



From Megaphones to Microphones: Speeches of American Women, 1920-1960

Sandra J. Sarkela, Susan Ross, Margaret Lowe

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Until recently, scholars assumed that women stopped speaking after they won the vote in 1920 and did not reenter political life until the second wave of feminism began in the 1960s. Nothing could be further from the truth. While national attention did dissipate after 1920, women did not retreat from political and civic life. Rather, after winning the vote, women's public activism shifted from a single-issue agenda to the myriad social problems and public issues that faced the nation. As such, women began to take their place in the public square as political actors in their own rights rather than strictly campaigning for a women's issue.

This anthology documents women's activism during this period by introducing heretofore unpublished public speeches that address a wide array of debated topics including child labor, international relations, nuclear disarmament, consumerism, feminism and anti-feminism, social welfare, family life, war, and the environment. Some speeches were delivered in legislative forums, others at schools, churches, business meetings, and media events; still others before national political organizations. To ensure diversity, the volume features speakers of different ages, races, classes, ethnicities, geographic regions, and political persuasions. The volume editors include short biographical introductions as well as historical context for each selection.

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