect their lack of commitment to achieving diversity in philosophy and population.

There is a point where commitment must meet intent, and despite their expressed concern with diversity, White women failed to overcome the burden necessary to achieve a fully integrated movement. Mary Long explained that, "superficially people would say, now we need

[164] Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment, (Rutledge: NY, 2000).

to get some diversity in here, but you have to go get it. You have to make a concerted effort to say we are going to do this. You can't just say "come on," you have to go and nurture people."[165] Black women leaders and activists like Brenda Sanford, Deloras Crocket and Jan Douglass who later openly criticized the elitism and racism in the feminist movements, were only occasionally consulted, courted and included in discussions regarding the ratification of the ERA. Ethel Smith, a Black woman who once investigated for the Equal Economic Opportunity Commission and former activist in the women's movement explained that, "The ERA had potential but it lost it because a lot of upper middle-class northside women became interested and the focus became 'my ego' or 'this is my baby' rather than the substance."[166] Historians can and should challenge the idea that White women were not concerned about the diversity of their movement, but the criticism that many of these groups were not truly committed to a multiracial coalition is still valid.

Additionally, points of direct conflict arose between the ERA movement and the Black feminists that could have been avoided. In November 1973, the Atlanta NOW chapter considered endorsing an inner city NOW chapter that would have been comprised of a majority of non-White members. The minutes of the monthly meeting explain that this petition was defeated and there were no further notes of discussion about this issue. [167] Such an opportunity to unify and lend support to a diverse chapter in the movement could have proven useful and effective in the following nine years of struggle for the ERA.

The most transparent conflict between pro- ERA forces and women of color was during Shirley Chisholm's visit to Atlanta in 1978. Earlier that year the National Organization of

---

[165] Long interview
[166] Emma Edmunds, "Women in Waiting"
[167] Letter from Joyce Durand (Atlanta NOW Secretary) to Peg Nugent (Atlanta NOW President) NOW Atlanta Chapter GDAH Nov. 20, 1973. NOW Atlanta Chapter, AC# 75-443 Box 2 Folder 4-04, Loc. # 2455-11 GDAH. The letter merely states that a motion was made and defeated. The vote count was 10 against, 2 for, 3 abstaining.

Women organized a nationwide boycott of states that had not ratified the ERA. Conferences for groups like the National Educators Association and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association cancelled their trips to Atlanta as members supported the boycott and changed their venues. The Atlanta Convention and Visitor's Bureau listed twelve conventions which withdrew from commitments to host events in Atlanta. The estimated cost to the city ranged from $23, 931,750 (ERA opponents' estimates) to $167,000,000 (ERA proponents' estimates).[168] Although some local leaders were concerned that this national policy may actually have hurt the local efforts to convince legislators to ratify, the boycott held strong.

In April of 1978, the Ninth Annual Women in Law Conference was held in Atlanta. It featured US Representative Shirley Chisholm in a conference billed as a "comprehensive examination of women's current status within the American legal, political and economic system."[169] Of course, among the topics of discussion would be the ratification of the ERA. However, NOW boycotted the event in order to be consistent with the national dictum against conferences in states that had not ratified. In reaction to the protestors outside the conference, Chisholm attacked the movement, calling it a "white women's luxury."[170] The irony is that what could have been an excellent opportunity for multiracial cooperation for the ratification of the ERA, turned into an abysmal failure. As historians Midge Wilson and Kathy Russell explained, "Fallout from this racial rift may have cost NOW, and the women's movement in general, passage of the Equal Rights Amendment."[171] Chisholm's attack on NOW added to the perception

---

[168] "Speech by Kathryn Dunaway before the Georgia Association of Broadcasters, Inc. April 20, 1978" Jeff Jones Collection, Box 1 Folder 6, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

[169] Hal Gulliver, "ERA Conference and Friends," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* April 4, 1978, 4-A.

[170] "Women's Movement a "White Luxury" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, April 7, 1978, 2-C.

[171] Midge Wilson and Kathy Russell, *Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap Between Black Women and White Women*, (Anchor Books, Doubleday: 1996). 202

that the ERA did not serve a multiracial community and was not supported by Black women in Atlanta.

In sum, the traditional narrative has narrowly portrayed White feminists as oblivious to the concerns of women of color, apathetic to their inclusion in the movement and ignorant of the needs of Black families. This research shows that the former narrative must be challenged, but the pendulum should not swing entirely in the other direction. As the above discussion demonstrates White feminists were concerned with their reputation as an exclusively White organization, they made attempts to "include" women of color and made efforts to understand the struggles of class, race and gender in respect to the ERA. Their successes were primarily through integrated labor unions or multicultural political groups. However, they also had tremendous failures in action and judgment, and their concern did not match their commitment to something they perceived as a problem. In all, their efforts to speak *to* as opposed to *with* minority groups were not successful. In this respect groups such as the GCSW and IWY serve as an instructive counter example. Both were formed under the auspices of interracial cooperation and did not experience the same difficulties as groups that had already been labeled "White organizations" and then attempted to change that label.

Efforts to reach out to the African American community were not the only experience that pro-ERA groups had regarding race. In addition to talking *to* or even *at* women of color, predominantly White groups were arguing *about* women of color.

****

Again, despite the perceived absence of Black women in the ERA struggle, the idea of race was prominent in the debate. In fact, the position of Black women, what was good for Black women, and how the ERA would affect the Black family became huge issues in the battle

between ERA proponents and the Stop-ERA movement. Judith Lightfoot [Cormack] was the regional director of NOW and served on the boards of several pro ERA organizations. She reminisced that, "It was very obvious to us early on… that the forces of conservatism—would attempt to drive a wedge, or reinforce the already existing wedge between Black men and women and White women because of the women's movement."[172] Thus, despite the fact that throngs of Black women did not attend the debates over ERA, they became the subjects of those debates.

On May 7, 1977 Atlanta hosted an IWY conference at the Sheraton Biltmore Hotel. This event was a prelude to the conference held in Houston later that year. Along with discussions about the positions of homemakers, sponsors held a debate in front of a multiracial audience between local Pro ERA forces, led by Mary Ann Oakley and Carrie Nell Thompson and Stop-ERA leaders Elaine Donnelly, who flew in from the national Stop-ERA campaign and Lee Wysong, the chairman of the Georgia anti-ERA movement. Interestingly, one of the foci of the debate was on the support of Black women. Specifically, Wysong quoted Dr. Jean Noble of the National Council of Negro Women as being against the ERA. A question came from the audience that challenged her source. When Wysong reported that it came from the Phyllis Schlafly Report of July 1974, the room burst into laughter.[173] The Stop-ERA campaign claimed that they had the support of both labor groups and women of color to bolster their position, but no other source was offered. Both the questioner and Carrie Nell Thompson challenged the claim and cited a 1976 announcement from the National Council of Negro Women "supporting the

---

[172] Judith Lightfoot Cormack interview August 11, 1998, Box 1, Oral Histories Collection, Women's History Collection, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University, 69.

[173] The Schlafly Report was a periodic newsletter which passed on information to members of the Eagle Forum who where fighting to support a conservative agenda. This source was not noted for its balanced reporting of the facts. "Transcription of Tapes Made During the ERA Debate on Saturday, May 7, 1977." Box 3, Folder 13, unprocessed Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, 33

ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment."[174] It seems almost surreal that groups of White women were fighting over the support of Black women in a movement that has been characterized by the media and historians as a White movement. Thus, despite the perception that Black women were not in the fight over the ERA, Black women were central to the debate.

In 1979, Dunaway addressed the Georgia Association of Broadcasters. She criticized NOW's boycott of cities that had not ratified the ERA. She explained that the boycott hurt the minority workforce who worked at convention centers and hotels.[175] Again, whereas Black women were not involved in the Stop-ERA campaign that group used the idea of minority concerns to buttress their arguments. [176] bell hooks argued this paternalistic concern differed little from the paternalism of pro-ERA women seeking tokens. "They make us 'objects' of their privileged discourse on race. As 'objects,' we remain unequals, inferiors. Even though they may be sincerely concerned about racism, their methodology suggests they are not yet free of the type of paternalism endemic to White supremacist ideology."[177] hooks astutely noted that concern about race does not mean the absence of racism.

Voicing Racial Thoughts

Throughout the battle for the ERA there was a great deal of explicit discussion about Black families, women of color and race. However, when historians examine the arguments and language of the entire movement, they will find both proponents and opponents of the ERA also implicitly discussed race. Both groups used overtly racist arguments, referenced the Civil Rights

---

[174] Ibid, 34

[175] "Speech by Kathryn Dunaway before the Georgia Association of Broadcasters, Inc. April 20, 1978" Jeff Jones Collection, Box 1 Folder 6, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

[176] There are no traces of concern about the involvement of women of color in the Stop-ERA records. Even using an expanded definition of activism and a thorough examination of documents, there are no indications that the Stop-ERA campaign included any ethnic diversity within their ranks. A closer examination of the opposition will be given in chapter 3.

[177] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: from margin to center,* (Southend Press: Boston, 1984), 12.

Act or the Fourteenth amendment, and presented conflicting ideas of "states' rights" and notions of the "Southern Lady" that were all laden with racial implications. Thus the ERA movement exemplified the intersection of race and gender, even when the players in this historical drama were not willing to address it overtly.[178]

Pro ERA groups highlighted the racism of their opponents to discredit their arguments against the ERA. In 1975, the ERA suffered a disappointing loss in the state Senate. The bill that had been introduced by Julian Bond and Horace Tate was defeated 33 to 22. The *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* declared "The Legislature Speaks… ERA killed in the Senate." NOW issued a statement linking the State Senate with racist organizations and hate groups. The statement read, "The Georgia Senate has joined with the John Birch Society, the Ku Klux Klan and the American Communist Party and a few small groups formed solely to oppose equal rights for women and men." Obviously NOW intended to link the Georgia Senate to the Klan and to link the severity of racism to discrimination against women.[179]

Proponents also used charges of racism as tools to discredit their opponents. When Lee Wysong quoted North Carolina's Senator Sam Irvin in her debate against the ERA, Mary Anne Oakley reminded the audience that, "Sam Irvin fought tooth and nail to keep Blacks from getting any part of equality in the state of North Carolina and anywhere else. He is a great civil libertarian as long as Blacks and women aren't involved."[180] Connecting the ideas of sexism and racism may have given more weight to the concerns of women whose oppression was not generally recognized by state legislators or the South at large.

---

[178] This chapter will focus primarily on the proponent's language whereas the opponents to ERA will be examined in chapter 3.
[179] Historians might also note the bizarre link between the John Birch Society and the Communist Party.
[180] "Transcription of Tapes Made During the ERA Debate on Saturday, May 7, 1977." Box 3, Folder 13, unprocessed Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, p 17.

It was also common for national figures to try to compare the struggle of African Americans and the fight for women's rights. However, this comparison was not well received within the African American community. Bella Abzug claimed that Southern White women were "locked into a system that degraded them as it did the slaves." This comparison between the Southern Lady and the slave seemed specious, and offensive to many African Americans. Gloria Steinem made several visits to Atlanta in 1972 and expressed her belief that "Sexism and racism…imitate one another."[181] She called on minorities and women to work together to fight against sexism as a means to continue the struggle for civil rights. She highlighted the common enemy of both groups and explained that, "Women like non-White men are viewed by White male leaders as having inferior brains, being complacent, irresponsible and late…"[182] However, she may have gone too far when she equated the oppression of Black people with the oppression of women: "The only difference between women and Black people is that "Black people sometimes lose their lives; women die inside."

White women's attempts to equate sexism with racism offended many women of color. Statements like Steinem's seemed ridiculous to many Black women who experienced the severe and violent nature of racism in the South. This connection between the oppression of women and the oppression of minorities did not sit well with Ethel Smith. She maintained that, "In the Civil Rights Movement, people died, people bled, just to be able to come and sit in this stinking place. Sure women have been discriminated against but White women have always had the coattails of their men."[183] Smith's objection seemed to conflate middle class and working class White women as she assumed that all White women have taken some advantage from their husband's position which is problematic. However, her criticism of Steinem is still valid.

---

[181] "Gloria Here Aims At Sexism, Racism," *Atlanta Journal,* Dec. 7, 1972.
[182] "Liberationist Gloria Steinem Applauded by Women," *Atlanta Journal,*. May 2, 1972.
[183] Edumunds

The deaths of Black men and women fighting for civil rights did not compare to the oppression suffered by White women struggling for equality. Janice White Sikes explained her objections to equating feminism and civil rights. When reminded of Steinem's comparison, she leaned back with a slight smile and said that, "in an effort to elevate one's cause, a person can belittle other people's pain."[184] Thus in attempting to open the eyes of White males to the oppression of women, White women diminished the plight of African American women, which did not help create a multiracial coalition for the ERA.

Steinem was not the only national official who attempted to make this connection between civil rights and women's rights. Jimmy Carter came back to his home state to rally support for the ERA's ratification in Georgia. There he stated that he wanted "to do for equal rights what Lyndon Johnson did for civil rights."[185] Ironically, he gave this speech at the Junior League, which was not one of the more diverse groups fighting for the ERA.[186] A Black male commenter in the *Atlanta Journal*, Lee May, advised against the tactic that Carter and others took. Although he presented no alternative, May said in no uncertain terms that ERA proponents "went the wrong way in using the human rights approach to legislators. Comparing women's struggle to that of oppressed minorities can't work." The Georgia legislature resisted many changes in the law regarding minorities, so trying to convince them to ratify an amendment that would dilute the power of White men, was probably not likely to succeed.

****

The resistance to civil rights implicit in the opposition to the ERA was evident in Georgia legislators' arguments for "states' rights." Southern positions in opposition to federal control

---

[184] Sikes Interview
[185] "Junior League Cheers ERA Talk" *Atlanta Journal*, November 10, 1976
[186] Mary Harriman, a 19 year-old woman from a socially prominent family, who believed that it was the responsibility of the more fortunate to help people in need, formed the Junior League in 1901. Since that time it has been a model organization allowing the wealthiest women to assist the lower classes. It is not known as a racially diverse organization.

have always been laced with racial implications stemming back from before the "The War Between the States." Following the conclusion of the Civil War, the federal government established certain constraints on Southern states that other states in the union did not have to follow. The resulting "Reconstruction" of the South deeply affected Atlanta and Georgia in particular. The recent incursion of federal mandates regarding desegregation in compliance with the *Brown* decision continued to ring in the ears of Southern legislators. Cathey Steinberg, the sponsor of the ERA from 1977-1982, was a Northern born woman who had no idea that the second section of the ERA would be such an immutable sticking point for many legislators.

Article two of the ERA states: "The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article." This provision struck fear into the hearts of Southern legislators as the ERA gave the federal government the ultimate enforcement power to impose changes on the states. Kathryn Dunaway, the founding chairman of Georgia's Stop-ERA campaign, made a not-so-veiled connection between the ERA and the 14th Amendment, which allowed the federal government to enforce civil rights beginning in the 19th century and continuing through the integration efforts in the 1960s. She stated that, "States have lost their powers to legislate in other areas covered by Constitutional Amendments"[187]

Unfortunately, that was not a connection that Representative Steinberg appreciated. She explained,

> I didn't understand, have the grasp that I do now of their concern about second part which was that if the states don't make the proper changes then the federal government will come in. 'Congress shall have the right to enforce.' That meant nothing to me in my years coming from the North. As I stayed in the legislature with everything from the Voting Rights Act to reapportionment, I clearly came to understand

[187] "The Equal Rights Amendment: How it Would Affect Georgia Law," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 15, 1977.

> why the South has so much anxiety about the federal government. They are states' rights in their blood as much as mine might have been federal…. I just didn't know. [188]

The *Journal and Constitution* recognized that Steinberg needed to address the issue of states' rights, race and sexuality. They reported that her "legislative career has brought Steinberg face-to-face with the sexual topography of the South. She has learned about Southern men who talk about states' rights and fear of the federal government and who in a deep way fear what they may lose…In the South, the issue is complicated further by race."[189] This learning curve for feminists proved costly to the fight for the ERA.

However, other ERA proponents recognized both the danger and the racism present in the "states' rights" debate and tried to walk the line between outsider and racist. Mary Ann Oakley tried to mitigate unease with the federal power over the states by reminding her audience that Georgia would have two years to comply with the amendment before federal enforcement would be necessary. She then attempted to back the state's rights issue away from the racial connection to the 14th amendment by explaining that there are seven other constitutional amendments that have the same enabling clause.[190]

Carrie Nell Thompson tried to position herself as a Southerner, Georgian and "state's righter" in order to convince those concerned about the racial. She says, "Yes we are states' righters. I hope that we are. I am a Georgian. You can tell by my accent I grew up on a farm in South Georgia. I love this state. It is magnificent, but we must remember that also that we are citizens of these United States."[191] She further argued that the need for the ERA did not even really lie in Georgia, but that proponents wished to reform the other states with discriminatory

---

[188] Steinberg Interview
[189] Emma Edmunds, "Women in Waiting"
[190] "Transcription of Tapes Made During the ERA Debate on Saturday, May 7, 1977." Box 3, Folder 13, unprocessed Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University
[191] Ibid, 3

practices. She attempted to deflect the perception that sexism was really occurring in the South or in Georgia to soften the defensive position that many opponents had taken.

In general, arguments over "States' rights" and civil rights were largely codes for the threat of racial integration in a state, which was still grappling with the impact of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Proponents of the ERA either did not understand the code, tried to deemphasize the impact on the state, or tried to separate the need for equal rights for women and the equal rights for minorities. Either way, these groups were constantly dealing with, and dancing around, issues of race. Meanwhile, national leaders were going to extremes to tie the ERA to issues of racial equality in order to give it more weight. Clearly race and states' rights had a large impact on the ERA debate. However, there was no code more laden with sexual and racial tension than that of the role of the "Southern Lady."

****

Like "States' rights" the phenomenon of the "Southern Lady" comes from the historic notions of sex roles. The Southern mistress of the plantation was put on a pedestal, treated with great gentility and hailed as a "steel magnolia" to be admired by a Southern gentleman. During Reconstruction and subsequent decades, there was a sense of protective respect for the Southern belle that was intended to keep White women out of reach from Black men, who were stereotyped as uncontrollably sexual animals. The rampant lynching associated with the supposed rapes of White "Ladies" by Black men was used to keep a clear division between races despite the end of slavery.

Historian Joel Williamson eloquently described the role of the "Southern Lady" and her position in the "Organic Society." He explained that, "if Blacks were to be held in place, White

people would have to assume a place to keep them there."[192] Thus the stability of the role of the Southern Lady was essential to keeping races separate, and order in society. Williams described this role as "Pious and pure, domestic and submissive, they were the veritable angels of the earth."[193] Finally, the entire fabric of Southern cultural society was held together by each group's dependence on each other to maintain their own positions. They in fact, were defined not by their positions, but rather the positions of others around them. He explained, "The South is a land of extremes, all linked together in tight tension. Extremes of one sort support and maintain extremes of other sorts. Extremes in the same category constitute a whole, and each extreme gains definition and clarity by reference to its opposite. Whites are made White by Blacks, men are made men by women and good is made good by bad."[194] This insight into Southern society has not been applied to the ERA debate however, and as a result key elements of the rhetoric have been overlooked.

The 20th century version of this myth was that the ERA removed the barriers separating Black men from access to White women because they displaced balance within the "organic society." In 1973, the *Atlanta Journal* published an article entitled "ERA Frowned Upon: Dixie Legislators protecting Belles." It suggested that Southern resistance to the ERA was based on this notion of the "Southern Lady". The *Journal* reported that, "Southern history and literature have generally placed women in an exalted position while rewarding chivalry among males."[195] Southern males struggled to maintain their role as the chivalrous dominant figure when pro-ERA women were not conforming to their position as pious, helpless maidens in need of protection.

---

[192] Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black –White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: University of Oxford Press, 1984) 24. Scott, Anne Firor, *The Southern lady: from Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1970)
[193] Williamson, *The Crucible*, 25
[194] Ibid 497
[195] "ERA Frowned Upon: Dixie Legislators protecting Belles" *Atlanta Journal*, March 15, 1973

The notion of chivalry and the role of the lady extended across the barrier of class. Noted Historian Ann Firor Scott asked blithely, "What is it about Southern men? Men here treat women more respectfully, in a certain limited sense, than in other parts of the country. There's an elaborate courtesy that cuts across social class. At the same time, there's a real unwillingness to admit she could be equal."[196] The *Journal* explained, "In the South, distinct roles between men and women are observed with almost ritualistic pride – the gentleman opens the doors, even if the lady drives the tractor."[197] Thus the idea of the Lady could be extended to *any* White women regardless of class. The only distinction between the Southern "Lady" and a "woman" was effectively race.

Once down from their pedestal, White women would be exposed to a world already tainted by the integration of the South. In this context, the ERA was a serious challenge to sexual norms that were the last vestiges of legislated White supremacy. ERA proponents dealt with it in two ways, National NOW and ERA America wanted to challenge the role of the Belle and destroy the patriarchy. Others wanted to appropriate the role to accomplish the ratification in a "more Southern way." Either way, the idea of sexuality and race played a prominent role in the struggle for the ERA.

Legislators and Southern men in general were shocked that the "antics" played out by Black people and "radical hippies" in the 1960s were being carried on by their own Southern Ladies. In an article entitled "Plain Jane Next Door May be Activist," the *Journal* warned that, "The new activist is not the campus radical or the poor Black who often was at the helm of the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s."[198] Rallies, protests, political lobbying were all activities expected of a radical fringe, not the nice southern lady next door. Prominent national feminists

---

[196] Emma Edmunds, "Women in Waiting"
[197] Ibid
[198] "Ordinary, Not Radical, Type: Plain Jane Next Door May be Activist" *Atlanta Journal*, May 27, 1973

like Bella Abzug announced that "the pedestal upon which men once placed the Southern woman has fallen."

The destruction of the myth of the lady was understandably a goal of feminists who wanted to challenge all notions of patriarchy. Abzug announced that "the protected White Southern lady in crinolines and White gloves in the ante-bellum days" was a myth. "For every pampered Scarlet O'Hara there were multitudes of plantation wives who worked hard day after day…" Certainly, it was historically true that the numbers of wealthy plantation women caricatured as Scarlet O'Hara were few in comparison to the White women who worked hard running farms across the South. And in fact, there were also hundreds of slave women who were certainly not put on a pedestal.

However, Abzug's address to the Georgia Women's Meeting in preparation for the IWY conference in Houston declared war on the Southern system. Her technique, while philosophically consistent with a challenge to the patriarchy, was not politically effective in furthering the ratification of the ERA. In fact Southern lobbyists for the ERA struggled to overcome the image that Abzug attempted to impose. They desperately wanted to "refute the image of themselves as Bella Azbug or Gloria Steinem."[199]

Instead many Southern White feminists wished to subvert the role of the lady and use it to further their political goals. In fact, ERA activists had only to look back at the work of Frances Freeborn Pauley or Dorothy Tilly to see how to successfully employ the image of the Southern Lady to exact justice. Pauley led her "Women of HOPE" to fight for open public schools. The ladies filled every seat in the gallery

> we had little signs in support of public education, small enough that we could put them under our coast and not have them seen as we came in. We told everybody to dress very nicely and wear white gloves and told

[199] Emma Edmunds, "Women in Waiting", 8.

> them not to say anything…when the senators came in, these women didn't clap. There was a silence and the silence was so great. They sat, and they didn't stand up, and they didn't clap…And here were all the nice ladies with hats and gloves, sitting there so serious, not a smile on any face… Then, as soon as one of the senators said something about schools, everybody took out their signs -- "We Want Public Schools" -- and held them up. Again everybody downstairs stood up and looked at them. It was dramatic." [200]

HOPE used their role as the pious caretakers of southern society to seriously impact the political decisions of the day.

Likewise, Dorothy Tilly and the Fellowship of the Concerned led crusades against the unjust conviction of Black men in the 1940s and 1950s. Historian Edith Holbrook Riehm described a "cadre of white-gloved, well-mannered, white churchwomen who sat silently in southern courtrooms observing trials where African Americans were defendants. While Tilly recognized that justice was not always served, she discovered that the women's seemingly innocuous presence frequently awakened a community's social conscience, sometimes shaming them into preventing injustices." Tilly claimed, "we may not always get justice... but we can get public opinion so stirred up that the same thing can't happen in that community again."[201] With such outstanding models, some ERA proponents preferred to use the same methods against their opponents.

White proponents and opponents competed for the position of most "ladylike" in an effort to sway legislators. In an article in the *AJC* titled, "'Dotsie' Holmes Accepts Her Southern Woman Role," the leader of the League of Women Voters (one of the organizations fighting for the ERA) professed,

---

[200] Kathryn Nasstrom, *Everybody's Grandmother and Nobody's Fool: Frances Freeborn Pauley and the Struggle for Social Justice*, (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 2000), 57.

[201] Edith Holbrook Riehm, "Dorothy Tilly and the Fellowship of the Concerned", in Gail S. Murray ed., *Throwing Off the Cloak of Privilege: White Southern Women Activists in the Civil Rights Era* (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 2004)

> The South as a whole is a little bit more accustomed to the mannerly way of doing things than many other parts of the country. We have a different kind of culture here, more paced, more traditional with more of an emphasis on a person's position in life. And the Southern woman is still expected to be soft, sweet, uncontentious and manipulative. Which is a role I'm quite comfortable with.[202]

Holmes was willing to put herself in the role of Southern Belle in order to manipulate legislators into passing the legislation that would allow her shed that role forever. Her description of the Southern Lady was laced with race and class codes. The different "culture" and "position in life" which Holmes reinforced may have served a short-term goal for a long-term cost.

Like Holmes, Steinberg admitted that Georgia's ERA proponents learned to play the role of the "Lady" to woo legislators to vote for the ERA. Although she, "had to learn the hard way that the South was not the same as Washington…We put on our pretty dresses and our suits and became 'appropriately ladylike' and we changed an image of what they all had for a long time."[203] Some lobbyists resented donning this persona. Julian Hillburn complained, "You wear a dress each time you go to the state capitol even though a pants suit would be more comfortable, just because you want to make those conservative legislators understand that the women's movement has the support of ladies."[204] In addition to changing their attire, Georgia's ERA proponents also altered their language to something more palatable to the Southern Gentleman. Women were advised to "'sugarcoat' their lobbying technique if necessary and if necessary to make themselves 'more acceptable' to tradition-bound Southern Lawmakers."[205] Proponents did not challenge legislators who called them "Honey," they simply spoke sweetly and asked to be

---

[202] "'Dotsie' Holmes Accepts Her Southern Woman Role" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* November 13, 1976.
[203] Steinberg Interview
[204] "In Houston, ERA OK Seemed Just a Matter of Time," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* November 26, 1977.
[205] Carol Ashkinaze, "100 Georgia Women Told Dos and Don'ts of Lobbying for ERA," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, January 11, 1980, 3-C.

given protection under the law. Unfortunately, this technique did not challenge the patriarchal system that the ERA was meant to address, and reified divisions based on race and class.

Proponents often competed with opponents over who were more ladylike. The ERA Georgia board chairman Sherry Schulman explained that, "the antis certainly aren't Southern ladies. Ladies, women, certainly don't go around making scurrilous statements, hurling lies about people. They do that. I think it's anything but ladylike."[206] In fact, despite initial images of feminists as bra-burning, jeans-wearing hippies, ERA forces began to win the "lady" title. Emma Edmunds described Schulman as a 40 year old woman who "wears makeup, nail polish and certainly a bra."[207] Cathey Steinberg maintained that, "these women (Stop- ERA) were so wacko that they began to get on the nerves of legislators. These were radicals. We changed our image and our style and we stuck to it. In general, we became more "ladies" and we learned to play the game.[208] However, this transformation apparently came too late for the ERA ratification.

Ultimately, Southern White women were willing to forsake their challenge to the patriarch and their commitment for racial equality. They "played the game" at great cost. Linda Hallenborg [Kurtz] commented that, "that is why the ERA wasn't passed in the South. Because there was this tacit agreement between men and women that this was the way things were."[209] In buying into the idea of the Southern Lady, they implicitly supported the position of White women above Black people and the justification for White men offering their protection. Although race was never explicitly mentioned, the constant argument over the "Southern Lady" was very much about the Black man and woman because White women were being defined in terms of their difference from perceptions of Black women. The Southern Lady was the last line

---

[206] Emma Edmunds, "Women in Waiting", 10
[207] Ibid
[208] Steinberg Interview
[209] Linda Hallenborg Kurtz Interview 4/03/98 Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

delineating White supremacy. This contest over the “Southern Lady” meant that the ERA was weighed down by a racial battle beginning back in antebellum years.

****

Thus, even when Black women were removed from the image of the struggle for the ERA, they were present in the debate whether explicitly named or implicitly referenced. It would be irresponsible to paint a picture of well-meaning White women, who constantly and diligently fought against racism throughout their struggle to end sexual discrimination. But historians inaccurately left race out of a story involving White women. Race was indeed a serious subject debated about throughout the process of ratification. Groups lamented the lack of diversity and attempted to “involve” women of color, but were not always committed to working with women of color as equals. Still their concern for the welfare of Black families and the presence of Black women should be noted. Further, in arguing about states’ rights and the Southern Lady, the ERA became a discussion about race.

However, these arguments were not one-sided. The opposition, most clearly represented by the Stop-ERA campaign, included no women of color on their rosters or in affiliated organizations. However, their campaign was about race and class divisions as much as it was about the ERA and their position deserves a thorough examination.

Chapter 3
The Targeting of Black Women

"Anti-ERA 'Gorilla' Bears Gifts For State Legislators"

> Rep. Jack Connell is accosted in the Capitol on Tuesday by a 'gorilla' bearing gifts. The 'gorilla' in this case, was an anti-ERA lobbyist who dressed up in the costume to dissuade legislators from 'monkeying round with the ERA.' Instead of the home-baked brownies and hot lunches passed out to legislators in past years by the anti-ERA group, the legislators this year got eagle-shaped brass paperweights. The paperweights were intended as a symbol of Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, which has led the anti-ERA fight nationally, according to Lee Wysong, chairman of the Georgia chapters of Stop-ERA and the Eagle Forum"[210]

Reading the headline of the story above confirms all the simple stereotypes about women fighting the ERA. They were silly, disillusioned fools. They served hot baked bread knowing that the "best way to a man's heart was through his stomach." However, if one can look past the monkey suit, these women were reminding legislators where their bread was buttered. The Eagle Forum, by 1981, was a well-oiled, conservative, political machine which could influence elections and certainly the voting patterns of Georgia legislators. The gift of the eagle would sit on a legislator's desk reminding him of the power and weight of the group opposing the ERA.

Many historians and lay persons alike describe the Stop-ERA movement as a group of misled and misinformed White women who were taken advantage of by White men. They are often characterized as religious fanatics who could not comprehend the implications of their actions. Political scientist and activist Jane Mansbridge explained that the opponents were given little factual information because more information would weaken their cause and would dampen

---

[210]"Anti-ERA 'Gorilla' Bears Gifts for State Legislators," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 25, 1981, 1-C

the zealous nature of the arguments made by rank and file members of the Stop-ERA campaign. She described opponents as amateurs who used unconventional tactics, personal slander and overt hostility.[211] This thesis, however, will challenge both the notions about the absence of racial implications and the ignorance of opposition members and leaders. In fact, the Stop-ERA Georgia campaign was led by politically astute and well organized women who set out to destroy a movement that they believed threatened their way of life and status as White women. Their campaign was well planned, well executed and well endowed. And like proponents for the ERA, their opposition to the ERA was heavily influenced by racial and class divisions.

It is important to recognize the role of race in the advocacy for the ERA. The lack of recognition of Black women who were directly involved in the ERA struggle leaves historians with only half of the story. Further, the acknowledgement that White women fighting for the ERA also used the idea of race as a powerful tool informs historians who have not recognized race as significant in this debate. An examination of race and the ERA would not be complete without an analysis of the opposition to the ERA in Georgia. The opposition was most clearly represented by the Stop-ERA Georgia campaign, which was an umbrella organization closely affiliated with Phyllis Schlafly and the national Stop-ERA movement.

This chapter will examine overt racism within the Stop-ERA movement, the implicit race language tied up in the ERA debate, and the actions of the Stop-ERA campaign including their efforts to target the destruction of multiracial organizations.

Not Hidden but Not Recognized

Kathryn Dunaway was the wife of a former representative in the Georgia state legislature and an active member of the Federation of Republican Women in the late 1960s. She was a long

[211] Jane Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 143, 145.

time friend of Phyllis Schlafly and had an established history of conservative activism.[212] She campaigned for Barry Goldwater in 1964, fought against the federal fluoridation campaign, argued for the "Freer Schools" act which banned psychotherapy in schools, and against the "so called civil rights bill" of 1964.[213] In fact, in one of many letters to her representatives in government she requested that they "vote against the Civil Rights bill which is 10% civil rights and 90% extension of federal control."[214] This theme would carry over into her work against the ERA.

Given her vast experience in government and her history of conservatism, Dunaway was the perfect choice to head the opposition campaign in Georgia. She organized Stop-ERA into chapters in each congressional district of Georgia and participated in both national and statewide training seminars for campaigners.[215] State organizations were also informed by pamphlets and workshops on "How to Organize the Unorganized Majority."[216] Dunaway and her recruits left nothing to chance; they held monthly meetings, targeted congressional representatives, and media events. They were not controlled by men who duped them into fighting for the opposition, but rather felt passionately that their positions as women were threatened by the ERA.

---

[212] Jeffrey G. Jones, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment" (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 1995) 50; Letter from Kathryn Dunaway to Senator Dirksen, 22 February 1967, folder 25 box 1 collection no. 618: Kathryn Dunaway Collection Unprocessed, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

[213] Application for Mother of the Year Award, Emory University, Box 1 Folder 3, Kathryn Dunaway Collection Unprocessed, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University; Letter from Ford Foundation undated, Box 1,Folder 3, Kathryn Dunaway Collection Unprocessed, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University; Letter from Dunaway undated, Box 1, Folder 4, Kathryn Dunaway Collection Unprocessed, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University; Letter to Senator Mansfield 3/2/64, Box 1Folder 25, Kathryn Dunaway Collection Unprocessed, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

[214] Letter from Dunaway, 1/22/64 Box 1, Folder 25 Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

[215] Jeffrey G. Jones, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment" (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 1995) 51, and Letter from Kathryn Dunaway to Mr. Weltner and Senators Humphrey and Mansfield 22 March 1964 Box 1, Folder, Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

[216] Pamphlet "How to Organize the Unorganized Majority" Box 4 Folder 16 Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

However, when representatives of the Stop-ERA campaign described their position as women, it was clear that "the position" to which they referred was only available to White women of the affluent class. Dunaway participated in an education campaign through classes at Emory University in homemaking and gentility. She intimated that the lifestyle of southern women was threatened by the ERA. This theme was continued in an interview with the *Atlanta Journal* when she argued that, "a woman should stick to the home and let herself be supported by her husband. [217] Neither the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* nor Dunaway recognized that such a lifestyle was not available to women of color or White working women. Assumptions about race and class were very important factors in the motives and methods of those who opposed the ERA.

Mary Long described the opposition as clearly focused on race as a tool used against the ERA. She recalled that the "Anti-ERA didn't want to get women much. It [the ERA] would have equalized Blacks and Whites, it would have given Black women and White women the same status." She explained that, "women would be equal, Black and White, and they weren't about to have that. That's the way people spoke about it." Her experience with Stop-ERA included women screaming on the capitol steps but maintained, "the opposition did not ever bother me. I just said 'Get the hell away from me,' and they did." These women whom Long refers to as "the crazies," zealously dedicated themselves to the task of defeating the ERA in order to protect their status in society, which was clearly informed by race.[218]

In speeches against the ERA, Dunaway herself linked her opposition to the ERA with her objections to racial integration. In her 1978 Speech to the Georgia Association of Broadcasters, Inc. she railed against the NOW boycott of states that had not ratified the ERA and explained the

---

[217] Raleigh Bryans, "Indifference to the ERA Cited" *Atlanta Journal*, September 6, 1973.
[218] Mary Long interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., July 18, 2003. Hereafter "Long Interview"

damage that it would do to Black families who would lose income because of lost convention revenue. She continued however, to list "other Atlanta problems" including her opposition to busing and explained that, "Black children do not need to be in a classroom with White children."[219] The unacknowledged contradiction she expressed between caring for the Black family and denying them an integrated education was significant. Her goal was not to benefit the Black family, but to keep the races (and classes) separate and delineated in society.

The most blatant racism from the opposition to the ERA was shown in the testimony and public statements of J. B. Stoner. Stoner was a self-avowed racist and White supremacist who was also one of the men responsible for the Birmingham bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in 1963.[220] His presence alone at the ERA hearings ten years later and his selection as a witness against the ERA speaks volumes to the racial tension that surrounded the ERA movement. Although his testimony was not typical in 1973, it linked at least part of the opposition's objections to the ERA to racist sentiments. Stoner claimed that, "This amendment is promoted by the same forces that have been promoting all the bad legislation all these years."[221] He referred specifically to the Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act and busing projects that were gradually transforming Atlanta into a racially integrated community.

Like many opponents to the ERA, Stoner was concerned about women in the military. However it was not the risk of life or physical hardship that concerned him. He objected to the placement of "women in racially mixed barracks."[222] Again the specter of sexuality and race overshadowed the debate over the ERA. However the testimony of Stoner at these hearings did

---

[219] "Speech by Kathryn Dunaway before the Georgia Association of Broadcasters, Inc. April 20, 1978" Jeff Jones Collection, Box 1 Folder 6, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University
[220] Frank Sikora, *Until Justice Rolls Down* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1991).
[221] "Women's Rights measure Pits 60 for 5 hour debate" *Atlanta Journal* Feb 8, 1973.
[222] "Equal Rights Gets a Hearing" *Atlanta Journal* Feb 8, 1973.

not warrant more than a mention in the mainstream papers and no one connected the opposition to the ERA with racism. Even if his testimony was an aberration, it should have been recorded both in the contemporary record and the historiography of the ERA struggle.

Ironically bigotry of another sort received attention from a commenter of the *AJC*. Hal Gulliver wrote of a "Bigotry Theme and the ERA" in September of 1979. When Georgia State Representative Tommy Tolbert made an anti-Semitic remark about ERA sponsor Cathey Steinberg, Gulliver felt compelled to address the issue. Tolbert's call to "Christians" to oppose the amendment led by a Jewish member of the house apparently merited comment while the overtly racist remarks of Stoner several years earlier received no response. In fact, Gulliver wrote that, "It is hard exactly to make out how such an anti-Semitic theme could even surface in connection with the ERA in Georgia."[223] Despite the racist and segregationist statements made by Stop-ERA representatives in association with the ERA ratification since 1973, Gulliver was "shocked" by the anti-Semitism in the ERA debate. The contemporary record included divisiveness over the ERA, but only selectively recorded the blatant racism in the Stop-ERA position.

Mean what you say and say what you mean

The opposition to the ERA was clearly threatened by the changing roles in Southern society. Divisions once held strong by race and class differences were shifting and crumbling. Opponents to the Civil Rights Act and integration included avowed racists to speak to the legislature on the behalf on the Stop-ERA movement. Just as the proponents of the ERA used language that referred implicitly to race, so did the opposition. In addition to the overt statements made by racists, race was also couched in issues regarding states' rights, civil rights, Southern Ladies and even toilets.

---

[223] Hal Gulliver, "Bigotry Theme and the ERA" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* September 17, 1979.

****

Section two of the ERA was a pressing concern for legislators who continued to fear the involvement of the federal government and who resented the forced integration of its cities and schools from the US Congress and the Supreme Court. Lee Wysong, the Co-Chair for the Georgia Stop- ERA movement, represented the opposition at the debate held at the IWY Conference in May of 1977. She stated that, "one of the greatest ills of the ERA is Section 2."[224] She referred to it as a power grab by the federal government and invoked statements made by Senator Sam Irvin to prove that "it will come near to abolishing the states of this union as viable government bodies…and reduce the states of this union to meaningless zeros on the nation's map." Specifically, she quoted Irvin's comments that the ERA was "the most destructive piece of legislation to ever pass Congress" because of its threat to states' rights.[225] Both her use of "states' rights" as an issue and her use of Sam Irvin, a senator who was at the core of civil rights opposition, gave a racial context to the ERA debate.

Dunaway shared this concern and reminded state legislators of the significant risk to "states' rights" through the ERA. Dunaway made veiled statements linking the ERA to the Fourteenth Amendment by reminding legislators that, "States have lost their powers to legislate in other areas covered by Constitutional Amendments"[226] Her prior opposition both to school integration and the Civil Rights Act played on the idea that the federal government would force equality on people who wished to remain segregated.

As with proponents, these arguments over "states' rights" were codes for the threat of racial integration in a state. Beverly Adams of Stop-ERA Georgia explained that "ERA could be

---

[224] "Transcription of Tapes Made During the ERA Debate on Saturday, May 7, 1977." Box 3, Folder 13, unprocessed Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, 14

[225] Ibid 15

[226] "The Equal Rights Amendment: How it Would Affect Georgia Law" *Atlanta Constitution*, January 15, 1977.

interpreted by the courts the way the 14th Amendment has been: to promote things such as busing for racial balance and laws liberalizing the restrictions on abortion." She exclaimed, "Won't we ever learn that the wolf always comes disguised in sheep's clothing?"[227] Notably, the threats to which Adams referred were racial integration and sexual freedom, the combination of which was perceived as deadly in the South. The implication was that the big bad [Black] wolf would soon hunt the pristine [White] sheep as a result of the ERA. Thus the ERA was not a single threat but a continued attack against the position of White southern authority, the revered status of the White southern woman, and the necessary protection of southern White women's sexuality. Opponents built upon racially charged images and arguments to build their case against the ERA without explicitly declaring openly racist sentiments.

Phyllis Schlafly also made a number of statements before the Georgia legislature and evoked references to the Civil Rights Movement, the rights of Black people and the power of the states. One stipulation of the ERA would mean that women would be in an equal category with Black people regarding the legal definition of discrimination by the federal government. Based on the Fourteenth Amendment, the government must administer a "severe" test to any decisions made because of race, which it did not have to meet to discriminate against women. The ERA placed sex in the same legal category as race and demanded an equally stringent test.[228]

In 1976, Schlafly objected saying that, "The whole idea that women are treated like Blacks is just ridiculous. If sex is treated under the law with the same 'rigid scrutiny' that race has been treated with over the past few years, then nobody would be allowed to discriminate no matter how reasonable it appears to the person doing it."[229] Schlafly wanted to leave the power to

---

[227] "Feather's Fly at ERA Hearing" *Atlanta Constitution* February 12, 1975.
[228] For additional explanation see Janet K. Boles, *The Politics of the Equal Rights Amendment, Conflict and the Decision Process* (New York: Longman, 1979).
[229] "Women Debate the Issue of the ERA" *Atlanta Constitution*, April 30, 1976.

discriminate in the hands of legislators who would uphold gender, racial and class norms. The Stop-ERA campaign linked race and women and played to southern legislators who already disagreed with those strides made by the Civil Rights Movement. The ERA was presented as one more contributor to the erosion of rights already slipping between the fingers of White male hands.

The Civil Rights Act challenged the southern hierarchy that established White men as the locus of all power. One of the few structures that remained was that tradition which positioned White women above all others as symbols of purity and goodness and limited access to this prize to White men. The ERA would have allowed women the freedom to leave this mythical pedestal and thus would seriously increase access to them.

****

Further, White female opponents of the ERA saw this amendment as diminishing their position and power. At a rally held in 1981, Tottie Ellis, national Vice President of the Eagle Forum (Phyllis Schlafly's organization) called on this historic sense of position and privilege when she appealed to "the descendants of Scarlet O'Hara" to rededicate themselves to "burying the ERA forever."[230] Ellis assured the public that, "The descendants of Scarlet O'Hara are not going to let the feminists and the federal bureaucrats steal our responsibilities and our integrity with their 'Extra Responsibilities Amendment'"[231] Clearly playing on the racial history of nineteenth century Atlanta, Ellis connected the fight against ERA in the 1980s to institutionalized racial superiority prevalent in the Georgia of the 1880s.

Pro-ERA Activist Jeanne Cahill described Phillis Shlafly's use of the Southern Lady with a mix of disgust and admiration;

---

[230] Carol Ashkinaze, "'Stop-ERA' Rally Held at Capital", *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* March 26, 1981.
[231] Ibid.

> "But she was so clever. She was, of course, beautifully coifed and a bow in her hair and her little pearls – and she's a very attractive woman -- and always so neat and lady-like. She leaned across the table and said, 'You men in Georgia are the envy of the world because of the way you treat your ladies. You are *such* gentlemen and you treat the ladies here so well, and don't let these women come in here and tell you that you must stop treating your ladies the way you do.' And [Cahill slaps the table] oh, you just want to gag over it!"[232]

Likewise, Kathryn Dunaway consistently positioned the ERA as antithetical to the idea of southern womanhood. She suggested to the Broadcasters' Association that by giving in to NOW's boycott, Georgians were selling White womanhood. She asked, "Will Atlanta, Georgia, and other states sacrifice their womanhood for a few more greedy dollars?"[233] Although the idea of selling Black women was not foreign to Southern history, the context of this question made it clear that White womanhood was in danger of being sold for the price of a convention, thus lowering White women to the position of Black women. This image of White women for sale engendered an immediate and passionate reaction from legislators against the ERA. However, the contemporary record has omitted the racial connection. Because opponents and the press commonly said "womanhood" and only implied "White" womanhood, historians missed the race argument implicit in the debate. However, it is clear that "Black" womanhood was a different experience entirely and that what was really being challenged was a racial division in society, which was threatened by the ERA.

****

One argument that seemed ridiculous to national groups involved in the ERA debate surrounded public restrooms. Historians Sharon DeHart and Donald Mathews saw statements by legislators as the height of absurdity.[234] It appeared that Georgians were concerned that the ERA

---

[232] Jeanne Cahill interview, August 25, 1998, Box 1, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.

[233] "Transcription of Tapes Made During the ERA Debate on Saturday, May 7, 1977." Box 3, Folder 13, Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, 14

[234] Donald G. Mathews and Jane Sherron De Hart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA: a State and the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

would result in bathroom facilities being shared by men and women. However, if historians looked closely at this contention, there were some very serious factors being considered. The toilet trauma of the South was closely tied to the conflation of sexual and racial taboos. It was not simply a matter of men and women sharing facilities, but Black men and women sharing restrooms with White men and women.

Opponents tied the ERA to the desegregation of public restrooms. When asked if the ERA would result in unisex bathrooms Dunaway responded, "It's true, yes, [just like] after the Civil Rights Act, there were no more 'Black' and 'White' bathrooms."[235] This connection seemed strange to national and northern ERA leaders who simply could not understand what the big deal was about the toilets.

However, E.D. Dunn Jr., Georgia's vice chairman of the American Party, the party associated with George Wallace's bid for the Presidency, explained his connection between the ERA and toilets. "The single bathroom under ERA is inevitable, I say this because it is an exact parallel to the civil rights law. Before that law was passed, we had four bathrooms- colored men, White men, colored women, White women. Now we have two. The single bathroom will become a haven for rapists and sex perverts."[236] At first glance, it may seem that Dunn made a huge leap in logic, but such a claim would have resounded with White audiences of a certain age and should make sense to historians sensitive to conceptions of Black sexuality in the past.

Julian Bond explained, "Sex is an important part of all of these arguments. Sex and fear of sex and fear of sexual predators who are either gay or Black… It was a nonsensical argument, but it was one that arouses real fear." Black men were commonly labeled sexual perverts for no other reason than their race. Thus, putting Black men in proximity to White women in a context

---

[235] "The Equal Rights Amendment: How it Would Affect Georgia Law" *Atlanta Constitution* January 15, 1977.
[236] "Feather's Fly at ERA Hearing" *Atlanta Constitution* February 12, 1975.

of intimacy would be a travesty of social justice. Bond elaborated, "Black people are viewed as being highly sexed and sexual creatures so that when in the early days of the Civil Rights Movement the common argument was that interracial unions would arise if Black boys and White girls (and it was odd because it was never White boys and Black girls) if they sat together in the class the next thing you knew the Black boys would be having sex with White girls and from that would come a mongrel race." These ancient arguments were revived during the Civil Rights Movement and were fresh in the minds of southern conservatives and legislators.[237] White males reacted viscerally and saw this as a threat to the women in their lives. Cathy Steinberg recalls a conversation with House Speaker Tom Murphy, "It just went over my head. Speaker Murphy said that, 'I have always put my daughters on a pedestal and I'm not going to bring them down to the level of men.'" Such a coded social norm was not evident to a Northern transplant like Steinberg and really did not resonate as a viable argument.

Clearly this racist notion of Black men was not openly discussed in national and Northern circles. Thus southern opponents of the ERA connected toilets to the Civil Rights Movement, which was enough to imply a logical leap toward rape and mayhem. This implied step that Black men were sexual predators, however, was never stated outright and thus has been overlooked in the historiographical record. Historians must be well informed of southern sexual history to understand the racial implications of statements like Dunn's, which would otherwise appear to deal with race and sex only as parallels never implying any interaction.

****

Like ERA proponents, southern ERA opponents used euphemistic language to deal with concerns of race and gender throughout the fight over ratification. Issues such as "states' rights" and "ladylike positions" were addressed by both sides vying for the dominant titles of "strongest

[237] Julian Bond telephone interview by author, tape recording, September 21, 2003. Hereafter "Bond Interview"

state's righter" and "most ladylike." However, neither contemporary records nor historiographical sources acknowledged the racial implications of these positions. Southern proponents noted that they needed to appear "ladylike" to appease southern legislators, but they did not explore why they should do so or what sacrifices they made by reifying this standard.

Opponents railed against a further threat to southern White male dominance by tying the ERA to the Civil Rights Movements and the 14th Amendment. They characterized the ERA as a further intrusion into southern society by northern and federal forces that continued their work toward integration and would continue to erode their power. This threat to class and racial superiority found eager ears in the Georgia state legislature and contributed heavily to the defeat of the ERA.

Meanwhile, northern proponents of ERA saw the "toilet turmoil" in the 1970s and 1980s as farcical. It was perceived as a ridiculous argument that was routinely ignored by proponents and eventually even dropped by Schlafly's national team.[238] However, while it seemed truly silly, it masked a very serious commentary on race and sexuality. The implicit message for the South was that through the reduction of the status of "lady" to the level of Black women and the access provided to Black men through general equality of women and public restrooms, states would no longer be able to protect White men's greatest asset: their position as racially superior. If White women were ultimately given access to freedom, then White men would not be able to point to their wives' "lofty" positions as protected women. Despite the absence of race in historical accounts and memory of the ERA, race weighed heavily on the decision to vote against the ratification.

[238] Jane Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 115.

Much More than Baking Bread

Looking at the language of ERA opponents enhances the understanding of the implications of race on the debate. However, it is even more telling to examine a person's deeds rather than their words regarding matters of great import. Thus, the opponents' actions toward Black women, families and organizations are essential in the analysis of the Stop-ERA campaign. Georgia's Stop-ERA campaign very much mirrored the national Stop-ERA campaign led by Phyllis Schlafly. However, the racially motivated tactics adopted by this group were most successful in the southern states, which voted as a block against ratification.

Stop-ERA representatives were famous for baking bread and hand writing pleas to their senators as tactics to fight against the ERA; this produced the historical image of activists as mild mannered women begging for protection. However just as historians and news media of the time have ignored the feminism of Black women, they have also ignored the agency, intelligence, political astuteness and racial motivation of the Stop-ERA campaigners. Along with baking bread, hand writing letters to senators and wearing attractive dresses while protesting at the capitol, these women targeted the most liberal, effective and racially diverse proponent organizations and destroyed them. Specifically Stop-ERA Georgia arranged for the removal of funding from the GCSW by Governor George Busbee and effectively undermined the Georgia Forum for the IWY.

In 1975, the GCSW began to see some pressure from both within and without the organization regarding its efforts to fight for the ERA. The commission was reformed under the Carter Administration in 1972 as a racially diverse group with a focus on the passage of the ERA. In 1973 commission members attended the Third Annual Conference of the Interstate Association of Commissions on the State of Women and discovered that the national average

budget for commissions was $21,655 while the average for the Georgia commission was less than $9,000.[239]

Seeking to rectify this under-funding, co-chairperson Jeanne Cahill obtained $37,000 in federal funding under the CETA (Comprehensive Emergency Training Act) and $10,000 from the Governor's Emergency Fund for the purposes of researching the impediments to female employment in Georgia.[240] With this additional funding Cahill was promoted to the position of Executive Director, given a salary, and one staff position to support the CSW's efforts. The issue of federal and state funding of an ERA effort became the Achilles' heel of the Commission.

By March of 1975, Dunaway and the Stop-ERA campaign targeted the Commission on the Status of Women, which they referred to as S.O.W. Dunaway sent a resolution to every member of the Georgia house and senate recommending the disempowerment of the CSW. She called the legislators to "prohibit the Commission, Director or members of the staff from engaging in lobbying…" She declared that "S.O.W. is now in violation of Number 586, Georgia Laws, 1966" because they funded staff and "other necessary items" and used those funds to promote the ERA.[241]

She cited both the federal and state funds that Cahill obtained and explained that "Investigation by Stop-ERA have found flagrant misuse of taxpayers' funds as well as other abuses by S.O.W. in 8 states."[242] Thus Dunaway placed herself in the middle of a national struggle against the ERA, which focused on eight southern states. Cahill addressed this national

---

[239] Letter from Dorothy Gibson to Governor Jimmy Carter, 26 July 1973, "Commission of the Status of Women" folder, box 44, Record Group 80-1-6, GDAH.
[240] Letter from Eliza Paschall to Jeanne Cahill, 9 June 1975, "Commission on the Status of Women" folder, Box 44 Record Group 80-1-6, GDAH.
[241] Letter from Dunaway to Legislators, "H.B. 884 (Committee Substitute) on Commission of the Status of Women" n/d, Box 3 Folder 2 Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University; Letter from Dunaway to EREG Committee, Appropriations Committee and All Senators", March 17, 1975, Box 3 Folder 2 Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.
[242] Ibid

threat to the CSW when she asked commissioners to limit their expenses and declared that, "Phyllis Schlafly has urged her followers to work toward the abolition of the Commissions on the Status of Women."[243]

The biggest blow to Georgia's CSW, however, was the "betrayal" by one of their own. Eliza Paschall who had previously been active in both the civil rights and feminist movements joined forces with Kathryn Dunaway and aided the Stop-ERA campaign in its defeat of the CSW. As early as 1973, Paschall began to be frustrated with various components of the women's movement including NOW, ERA Georgia and particularly the CSW.[244]

In May of 1975, commission members began to complain about the conflicts surrounding Paschall within the Commission. Her constant inquiries about the funding of the Commission and the appointment of Cahill to a paid position caused problems. Paschall constantly demanded to see records on members of the Human Relations staff. She questioned Cahill's decisions and the procedures used to fund and run the Commission. She challenged the Governor's role in what she deemed misappropriation of funds and forced Cahill to defend herself from "a recent attack by one disgruntled Commission member." [245] Cahill was so threatened that she recounted to Governor Busbee her "help during his campaign and her further support of his administration."[246] The Chairperson of the CSW characterized this conflict as, "continuous carping criticism from Commissioner Eliza Paschall Morrison."[247]

---

[243] Letter from Cahill to Commissioners, April 2, 1975, Cahill Papers, Box 3 Folder 41 Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.

[244] Letter to Jane Sept 17, 1973 from Eliza Paschall NOW Atlanta Chapter Papers Box 2 Folder 4-04 RG 750443 Location 2455-11 GDAH

[245] Letter from Cahill to Busbee, May 13, 1975, Cahill Papers, Box 3 Folder 41 Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

[246] Ibid

[247] Letter from Gibson-Ferry to Busbee, May 7, 1975, Gibson- Ferry Collection, Box 1, Folder Gibson-Ferry Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.

Later, in one of Paschall's written speeches entitled "A Feminist Protest against Backwater Feminism," she explained her new opposition to women's groups. She maintained that, "special activities for women do not integrate them into the mainstream." She believed that women were too diverse to be lumped together in one group and felt that by holding separate meetings and organizations from male dominated groups, women inhibited their own movement toward equality within American culture. She stated that the "CSW further institutionalizes the segregation of women- the purpose of the CSW should be to make sure that women are included in all other groups" as opposed to forming their own exclusive clubs.[248]

Just as she attacked the separate but equal meetings, education and employment systems for African-Americans from the 1930s through the 1960s, Paschall believed that the new trend toward separate women's groups was inherently unjust. She attacked the creation of women's centers, women's studies programs and women's political caucuses because she believed that, "segregating, 'feminist positions'" defeated the purpose of striving for equality.[249] Although she would not formally break with her feminist affiliations until 1978, her most damaging actions came in June of 1975 when she wrote to Dunaway in an effort to help with the destruction of the CSW.

In a private letter to Dunaway, Paschall wrote, "from what I have heard of your views, we probably disagree on many issues. However, on one thing I think we do agree, and that is that if there is to be a commission on the status of women, it should operate like a public agency."[250] She included copies of a number of letters between herself, government officials and commission members which highlighted the issue of Cahill's appointment to the Executive Director post

---

[248] "A Feminist Protest against Backwater Feminism" Eliza Paschall Collection Box 35 Folder IWY General #1, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.
[249] Ibid
[250] Letter from Eliza Paschall to Kathryn Dunaway, June 6, 1975, Box 28, Folder Commission January- October 1975, Paschall Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

within the CSW, and Cahill's conflict with an employee and friend of Paschall's, Nora McNiven, which resulted in a formal grievance.[251]

As a result of these attacks from within and without of the CSW, Governor Busbee denied the group further funding, allowed its federal CETA grant to run out, and then replaced all but six members of the commission. Busbee explained in October 1975 that he "appointed persons to serve on the Commission and attempted to choose a broadly representative group reflecting the views of all segments of thought among Georgia Women." He explained that the new commission would not have any funding for staff, but he assigned one of his assistants, Janet Todd, to work with the commission. [252]

Despite his assurances of a broad representation within the commission, the diversity and activism represented by the former commission did not continue. Dorothy Tracy of the League of Women Voters, Sandra Mitsel from NOW and Joyce Parker of ERA Georgia were a few of the many women who wrote to the Governor pleading for a return to both activism and diversity. They explained that the "new appointments include NO members of NOW," or women with experience fighting for women's issues, and pled for funding and professional direction. [253] In response to a letter sent by feminist and ERA activist Dorris Holmes, Human Relations official Tom Purdue represented the Governor's office and explained that the new Commission was

---

[251] McNiven was unhappy with her pay and merit system rating which she challenged in a formal grievance. Cahill retorted with an attack on McNiven's work ethic and professionalism. Letter from Cahill to Human Resources July 11, 1975, Special Assistant to the Governor for Social Program Matters Subject Files- Box 10 Folder CSW RG 80-1-30 Location 4281-36 GDAH; Letter from Personnel Services to Eliza Paschall, April 24, 1975 Department of HR Records of Commissioners office- Department of HR Subject Files, RG 80-1-6 Location 4410-13 GDAH; Letter from Gibson-Ferry to Governor Busbee May 7, 1975 Gibson-Ferry Collection Box 1 Folder 1 Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University.

[252] Letter from Governor Busbee to Sue Zimmer, October 17, 1975, Governor's Subject Files (on the CSW) Box 2 Folder Commission on the Status of Women RG 1-1-5 Location 1961-05 GDAH.

[253] Letter from Sandra Mitsel to Governor Busbee, October 6, 1975, Governor's Subject Files (on the CSW) Box 2 Folder Commission on the Status of Women RG 1-1-5 Location 1961-05 GDAH; Letter from Dorothy Tracy to Governor Busbee, September 23, 1975, Governor's Subject Files (on the CSW) Box 2 Folder Commission on the Status of Women, RG 1-1-5 Location 1961-05 GDAH; Letter from Joyce Parker October 7, 1975, Governor's Subject Files (on the CSW) Box 2 Folder Commission on the Status of Women RG 1-1-5 Location 1961-05 GDAH.

interested in "removing itself from being looked upon as a negative force and has developed a positive image. As far as possible, the Commission has represented all views and opinions, and no particular group or viewpoint has been excluded purposely." He went on to explain that, "Your members are serving in many other areas in government" which apparently justified their exclusion from the CSW. [254] The long history of racial diversity and activism led by the CSW came to an end.

The opposition was very pleased with the outcome, as their greatest foe (CSW) had been completely destroyed. Dunaway wrote a letter to thank the governor for "withholding funds from the Commission on the Status of Women, which in reality has merely been an instrument used for lobbying and promotion for the passage of the controversial ERA."[255] Eliza Paschall concurred. Feeling understandably estranged from her former colleagues but not yet ready to join the opposition, she began writing under the name "The Feminist Committee." She advocated the end of all women's organizations and insisted that all members of the CSW "can best serve by refusing to serve the agency which can only hold out hollow promises."[256]

Thus in 1975 the opposition targeted Georgia's most effective and racially inclusive proponent for the ERA and forced the legislature and Governor to deny it funding, to fire all its feminist members and to replace them with a much less racially diverse and much less political force. By 1975, the opposition had stopped the movement on all fronts, the Senate bill sponsored by Tate and Bond had been defeated, Stop-ERA had become a force in the media, and the

---

[254] Letter from Tom Purdue to Dorris Holmes, August 22, 1978 Jeff Jones Collection, Box 1 Folder 6, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

[255] Letter to from Kathryn Dunaway to Gov. George Busbee, September 27, 1975 Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed Box 1, Folder 28 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

[256] "Open Letter" from The Feminist Committee, November 1975, Gaines Collection Box 9 Folder "Recommendation" November 1975, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

GCSW had been dismantled. All of this was orchestrated not by women baking bread for their legislators, but by politically astute women who knew how to work the system.

These women did not merely talk about the loss of their position as “Southern Ladies.” They designed and executed a plan that protected their position in society. The GCSW was both a social and political threat. It represented the one of the opponents’ greatest fear: federal authority supporting a meeting of liberal women, and women of color working in concert with White feminists for the passage of the ERA. Had such a group been allowed to function, the landscape of feminism in Georgia might have been much different. Opponents strategically gathered and disseminated information about their opponents, forced the hands of legislators and left the group crippled. They used this tactic effectively and soon turned it against another target. Interestingly, the next organization to feel the wrath of the Stop-ERA campaign was also a group connected to racial diversity and the equal rights of women, the Georgia Forum in association with the International Women’s Year.

****

After their success eliminating the Commission on the status of women in 1975, opponents to the ERA used similar tactics to attack Georgia’s Committee to represent women at the International Women’s Year conference in 1977. Again, Georgia’s Stop-ERA groups targeted the most racially diverse group supporting the ERA. Kathleen Crouch called together a Coordinating Committee in December of 1976 that met and discussed their selection process for representatives to the national event, and efforts to ensure diversity. The resulting list of thirty seven women included a number of Black, female leaders, former members of the GCSW and even opponents to the ERA. Vocal minority women like Deloras Crocket and Josephina Cross were selected to ensure that the needs of various minority women were addressed and women

like Kathryn Dunaway and Eliza Paschall were invited to represent opposition to both the ERA and the meeting itself.[257]

Such efforts at diversity clearly signaled a red flag to the Stop-ERA campaign. Following the lead of the National Stop-ERA campaign they claimed that because the representatives did not adequately include those who opposed the ERA that the meetings were illegitimate uses of federal funds. Attorney John Schlafly (husband of Phyllis Schlafly) brought a federal suit against the IWY. He alleged that such a misappropriation of funds violated laws about federal funding of lobbying efforts, however the suit was thrown out of court in February 1977.[258] Despite this blow, the Georgia Stop-ERA campaign continued to push this argument against the use of federal funds through another venue.

In April of 1977, the Committee assigned to study the role and interests of homemakers was prepared to introduce its report in a press conference. However, this announcement was interrupted by Stop-ERA representatives who rushed in to the conference yelling that the findings of the committee were rigged and that they did not represent the diversity of thought in Georgia.[259] The committee may have represented people from a variety of localities, races and groups, but it was not diverse according to the opposition. The next month the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* quoted Elaine Donnelly, Illinois National Media Chairman of The Citizens' Review Committee for IWY. She asked, "What kind of election is it where the nominees race, creed, group affiliation and occupation are listed but their views are not?"[260] The idea that racial diversity was a greater priority than the balance between conservative and liberal ideas was truly

---

[257] Minutes of the First Meeting of the Georgia Coordinating Committee, December 1, 1976, Gaines Collection, Box 13, Folder 8, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University; Press release from the National IWY, December 1976, unprocessed Kathryn Dunaway Collection Box 5 Folder 9 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.
[258] IWY Press release: "Stop-ERA suit against IWY Commission thrown out", Feb 24, 1977, Gaines Collection Box 13, Folder 2 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.
[259] "Women Interrupt Meeting" Atlanta Constitution, April 5, 1977
[260] "ERA Opponents Rail Against Women's Meeting" Atlanta Journal and Constitution May 14, 1977.

offensive to the Stop-ERA campaign. This connection and comparison between race and the opposition was important but easily overlooked by historians. Clearly the Stop-ERA campaign recognized both the diversity and the threat of the IWY. They saw such a conglomeration of women of color, various classes and backgrounds as a huge threat.

Unlike the GCSW, the funding for the IWY was primarily federal and thus harder to attack. Dunaway and Paschall both had access to all the actions and plans of the IWY as members and used this access in an attempt to de-legitimize the proceedings. In May 1977, Dunaway published "A Dissenting view of The Georgia Women's Meeting for the observance of IWY." In this document she continued the claim that despite her own inclusion in the delegation, the opposition was not fairly represented. She described the IWY conference guide, To Form a More Perfect Union, as a lobbying effort and cited it as a violation of federal and state law preventing public funds from being used to lobby.[261]

She railed against issues of homosexuality discussed at the conference, calling them, "distasteful, pornographic degrading and an insult to our ladies attending." She even made a veiled suggestion about Bella Abzug's sexual orientation in attempt to discredit her. Finally, she attacked the Georgia conference as an exclusively ERA event. Dunaway declared that, "from the beginning with Mrs. George Busbee's welcoming address, when she urged us not to be ashamed of Georgia because we failed to ratify the ERA, to Bella Abzug's keynote address, it was without question an ERA meeting."[262]

---

[261] "A More Perfect Union", Kathryn Dunaway collection unprocessed, Box 4, Folder 9, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University; "A Dissenting view of the Georgia Women's Meeting for the observance of IWY", Kathryn Dunaway collection unprocessed, Box 3, Folder 16, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

[262] "A Dissenting view of the Georgia Women's Meeting for the observance of IWY", Kathryn Dunaway collection unprocessed, Box 3, Folder 16, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

In September of 1977, Dunaway wrote a letter to Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina in an attempt to have the funding cut from the IWY. She used the words of Colorado IWY leader Mildred Persinger to incite the opposition. Persinger announced at the opening of the Colorado meeting, "This is the first federally funded revolution!" To support Dunaway's claim that IWY funds were being used to lobby in Georgia, she cited Georgia's payment for Bella Abzug as a speaker and explained that members of Georgia's Assembly including lieutenant governor Zell Miller (a known advocate for the ERA) were present. Along with various references to issues in "A Dissenting Opinion…" which she attached, Dunaway claimed, "The Coordinating Committee of Georgia was guilty of gross discrimination in the selection of speakers."[263]

Dunaway recognized that the predominately White and male government was in danger of being threatened by a racially and socially diverse coalition. ERA would continue to empower liberal, multiracial cooperation and would threaten the White, male power structure. Her choice of words was calculated to have maximum impact. The IWY was a racially diverse group, challenging sexual and gender norms, which would threaten the power of stalwarts like Helms. She provided the conservative, White male leadership with information and the means to shut off this well of power by sighting various violations of federal code, which the senator could use to challenge the conference. Dunaway was not just baking bread; she was gathering forces to discredit if not destroy her greatest enemy, groups of strong, diverse women united for ERA.

Likewise, Eliza Paschall used her considerable political influence to discredit the IWY. In June of 1977, Paschall wrote a letter to all her representatives including President Carter, Senators Talmadge and Nunn, Congressman Elliot Levitas, Governor George Busbee, Lieutenant Governor Zell Miller, State Senator Pierre Howard and State Representative John Hawkins. In

[263] Letter to Jesse Helms et al, September 14, 1977, unprocessed Kathryn Dunaway collection Box 4, Folder 9, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

this letter she referenced her past involvement with feminism and then went on to malign the IWY proceedings. Her argument was that any meeting exclusively for feminists was defacto discriminatory, as it would not represent all the concerns of all women. She tied her arguments against the IWY to her previous opposition to the CSW explaining that just as the CSW was illegitimate so was the IWY. Finally Paschall signed the letter, "Former National Secretary, National Organization for women, Former member, Georgia Commission on the Status of Women, Former local and State President, League of Women Voters, Member, Georgia Coordinating Committee for the Observance of IWY."[264]

In an attached "Report on Subject of Ga. Women's Meeting and National Women's Conference" by Paschall, she supported Dunaway's claim that the meetings were not diverse or representative of Georgia women. She asserted that the meeting's purpose was not to find truth but to support the previously adopted agenda and claimed that the information provided was "advocacy oriented."[265] By 1977, Paschall's allegiance and motivation had clearly changed. She had once been attracted to racially diverse groups of women who fought for power and recognition. However, her previous dedication to these values had been clearly challenged and reversed.

Paschall continued her attack on the IWY in a letter to Bella Abzug that she copied to state representatives. This former stalwart at the EEOC questioned the selection process for the Georgia representatives to the National IWY conference. She asked, "Are we to have racial quotas among the delegations? Is that what 'demographic balance' means? Are the meetings, the

---

[264] Letter from Eliza Paschall to President Jimmy Carter et al, June 27, 1977, unprocessed Kathryn Dunaway collection, Box 4, Folder 8, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.
[265] Report on Subject of Ga. Women's Meeting and National Women's Conference, June 27, 1977 Kathryn Dunway Collection unprocessed, Box 4 Folder 8 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

conference, open only to people who favor the positions of the Commission?"[266] Her questions echoed the challenges offered by Dunaway. The implication was that racial diversity forced out the voices of the previously sacrosanct, southern elite lady.

Paschall rebuked the pro ERA attacks. She was understandably amazed and offended by the State Department's use of the terms "right-wing" and "Klan like" in their press releases to describe the opposition movement to the ERA. As a person who had previously dedicated her life to civil rights, she now saw the ERA and its supporting organizations as undermining the inclusion of women in society. This discord created an interesting conflict within Paschall as she sought to reconcile her feminist past with her new convictions against the need for the ERA. Eventually, this fracture resulted in her split from "feminist" organizations and official alignment with the Stop-ERA campaign. She was later appointed to the Women's Bureau under the Reagan Administration.[267]

In her writing Paschall gave her new views rhetorical life with a spoof on the National IWY conference titled, "Alice in Abzugland." Paschall inferred that the IWY was merely an attempt to confuse and repudiate the archetypal, modern American [White] housewife and manipulate her into recommending legislation that was not in her best interest.[268] She used her experience arguing for the ERA to question each point made by advocates. The ERA movement was understandably devastated by the insight that Paschall provided to their opponents.

Clearly, women like Eliza Paschall and Kathryn Dunaway were not ignorant or naive about political maneuvering and advocacy. They used a very well thought out strategy to cripple

---

[266] Letter from Paschall to Abzug, October 3, 1977 Eliza Paschall Collection, Box 37, unfoldered, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.
[267] "More Ups than Downs" Autobiography by Eliza Paschall, n/d Eliza Paschall Collection Box 76, Folder Writings "More Ups than Downs" Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.
[268] "Alice in Abzugland" by Eliza Paschall, Eliza Paschall Collection, Box 35 Folder IWY General #1 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

their opponents and targeted the most racially diverse and strong organizations. Dunaway's history of opposition to racial integration and Paschall's history fighting for the civil rights of African Americans certainly made them strange bedfellows, but once those differences were somehow reconciled, they made a formidable team. It is notable that both women referred to issues of race and class in their attacks on women's groups. In spite of the historiographical record, which omitted race from the ERA debate, the opposition continued to attach attacks to racially charged images and arguments.

****

Much like the history of the ERA proponents, a close study of the opposition reveals some striking connections between race and the women's movements that have been previously ignored. The opposition was fighting for the protection of White, southern womanhood and the privilege associated with racial superiority in the South. In their earlier iterations opponents used overt racist language to attack the ERA and its supporters. People like B.J. Stoner and Kathryn Dunaway had a history of racist and segregationist positions, which they continued in their fight against the ERA. As the struggle continued over time, the opposition became more subtle. They did not need to make explicitly racist charges, but they laced their pleas to the White, southern legislators with racial language and images.

Most significantly they directly attacked and destroyed racially diverse organizations that threatened their position both by their advocacy of the ERA and their very existence. The contemporary record of the time was controlled by the very powers threatened by multiracial cooperation and the ERA. While some opponents were openly racist and segregationist, the *Atlanta Journal* was still publishing coded segregated want ads. The language of implicit racism was easily overlooked and misunderstood by the national press. Thus contemporary record as

recorded both locally and nationally failed to recognize the connection between race, gender and the ERA in the South. A closer and more informed look by historians reveals blatant, inferred and active racism throughout the efforts to defeat the ERA.

Conclusion

> "I was across the street from the rallies that we had, etc. But I do remember looking from the Presbyterian Church across from the Capitol and seeing the rally that we had right before the Equal Rights Amendment was coming to a vote. And I remember especially Donna Coles with her baby in a stroller being there with other people also, who had their children there. And I was trying to coordinate balloons being blown up and having enough balloons and having buttons and registering people at the table so we knew exactly who was there at each time."[269] Beverly Jordan

Beverly Jordan was the Administrative Vice President and office manager of ERA Georgia from 1972 to 1982. She kept things moving smoothly, kept records of the group's members and efforts to fight for the ratification of the ERA. Her records reflect the participation of members of the AFL-CIO, representatives of the Nurse's union, celebrities, politicians and friends alike who came to the rally at the Capitol. Historians, however, ignored the clues she provided about the real diversity involved in this event. They did not register the presence of women of color at rallies, because they were hidden behind the titles of their unions. They did not recognize the importance of race in the fight for women's rights because it was not always women of color who spoke about racial equality. Further, they did not connect race to the ERA because it was discussed in coded language that historians needed to decipher to see the racial discourse present in the debate.

This work presents a radically different view of ERA. I have attempted to broaden the historic vision of the ERA to expose a rich history of racially motivated actions and speech. The history of the ERA is certainly a history of White, feminist activism and lobbying for the

---

[269] Beverly Jordan interview, February 26, 1997, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

ratification of an amendment, but it was also much more than that. In this work, I have not focused on the legislative outcome, but rather the movement itself. Whether or not the ERA passed, the effect of the movement was substantial. Even more significant than the ratification, was the mobilization of groups of women, Black and White, who began transforming our society. How they worked together, the language they used and their methods are much more important than the vote on the floor of the state legislature. Alternative sources such as interviews, private records and official documents of the groups involved demonstrated that the contemporary record is not the only "truth." This trove of historical data complicates the view of the women's movement regarding the ERA.

Valuing actions and people not previously considered political, such as baking bread for political gain or working on the ERA as merely a part of broader activism, illuminated the critical work of women both Black and White. Because previous works only recognized women who worked with organizations specifically labeled "feminist" they missed women like Jean Davis and Mary Long who saw the fight for women's equality as a part of their fight for human rights. Finally, discourse analysis revealed the coded race language prevalent in the South. These methodological changes exposed a rich history of race in the ERA movement. Despite the lack of coverage in the contemporary reports and the subsequent omission in the historiographical record, race played a central role in the ERA struggle in Georgia.

Black women were involved in the ERA movement. They fought for ratification within "White" groups, multicultural feminist organizations, and associations that served other purposes such as unions and churches. Additionally, Black women used race-focused organizations to talk about women and women's groups to talk about race. White feminists recognized the power of their Black counterparts. They sought out Black women, talked about Black families and even

used race speech in an attempt to influence legislators. White conservatives also recognized the powerful influence of Black women and race. They used coded race language to tip the scales of the ERA debate and targeted multiracial coalitions as the biggest threat to their social standing and political success. Thus, using innovative methodology, this work reveals the broad role of race in ERA history.

The Appearance

Despite the assumptions of previous works on the ERA, Black women were actively involved in the ERA debate. Black women did not have to be in the forefront of the movement or on the front pages of the paper in order to make a difference or create change in their communities. Their methods differed from those of Black male activists and White feminists, but they were actively engaged in the fight for the ERA. They were on the capitol steps but ignored; they were behind the scenes but given no credit; they were members of multiracial commissions but were not acknowledged. They were speaking but not heard.

Black women were invisible in reports of the ERA movement, but they were surprisingly easy to find once I looked beyond contemporary records and once political action was examined as a spectrum of activity not limited to titled positions in official organizations. Individual Black women were essential to the effort in Georgia to pass the ERA. Black activist Mary Long served as an officer in ERA Georgia Inc., which had previously been labeled a “White” institution. Her involvement was not recognized by the contemporary press or historiographic record. Jean Davis worked with the A. Philip Randolph Institute to bring the ERA to the union members instead of bringing union members to the ERA meetings. None of those meetings were labeled “feminist” or even “women’s meetings” and therefore did not make it into the history books as a part of the movement. Additionally, elite Black women such as Vivian Jackson and Jean Young spoke out

publicly for the ERA; their involvement, however, did not shape the historic perception that the ERA was a purely "White" movement. These omissions in the historiography gave the false perception that the ERA movement was devoid of biracial involvement and had no true significance for Black women. This is a clear example of an absence in the contemporary records being perpetuated in the historiography. The source base was expanded beyond newspapers and public records, however, the role of important Black women became clear.

Unlike Black men in the Civil Rights Movement and White feminists, Black women often worked behind the scenes to create change. Once historians relinquished the paradigm in which leadership is limited to those individuals with name recognition and accolades, we began to value the activism of Black women. Black women supported the actions of and potentially motivated leaders such as Maynard Jackson, Horace Tate and Julian Bond to act on their behalf. These leaders actually introduced the ERA bill in the Georgia Senate, publicly advocated it, and were even accused of being responsible for its failure. Behind these powerful Black men were Black women whose opinions they trusted and whose support they received. These women were accorded no recognition, but their style of "bridge leadership" was essential to the cause. [270]

Recognizing the value of bridge leadership also exposed the valuable activism of Black women working within groups to advance the ERA. Often without receiving the "feminist" label (which they may have rejected)[271], they included the ERA in their lobbying of state legislators and supported the ERA movement through organizations such as YWCA, the National Council on Negro Women and various unions. Historian Becky Thompson explained that, "In fact,

---

[270] Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 19, 20.

[271] According to Midge Wilson and Kathy Russell, Black women "believed in the ideals of feminism, but opposed the label *feminist* which they equated with man-hating lesbians, and the perceived, and in some cases actual, racial prejudice of the White women running feminist organizations" Midge Wilson and Kathy Russell *Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap Between Black Women and White Women*, (Anchor Books, Doubleday: 1996) 202.

during the 1970s, women of color were involved on three fronts—working with White dominated feminist groups; forming women's caucuses in existing mixed gender organizations; and developing autonomous Black, Latina, Native American and Asian feminist organizations."[272]

Their work to "lift as you climb" included fighting for the rights of women, so that they could use their improved status to advance their primary goal of enhancing family and community. Historian Benita Roth maintained that, "From the beginning of their [Black women's] feminist activism, they argued for opposition to gender, race and class oppression and resistance to prioritizing any one of the three above the others."[273] Again the previous historiographic trend only recognized activism that was solely focused on the ERA as an end. Historians failed to acknowledge Black women's group who fought for the ERA as a tool for future advancement. By recognizing a variety of styles of activism and leadership, a more complete picture became clear.

Black women also participated in multicultural organizations such as the Georgia Commission on the Status of Women and the Georgia Forum to support the International Women's Year. Georgia's efforts to create strong multicultural organizations coincided with its commitment to fight for the rights of women. Both of these groups included powerful Black women who were dedicated to the advancement of both their race and their sex.[274] Black women who were active in the civil rights movement continued their political work through formal avenues such as the Commission and the Georgia Forum. These multiracial organizations were

---

[272] Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism," *Feminist Studies* Summer 2002, vol 28 Issue 2, 337.
[273] Benita Roth, "The Making of the Vanguard Center: Black Feminist Emergence on the 1960s and 1970s" Kimberly Springer, ed. *Still Lifting Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, (NYU Press: New York, 1999) 83
[274] Jeanne Cahill interview, August 25, 1998, 19 Box 1 Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

pivotal in shepherding the ERA through Georgia's political machine and garnering public support for the movement. They controlled when the bill was introduced, lobbied legislators, and acted as an education and organizational resources for other groups fighting for the passage of the ERA.[275] It may have been because of the success and power of these multiracial groups that the organizations were targeted by the Stop-ERA campaign.

In addition to supporting the ERA, Black women changed the debate about the amendment itself to create talking points about racism and the plight of Black women. The press coverage of the struggle for the ERA was constant. Mainstream Atlanta newspapers such as the *AJC* dedicated multiple articles per week to the women's rights movement and specifically to the struggle for the ERA. Black women used the notoriety of the ERA to bring attention to issues of race. They created opportunities to talk about racism within the women's rights movement, the economic hardship facing Black women and families, and the limited opportunities for Black men and women.[276] The ERA was a perfect opportunity to show White America that the privileges White women were seeking were in some cases the burdens under which Black women were forced to slave. One group saw working as a privilege denied them, while the other saw work as a burden under which their families suffered. Further, Black women encouraged pro-ERA groups to consider the implications of the ERA on the family, not just women. Their participation fundamentally changed the debate and broadened its significance beyond this one legislative goal.

---

[275] "ERA Backers Decide to Wait in Georgia" *Atlanta Journal* Feb. 20, 1973, "View Falsely Given, ERA Backers Assert" *Atlanta Journal* February 22, 1973, "Women Feel Tricked; Rights Bill not Dead" *Atlanta Journal* Feb 25, 1973.

[276] Steve Wright, "'Racism Hurts ERA Movement,' says Douglass" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Intown Extra,11 and "Minority women- 'They have to deal with racism and sexism'" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, August 7, 1978.

When new methods were used to examine this period, the important role of Black women came vividly into the picture. The recognition of their direct involvement challenges notions about the nature of the struggle for the ERA as well as the very “Black” or “White” nature of second wave feminism. Black women were there; they simply weren't noticed by contemporaries, and have been overlooked by history until now.

The Idea

The traditional historiography of the ERA includes a picture in which the White community was divided over whether or not to extend rights to White women. White women fighting for the ERA were concerned with their own privileges and their desire to break away from the paternalistic status quo. Meanwhile, their opponents, also White women, worked hard to preserve their separate sphere of influence in the home and protect their families. All this discussion was then presented to (and possibly manipulated by) White men who voted on the legislation. However, such a picture denied a more inclusive movement that considered race at the heart of the struggle. Both proponents and opponents considered the needs of Black women and the impact of the ERA on racial interactions. Even when Black women were not present in the room, the idea of Black women continued to influence the struggle for the ERA.

White Women who fought for the ERA were constantly aware of the racial implications of the ERA and the need to include Black women within organizations. Their discussions, particularly in interviews after their work for the ERA had ended, included laments about the absence of racial diversity within their groups. They spoke often about encouraging diversity and creating a multicultural dialogue. Specifically, ERA Georgia Inc. and other groups recognized the importance of cooperation and inclusion and made many efforts to reach out to Black women. Unfortunately, many of the efforts made by White women were misguided and

unsuccessful. The impact of segregation upon the South left White and Black women separated socially and understandably wary of each other. The sheer ignorance of White women about their Black counterparts left them no idea how to reach out and seek support without seeming paternalistic.

Meanwhile, opponent groups discussed their opposition to the ERA using racial language. These dedicated women saw the ERA as a threat to their social status in terms of race. The ERA would have treated Black and White women equally, thus furthering the social change begun by the Civil Rights Movement. Racists such as J.B. Stoner spoke openly about the racial implications of the ERA and opposed it vehemently in public.[277] There was a community in the South still fighting desperately to preserve the social chasm between races and the comparative status of Black women and White women was essential to this division. They saw the ERA as a further threat to this division and explicitly used race as a reason to defeat the amendment. The debate in this case was not with Black women but about Black women. It is unclear, however, the degree to which racism was an actual motivation to oppose the ERA, or whether racially tainted language was used as a tool that could sway Georgia's legislators.

Ironically, both pro and anti groups also argued about what would be best for Black women. Both sides insisted that they had the support of Black organizations. They both claimed Black women as allies and each side accused the other of racism, and of damaging Black families which belies the claim that Black women were not important to this debate.[278] Despite the general consensus that Black women were not involved in this fight, Black women were fought over by the White women left in the room.

---

[277] "Women's Rights measure Pits 60 for 5 hour debate" *Atlanta Journal* Feb 8, 1973 and "Equal Rights Gets a Hearing" *Atlanta Journal* Feb 8, 1973.

[278] "Transcription of Tapes Made During the ERA Debate on Saturday, May 7, 1977." Box 3, Folder 13, unprocessed Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, 33

Finally, the idea of Black women working with White women was the most threatening issue of all. Possibly even more threatening than the ERA itself was the idea that a multicultural group of women could effect profound change in Georgia. Multicultural organizations such as the GCSW and the Georgia Forum for the IWY were immensely successful at advocating for the ERA and were targeted by the opposition.

The ERA needed an official advocate and then Governor Jimmy Carter reconstituted the GCSW to fill that purpose. He insisted on a multiracial organization and watched as it deftly maneuvered the perils of Georgia politics. In response to this new powerful voice for the ERA, Stop-ERA created a successful campaign to deny this group funding and quash any efforts it could make toward lobbying for the ERA. Within Stop-ERA, the Amendment's most effective advocate soon became its most powerful enemy as Eliza Paschall passed on information to the Stop-ERA group essential to the demise of the GCSW. The minutes of a very intense GCSW meeting explained that, "As a result of the circulation of Ms. Paschall's letter, a large delegation of people in the Stop-ERA movement visited the Governor's office and urged that he abolish the commission."[279]

The IWY, a multicultural forum with an agenda to pass the ERA, met a similar fate. Again the Stop-ERA campaign mobilized to disrupt multicultural cooperation ironically claiming that the group was not diverse. The opportunity for a successful legislative venture of this magnitude by a multicultural group was a threat to social status and racial division that southern society faced. The Stop-ERA campaign not only won a legislative battle, but more importantly it stalled a social movement of cooperation between Black women and White women in Georgia. By examining the records of these groups a flaw in the historiography became evident. The

[279] Report of Activities for June, June 1975 Governor's Subject Files (on the CSW) Box 2 Folder Commission on the Status of Women RG 1-1-5 Location 1961-05 GDAH

absence of race in the discussion of the ERA struggle essentialized the movement as a debate about one legislative vote instead of a social movement with profound implications that has lasted well beyond 1982.

Race played a huge role in the struggle for the ERA even when the voice of Black women was absent from the record. White women discussed racism and made efforts to include Black women; they argued about what was best for Black women and the family and eventually, some recognized multicultural cooperation as their greatest hope or greatest threat. The traditional historical narrative of this period ignored all these racial implications and omitted a significant portion of the debate from the history of this period.

The Language

One of the difficulties of national movements trying to impose their ideas upon the South is that they inevitably miss the coded racial language of Southern political and social life. Likewise, historians have easily missed whole threads of narrative by ignoring coded language in Southern history. As this work has demonstrated, analysis of coded race language opened up an entire new level to the racial analysis of the ERA. Both pro and anti groups used racially tainted language to buttress their arguments for and against the ERA. This coded battle, however failed to resonate with national groups or historians. The history of the ERA has been told as if separate from a struggle for racial equality. Clearly, race was a key element in this battle and recognition of racial language is essential to telling a more complete story of the ERA in the South.

Key phrases such as “State’s Rights” and “Southern Lady” were used as codes to evoke the racial and social order of the South that had been threatened by the Civil Rights Movement. An idea conceived in the antebellum era to argue in favor of preserving slavery, “states rights” has long since been associated with race. During the Civil Rights Movement White

segregationists revived the call for "state's rights" in the South as the social order established during Reconstruction was again threatened by federal interference. This perpetuated the association between "state's rights" and race. Indeed it would be nearly impossible to imagine the term being deployed without its subtext of race in the 1970s, so soon after its revival by White supremacists.

Pro-ERA Georgians attempted to mitigate the issues associated with the threat of the federal takeover implied in section two of the ERA. They cast themselves as "state's righters" and ignored the racial implications therein. Meanwhile the Sstop-ERA advocates used "state's rights" as an emotional trigger to threaten social change and create fear in a racially tense society. They associated the ERA with the 14th Amendment, the Civil Rights Movement and other efforts to strip the South of its unique racial divide, using coded language to appeal to racial intolerance even in those people who were not openly racist.

Likewise, the term "Southern Lady" carried with it a subtext of the establishment and maintenance of racial segregation. The "Southern Ladies" in fact included all women except women of color. Christine Tibbets who ran the South Georgia office of ERA Georgia remembered her lessons about race and the title "lady" from her childhood;

> I remember vividly some point being a little girl and in the supermarket with mother and I can picture us and I guess I would have said a 'colored lady', I think colored would have been the word in that era. And I remember mother correcting me and saying, 'No, not Lady.' Now that's pretty racist, right? But in their sense of rules, so that was a truth if you will, in the environment in which I grew up. She could be a woman, but this would not be a 'Lady'.[280]

[280] Christine Tibbets, interview June 4, 2004, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

By breaking away from southern womanhood, feminists were equating Black women and White women. The Pro-ERA camp was divided in its address of these issues. The national movement wanted to break the South's strong attachment to racial divide and patriarchy. Gloria Steinem, Bella Abzug and others attacked the Southern Lady as antiquated and oppressive.[281] Meanwhile southern, Pro-ERA women recognized that this was a threat to southern culture and attempted to co-opt the title of the Southern Lady and use its power within the social structure to exact change. This led to an interesting struggle over who was more Ladylike in the ERA debate.

The threat to the "Southern Lady" was a threat to the last institution of social divide between races. The only clear remaining differences after the Civil Rights Movement was that White men had the ability to place the Southern lady on the pedestal where she was the queen of her home, did not work or seek power in the public sphere, whereas Black women remained in the public domain as workers. Black men would have greater access to White women if they were removed from their private sphere just as White men had always been privileged with greater access to Black women who worked for them. Stop-ERA forces used this implicit fear of sexual and racial degradation to cue legislators to protect their "Ladies" and thus their way of life.

The argument culminated in the farcical toilet debates. Phyllis Schlafly began the toilet terror when she wrote in "The Right to be a Woman" that if the ERA is adopted "we must assume that rest rooms segregated by sex would be prohibited by courts just as the courts prohibit color-segregated rest rooms."[282] This argument was then taken up by many local groups and was in fact one of four primary arguments used by southern opposition groups. However, most of the nation's legislatures saw the argument as a clear exaggeration, and even Schlafly

---

[281] "Push for Rights, Women Urged" *Atlanta Constitution*, May 7, 1977.
[282] Jane Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 112.

distanced herself from the argument. The Georgia legislature was an exception, "One Georgia legislator claimed that the ERA 'would absolutely abolish segregated washrooms.'"[283] Northerners missed the southern-coded cues which connected the ERA with racial integration and implied sexual proximity between Black men and White women should the ERA be passed. Although not explicitly stated, the social and sexual threats of racial interaction was crystal clear to Southerners. Their significance has been previously overlooked by historians who did not consider race and racial codes in their examination of the ERA.

Coded language hid from national organizations, contemporary records and historians the racial war being waged through the ERA ratification debate in the South. A change in historical methodology however exposes several complex and racially charged themes in the subtext of otherwise extreme or absurd positions taken by the opponents to ERA. The relationship between race and the ERA is evident in the examination of language in the South.

Implications

This closer look at the history of the ERA in the South reveals the strong impact of Black women and race on the struggle for ratification. Black women were directly involved but not recognized, they were discussed when not physically present, and they were referred to when not explicitly mentioned. Black women and race were essential to the debate whether in physical presence, theoretical support or as a symbol of class structure. A complete history of this period which includes an examination of the impact of Black women and race greatly complicates an oversimplified tale of White, middle-class feminism failing to win ratification of an amendment.

The only way to locate these moments in history is to alter the traditional methodologies applied to significant historical periods. Historians must expand their political analysis to examine movements instead of mere legislative debates. The impact of the social movement is

[283] Ibid 116

far more profound than any one vote. Historians must examine local histories for their impact on national issues because such close examinations can expose hidden players and language that would be apparent to those close to the movement, but were foreign to those who were removed. Women's history should be examined with an eye out for various forms of political action. Civil rights historians have made great strides seeing women who were otherwise invisible in earlier histories, but historians of women's history have yet to thoroughly examine race to uncover hidden actors in the "women's movement." Historians must reexamine definitions of political activism that restrict our searches to only those who work within official organizations labeled "feminist." Important work for the rights of women happened within groups whose focus was not on women's rights. Exposing those histories will add to the diversity of the historiography and unveil the active participation of women of color who did not sit idly by while white women changed the world.

Historiography could also be dramatically impacted by expanding the source base for most historical study. Interviews, private papers and organizational archives are more difficult to access but can provide richer analysis. Memories, however flawed, can provide a much richer and more inclusive description of a person, period or movement because it does not have to be essentialized to fit ideals held by the editors and publishers of the day. Interviews provide a more intimate understanding of social mores, characters and activities because they can be clarified with questions.

Finally, discourse analysis which recognizes the unique language of the South would enhance historical understanding of both motives and arguments. Recognizing social codes and applying them to debates, speeches and correspondence can make a significant difference in our understanding of the period. Reading for things that were said as well as noting things that were

not said can inform the history of the period and often reveals racial implications. In the case of the ERA, such methods have uncovered a fascinating narrative heretofore ignored by historians.

Beyond the ERA, there is a need to extrapolate these methodologies to other stories. It is incumbent on historians to consider the diverse ways that Black women work in other periods. Examining bridge leadership, common among Black women of the time, will help uncover some of the previously invisible activists who worked without recognition but created significant change. Historians should consider the peculiar language of the South to discover implicit references to race in historical spaces that have appeared absent of color. Race analysis using a narrative approach to interviews will benefit the historical community and make relevant many stories which will remain incomplete without such study.

Works Cited

Secondary Sources

Berry, Mary Francis, *Why ERA Failed* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

Boles, Janet K., *The Politics of the Equal Rights Amendment, Conflict and the Decision Process* (New York: Longman, 1979).

Collins, Patricia Hill, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the* Politics of Empowerment, (Rutledge: NY, 2000)

Clayton, Xernona, *I've Been Marching All the Time: An Autobiography* (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1991)

Crawford, Vicki L., Jacqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods eds. *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965*. (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Pub., 1990).

Curry, Constance, *Deep in our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement*, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2000).

Gluck, Sherna Berger et al, "Whose Feminism, Whose History? Reflections on Excavating the History of (the) U.S. Women's Movement(s)" in Nancy A. Naples, Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class and Gender, (Rutledge: New York, 1998) 10.

Evans, Sara, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, (New York: Knopf, 1979).

Gilmore, Glenda, *Gender and Jim Crow: women and the politics of white supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

Guy-Sheftall, Beverly, *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought, (The New Press: New York, 1995)*

Hartmann, Susan, *From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics since 1960* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989).

…., *The Other Feminists*, (New Haven, [CT]: Yale University Press, 1998).

Harrison, Cynthia, *On Account of Sex the Politics of Women's Issues, 1945-1968*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

hooks, bell, *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*, (Southend Press: Boston, 1984).

Jones, Jeffrey G., *Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment*, Master's Thesis. (Georgia State University, 1995).

Kelley, Robin D.G., "'We are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South," *Journal of American History*, Vol 80, Issue 1, June 1993, 75-112.

King, Mary, *Freedom Song: a Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement*, (New York: Morrow, 1987).

Mansbridge, Jane, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Mathews, Donald G. and Jane Sherron De Hart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA: a State and the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Nasstrom, Kathryn L., "Down to Now: Memory, Narrative, and Women's Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, Georgia," *Gender & History* [Great Britain] 1999, 11 (1): 113-144.

Nasstrom, Kathryn, *Everybody's Grandmother and Nobody's Fool: Frances Freeborn Pauley and the Struggle for Social Justice*, (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 2000)

Naples, Nancy A., *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class and Gender*, (Rutledge: New York, 1998).

Radford-Hill, Sheila, *Further to Fly*, (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2000)

Riehm, Edith Holbrook, "Dorothy Tilly and the Fellowship of the Concerned", in Gail S. Murray ed., *Throwing Off the Cloak of Privilege: White Southern Women Activists in the Civil Rights Era* (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 2004)

Robnett, Belinda, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)

Roth, Benita, "The Making of the Vanguard Center: Black Feminist Emergence on the 1960s and 1970s" in Kimberly Springer, ed. *Still Lifting Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, (NYU Press: New York, 1999).

Sacks, Karen Brodkin, "Toward a Unified Theory of Class, Race and Gender" *American Ethnologist*, Volume 16, Issue 3, August 1989, 534-550.

Sandoval, Chela, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2000).

Scott, Anne Firor, *The Southern lady: from Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1970)

Sikora, Frank, *Until Justice Rolls Down* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1991)

Springer, Kimberly, ed. *Still Lifting Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, (NYU Press: New York, 1999).

Thelen, David, “Memory and American History,” *Journal of American History* 75 (4): 1123.

Thompson, Becky, “Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism,” *Feminist Studies* Summer 2002, vol 28 Issue 2, p. 337.

White, Deborah Gray, *Ar’n’t I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999).

Williamson, Joel, *The Crucible of Race: Black –White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: University of Oxford Press, 1984)

Wilson, Midge and Kathy Russell, *Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap Between Black Women and White Women*, (Anchor Books, Doubleday: 1996).

Primary Sources

Newspapers

"Anti-ERA 'Gorilla' Bears Gifts for State Legislators," *Atlanta Constitution,* February 25, 1981 1-C

Arnold, Anne, "Support for Minority Women's Rights Highlights National Women's Conference" *Atlanta Daily World*, November 22, 1977, sec 1 pg 1

"Are Federal Funds Used to Lobby for the ERA?" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution,* February 26, 1977

Ashkinaze, Carol, "100 Georgia Women Told Dos and Don'ts of Lobbying for ERA," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution,* January 11, 1980, 3-C

Ashkinaze, Carol "Hundreds Back ERA at Capitol," *Atlanta Constitution,* February 9, 1981

Ashkinaze, Carol, "'Stop ERA' Rally Held at Capital", *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* March 26, 1981

Brown, Joe, "More Support by Blacks Hailed by Ga. ERA Leader," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* July 20, 1981

Bryans, Raleigh, "Indifference to the ERA Cited" *Atlanta Journal,* September 6, 1973

"'Dotsie' Holmes Accepts Her Southern Woman Role" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* November 13, 1976

Edmunds, Emma, "Women in Waiting" Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine, November 22, 1981

"The Equal Rights Amendment: How it Would Affect Georgia Law," *Atlanta Constitution,* January 15, 1977

"Equal Rights Gets a Hearing" *Atlanta Journal* Feb 8, 1973

"ERA Backers Decide to Wait in Georgia" *Atlanta Journal* Feb. 20, 1973, "View Falsely Given, ERA Backers Assert" *Atlanta Journal* February 22, 1973

"ERA Frowned Upon: Dixie Legislators protecting Belles" *Atlanta Journal,* March 15, 1973

"ERA Opponents Rail Against Women's Meeting" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution,* May 14, 1977

"ERA Public Hearing Set for Feb. 11" *Atlanta Constitution,* January 23, 1975.

"Feather's Fly at ERA Hearing" *Atlanta Constitution* February 12, 1975

Fleming, Martha, "Coretta King Hails Women's Conference Minority Resolution," *Atlanta Daily World* November 24, 1977, sec 1 pg 2

"Gloria Here Aims At Sexism, Racism," *Atlanta Journal,* Dec. 7, 1972

Gulliver, Hal, "Bigotry Theme and the ERA" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* September 17, 1979

Gulliver, Hal, "ERA Conference and Friends," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* April 4, 1978, 4-A

"In Houston, ERA OK Seemed Just a Matter of Time" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution,* November 26, 1977

"Junior League Cheers ERA Talk" *Atlanta Journal,* November 10, 1976

"The Legislature Speaks… ERA killed in Senate" *Atlanta Constitution,* February 18, 1975.

"Liberationist Gloria Steinem Applauded by Women," *Atlanta Journal,*. May 2, 1972

"Minority women- 'They have to deal with racism and sexism,'" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* August 7, 1978

"Ordinary, Not Radical, Type: Plain Jane Next Door May be Activist" *Atlanta Journal*, May 27, 1973

"Parallels Seen for Lib, Negroes," *Atlanta Journal* June 25, 1972

Pettys, Dick, "Carter Denies Women Panel Curb," *Atlanta Journal*, May 11, 1972, 6-A

"'Push for Rights', Women Urged" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, May 7, 1977

"Three Senators Dodge Miller Effort for ERA" *Atlanta Journal*, January 21, 1975.

"Women Debate the Issue of the ERA" *Atlanta Constitution*, April 30, 1976

"Women Feel Tricked; Rights Bill not Dead" *Atlanta Journal* Feb 25, 1973

"Women Interrupt Meeting" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* April 5, 1977

"Women Oppressed, Exploited in Man's World" *Atlanta Constitution*, February 5, 1970.

"Women's Lib Touches Nerves" *Atlanta Journal*, October 6, 1970.

"Women's Movement a "White Luxury" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, April 7, 1978, 2-C

"Women's Rights measure Pits 60 for 5 hour debate" *Atlanta Journal* Feb 8, 1973

"'Women's Year' Plans off to a Shaky Start" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, March 3, 1977

Wright, Steve, "'Racism Hurts ERA Movement,' says Douglass" *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Intown Extra, October 4, 1979

Archival Material

1977 National Women's Conference Plan of Action Box 4 Folder 9 unprocessed Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Application for Mother of the Year Award, Emory University, Box 1 Folder 3, Kathryn Dunaway Collection Unprocessed, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Board Meeting Minutes 1971-1973, Minutes for March 23, 1973, AC 75-443, NOW Atlanta Chapter, Box 1, Folder 2-01, Georgia Department of Archives and History (GDAH)

Board Meeting Minutes 1971-1973, Report, AC 75-443, NOW Atlanta Chapter, Box 2 Folder 4-02, GDAH

"Commission on the Status of Women," Box 9, Folder 22, Martha Gaines Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Coordinating Committee List of Members, Box 13 Folder 7 Martha Gaines Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

"A Dissenting view of the Georgia Women's Meeting for the observance of IWY", Kathryn Dunaway collection unprocessed, Box 3, Folder 16, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Dunaway, Kathryn, "A More Perfect Union", Kathryn Dunaway collection unprocessed, Box 4, Folder 9, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

"ERA GA. Inc. Board of directors" undated, Jeff Jones Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collections Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Freeman, Frankie Muse *"Equal Right Amendment: What's in it for Black Women?"* 1973, Mamie K. Taylor RG 48-01-001, Box 4, Folder 2, Location 2453-07- GDAH

Greg Fullerton to Jim Parham, Deputy Commission of the Department of Human Resource (DHR), 27 June 1972, folder "Commission on the Status of Women, Box 44, record groups 80-1-6 "Department of Human Resources Commissioner's Subject files, " GDAH

Internal Correspondence with National and other Chapters, 1971-1974, Proposal to address Racism within NOW, NOW, Box 3, Folder 7-23, GDAH

IWY Press release: "STOP ERA suit against IWY Commission thrown out", Feb 24, 1977, Gaines Collection Box 13, Folder 2 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Cahill to Busbee, May 13, 1975, Cahill Papers, Box 3 Folder 41 Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Letter from Cahill to Commissioners, April 2, 1975, Cahill Papers, Box 3 Folder 41 Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Letter from Cahill to Human Resources July 11, 1975, Special Assistant to the Governor for Social Program Matters Subject Files- Box 10 Folder CSW RG 80-1-30 Location 4281-36 GDAH

Letter from Dorothy Bolden to Kathleen Crouch April 20, 1977, Box 37 Unfoldered Eliza Paschall Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Dorothy Gibson to Governor Jimmy Carter, 26 July 1973, "Commission of the Status of Women" folder, box 44, Record Group 80-1-6, GDAH

Letter from Dorothy Tracy to Governor Busbee, September 23, 1975, Governor's Subject Files (on the CSW) Box 2 Folder Commission on the Status of Women, RG 1-1-5 Location 1961-05 GDAH

Letter from Dunaway, 1/22/64 Box 1, Folder 25 Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection Unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Dunaway to EREG Committee, Appropriations Committee and All Senators", March 17, 1975, Box 3 Folder 2 Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Dunaway to Legislators, "H.B. 884 (Committee Substitute) on Commission of the Status of Women" n/d, Box 3 Folder 2 Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Dunaway undated, Box 1, Folder 4, Kathryn Dunaway Collection Unprocessed, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Eliza Paschall to Jane Sept 17, 1973 NOW Atlanta Chapter Papers Box 2 Folder 4-04 RG 750443 Location 2455-11 GDAH

Letter from Eliza Paschall to Jeanne Cahill, 9 June 1975, "Commission on the Status of Women" folder, Box 44 Record Group 80-1-6, GDAH

Letter from Eliza Paschall to Kathryn Dunnaway, June 6, 1975, Box 28, Folder Commission January- October 1975, Paschall Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Eliza Paschall to President Jimmy Carter et al, June 27, 1977, unprocessed Kathryn Dunaway collection, Box 4, Folder 8, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Ford Foundation undated, Box 1,Folder 3, Kathryn Dunaway Collection Unprocessed, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Gibson-Ferry to Busbee, May 7, 1975, Gibson- Ferry Collection, Box 1, Folder Gibson-Ferry Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Letter from Governor Busbee to Sue Zimmer, October 17, 1975, Governor's Subject Files (on the CSW) Box 2 Folder Commission on the Status of Women RG 1-1-5 Location 1961-05 GDAH

Letter from Joyce Durand (Atlanta NOW Secretary) to Peg Nugent (Atlanta NOW President) NOW Atlanta Chapter GDAH Nov. 20, 1973. NOW Atlanta Chapter, AC# 75-443 Box 2 Folder 4-04, Loc. # 2455-11 GDAH

Letter from Joyce Parker October 7, 1975, Governor's Subject Files (on the CSW) Box 2 Folder Commission on the Status of Women RG 1-1-5 Location 1961-05 GDAH

Letter from Kathryn Dunaway to Gov. George Busbee, September 27, 1975 Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed Box 1, Folder 28 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Kathryn Dunaway to Mr. Weltner and Senators Humphrey and Mansfield 22 March 1964 Box 1, Folder, Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Kathryn Dunaway to Senator Dirksen, 22 February 1967, folder 25 box 1 collection no. 618: Kathryn Dunaway Collection Unprocessed, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Paschall to Abzug, October 3, 1977 Eliza Paschall Collection, Box 37, unfoldered, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter from Personnel Services to Eliza Paschall, April 24, 1975 Department of HR Records of Commissioners office- Department of HR Subject Files, RG 80-1-6 Location 4410-13 GDAH

Letter from Sandra Mitsel to Governor Busbee, October 6, 1975, Governor's Subject Files (on the CSW) Box 2 Folder Commission on the Status of Women RG 1-1-5 Location 1961-05 GDAH

Letter from Tom Purdue to Dorris Holmes, August 22, 1978 Jeff Jones Collection, Box 1 Folder 6, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Letter to Jesse Helms et al, September 14, 1977, unprocessed Kathryn Dunaway collection Box 4, Folder 9, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter to Mr. And Mrs. King April 25, 1937 Box 29, Eliza Paschall Papers 1932-1988 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Letter to Senator Mansfield 3/2/64, Box 1Folder 25, Kathryn Dunaway Collection Unprocessed, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

List, Folder “Commission on the Status of Women,” box 44, record group 80-1-6, GDAH

Minutes Coordinating Committee December 1, 1976 Box 13 Folder 8 Martha Gaines Collection Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Minutes for August 16, 1972, AC 75-443, NOW Atlanta Chapter, Box 1, Folder 2-01, Loc. # 2455-11 GDAH

Minutes of the First Meeting of the Georgia Coordinating Committee, December 1, 1976, Gaines Collection, Box 13, Folder 8, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

The Nominating Committee Slate Information Sheet, Box 36 Folder IWY Georgia Committee #2, Eliza Paschall Collection Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

“Open Letter” from The Feminist Committee, November 1975, Gaines Collection Box 9 Folder Recommendation. November 1975, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Pamphlet “How to Organize the Unorganized Majority” Box 4 Folder 16 Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Paschall, Eliza, “Alice in Abzugland”, Eliza Paschall Collection, Box 35 Folder IWY General #1 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Paschall, Eliza "A Feminist Protest against Backwater Feminism" Collection Box 35 Folder IWY General #1, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Paschall, Eliza K. *It Must Have Rained* autobiography (Atlanta, Ga.: Center for Research in Social Change, Emory University, 1975).

Paschall, Eliza "More Ups Than Downs" Unpublished Autobiography, Box 76, Folder Writings "More Ups than Downs", Eliza Paschall Papers 1932-1988 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

Press release from the National IWY, December 1976, unprocessed Kathryn Dunaway Collection Box 5 Folder 9 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Press release from the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year Box 5 Folder 9, unprocessed Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Report of Activities for June, June 1975 Governor's Subject Files (on the CSW) Box 2 Folder Commission on the Status of Women RG 1-1-5 Location 1961-05 GDAH

Report of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, April 1965, Box 1 of 3 unprocessed papers of Maime K. Taylor, GDAH.

Report of the NOW National Conference March 20-22, 1970, NOW Atlanta Chapter, AC# 75-443 Box 2 Folder 4-04, Loc. # 2455-11 GDAH

Report on Subject of Ga. Women's Meeting and National Women's Conference, June 27, 1977 Kathryn Dunaway Collection unprocessed, Box 4 Folder 8 Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

"Speech by Kathryn Dunaway before the Georgia Association of Broadcasters, Inc. April 20, 1978" Jeff Jones Collection, Box 1 Folder 6, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Stewart, Sarah Jane "Report of the NOW National Conference" March 20-22, 1970, NOW Atlanta Chapter, AC# 75-443 Box 2 Folder 4-04, Loc. # 2455-11 Georgia Department of Archives and History GDAH

"Struggle for Ratification of the ERA," Report Commission Status of Women, RG 80-17-47 Box 316 Folder 1, GDAH

Taylor, Mamie K. "Progress Report: Governor's Commission on the Status of Women in Georgia," 18 March 1966, Box 1 of 3, unprocessed papers of Maime K. Taylor Georgia, GDAH.

"Transcription of Tapes Made During the ERA Debate on Saturday, May 7, 1977." Box 3, Folder 13, unprocessed Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Oral Interviews

Bond, Julian, telephone interview by author, tape recording, September 21, 2003.

Butler, Sarah, interview, October 23, 2004, unprocessed, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Cahill, Jeanne, interview, August 25, 1998, 19 Box 1 Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Cormack, Judith Lightfoot, interview, August 8, 1998 and August 18,1998 Box 1 Judith Lightfoot Cormack, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Davis, Jean, interview January 22, 2005, unprocessed, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Fowlkes, Diane interview, March 10.1998, Box 1, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Hlass, Cynthia, interview, February 18, 1999, Box 2 Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Jordan, Beverly interview, February 26, 1997, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Kurtz, Linda Hallenborg, interview 4/03/98 Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Long, Mary, interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., July 18, 2003.

Millen, Sue Ann, interview, July 7, 1999, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Parsons, Sara, interview May 5, 1999, Box 2, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Shulman (now Sutton), Sherri, interviewed November 8, 1998 and March 7, 1999, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Sikes, Janice White, interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., July 2, 2003.

Simpson, Polly, interview, September 22, 1997, Box 3, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Steinberg, Cathey, interview by author, tape recording, Atlanta, Ga., May 22, 2003.

Taylor, Mamie K., interviewed by Janet T. Paulk, August 1981, ERA Georgia, Inc. Records #662, Special Collections and Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University

Tibbets, Christine, interview June 4, 2004, Oral Histories Collection, Georgia Women's Collections, Special Collection Department, Pullen Library, Georgia State University

Website

http://www.ncnw.org/index.htm