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Oregon's 1960s Woman

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Women have been the base of and the invisible force behind many of history's greatest events. The events in Oregon are no different but women have been the driving force for many years. While the women of Oregon did not drastically alter their views of American society the changes were drastic in Oregon. Women's involvement was not something which started in the 1960s but in early years and made stronger by mothers teaching their daughters to stand up for their beliefs. Women started asking what their roles would be in this new decade, often seen as a state which is either a backwater with little happening or the center for the hippie movement. Oregon women had a role to play in the 1960s which is often overlooked. In the 1960's young women started feeling the world was not going where it should and women started to take a stand to fight for what they believed was right; the counterculture, radicalism and the New Left started to gain a subtle, but firm foothold among women in Oregon, changing not only the views of these women, but also the way of life in Oregon.

Women of Oregon have changed history just by demanding that change happen. The changes were subtle because they happened not just in the 1960's but beginning with when Oregon became a state. The views which now are considered a part of everyday thought originated in the 1960s because some young women of that era had connection to the women who fought for the suffrage movement. While this is the most well-known part of radicalism and the counterculture in Oregon there were also other movements which came before and helped create an atmosphere of openness.

Oregon has always had groups which were not considered mainstream; these groups often were seen as people who were working to bring down Oregon's peaceful society. The people of Oregon often demanded social reform when they were unwilling to put up with something they felt was wrong and holding them back from living the life they wanted. Oregon

from the beginning had a small but committed group of women who in their times were considered radical. Women are the force behind many of the advancements in the country, which helped women and people without power. Women who participated led this women's movement understood the need for change.

History of change in Oregon

The concept of what is or is not radicalism has changed over time. When a person is considered radical by society, they are deviating from the norm and trying to bring about a change they see as a positive, although the rest of the population may not see the change as a good one. Radicals of the 1960 were not a new phenomenon. Women started fighting for rights during the American Revolution and Suffrage Movements spanned the two world wars. In such times, women had to step outside of their roles and this experience helped shape the radical women of 1960s.

Women in the mid 1800's also struggle to find accepted roles for women in Oregon. Women in the West could not hold on to the middle class ideal of women who focused only on housekeeping and taking care of the family. They had to help the family on the land, working outside the idealized roles of domesticity. They did what they had to do to survive. Historian and author Laura E. Woodworth writes about, "when expanding the national home to include new territories, it would be the women's role to domesticate them."¹ Not only were women expected create a household in which they could raise a family, they also needed to help the family survive. Laura E. Woodworth writes about Narcissa Prentiss Whitman.² Narcissa was "raised to believe women had specific civilizing roles to play in American democracy, Narcissa Prentiss chose to

¹ Laura E. Woodworth-Ney, *Women In The American West*, ed. Scott C. Zeman (Santa Barbara: ABC CLIO, 2008),Page 108

² Laura E. Woodworth-Ney, *Women In The American West*, ed. Scott C. Zeman (Santa Barbara: ABC CLIO, 2008),Page 118

embark on a life of missionary work among the “savages” of the Far West.”³ Narcissa only married because the only way to travel west as a woman during the mid 1800’s was with ones father or husband. She wanted to bring change to the west, but since she was either unwilling to work or to understand the people around her change was slow. Women while raised to believe farming was the job of the husband in the west these jobs need to be tended by everyone in the family.

This also happened in World War Two when women went to the factories. If the 1960’s were radical because women were working outside of the norms, this was no different than previous years, when women stepped outside otherwise expected roles to fill certain needs otherwise considered beyond their sphere. Karen Beck Skold, during World War II was a “young mother in Portland Oregon, said that her welding job allowed her to capitalize on the interests she had developed in her father’s blacksmith shop as a child,”⁴ Women took advantage of what was happening during World War II to expand their opportunities to secure what they wanted out of life.

The power of the strong, young woman of the 1960s came from her newfound independence. Alice Echols observes that the young “white female activists began to question culturally received notions of femininity”⁵ after seeing young and independent black women fighting for what they believed in during the 1950s. Women wanted to be able to be both independent and hold on to the traits which they saw as feminine, but not stick to the roles given to them by their mothers. The world of the 1940s and the 1950s was changing no longer did

³ Laura E. Woodworth-Ney, *Women In The American West*, ed. Scott C. Zeman (Santa Barbara: ABC CLIO, 2008),Page 118

⁴ Laura E. Woodworth-Ney, *Women In The American West*, ed. Scott C. Zeman (Santa Barbara: ABC CLIO, 2008),Page 265

⁵ Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), Page 27

women need to break the traditional roles of femininity merely to help their families survive. Instead, they broke out of those roles to do what they felt was right.

Radical movements in Portland, Oregon varied in goals and methods, over the last 150 years, but overall, they generally pressed for a better life, more money from work, and more freedom. Change, was the goal for all the different radical groups. Women like Sister Miriam Theresa also know as Caroline Gleason⁶ was willing to stand up and say when something was wrong even if no one else did. Munk writes “although not an ideological radical Gleason worked in Portland factories to gather data on the exploitation of women workers,”⁷ because of women lone Caroline Gleason Oregon women got a minimum wage in 1912. They were willing to take any means they could think of to bring this change without completely breaking the society in which they lived.

Since Portland is and has been a city at the crossroads of many other cities, this history of a radical past is not something, which came in the 1960s. While not as large as other cities and the different radical movements there, there was always a presence of a counterculture in Portland history. Oregon is a part of the nation not left behind by the different movements. The Marxists of the late nineteenth century wanted better living and wages. By the early twentieth century, the socialists had grab enough power, the leaders of Portland made a ‘red squad’ who made sure no one was out in public talking about radical ideas. Portland elites feared the radicals so much they sometimes deported them from the city.⁸ The 1930s were a decade of the union activist and communist organizations. One of the largest strikes of the decade was the West

⁶ Michael Munk, *The Portland Red Guide Sites & Stories of Our Radical Past* (Portland: Ooligan Press, 2007),Page 61

⁷ Michael Munk, *The Portland Red Guide Sites & Stories of Our Radical Past* (Portland: Ooligan Press, 2007),Page 61

⁸ Michael Munk, *The Portland Red Guide Sites & Stories of Our Radical Past* (Portland: Ooligan Press, 2007),

Coast Maritime strike of 1934. John C. McWilliams writes about the 1930s, “the Old Left was a coalition of socialists and communists whose activities were sharply muted after World War II by blacklists and witch hunts in the era of McCarthyism.”⁹ They were fighting for the underdog in society for the city of Portland to treat all of the citizens as equals. In the following two decades while events, many liberal and other radical groups were kept quite. Not until the 1960s did voices begin to speak at a larger volume again, with people demanding equals rights, more freedom, and pulling away from mainstream society.

Discussion of Oregon’s varied past seldom considers women’s role and their involvement or what they felt about the cause for which they worked for. In the 1960’s however, historians started writing about women, reexamining past events in search for more meaning. Many historians write only women of the 1960’s were struggle with their roles in life, they were trying to break the mold.

The New Left

By the time of, the 1960’s many people who were a part of the Old Left felt the left was no longer representing the values they held as important. People did not feel the Old Left, was the best for helping make the United States in to a place where they wanted to live. Echols observe “Feminists or radical feminists, who opposed the subordination of women’s liberation to the left and for whom male supremacy was not a mere epiphenomenon capitalism, were an embattled minority.”¹⁰ Women wanted to be treated as equal and dissented the Old Left for the New Left.

⁹ John C McWilliams, *The 1960's Cultural Revolution* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), page 28

¹⁰ Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), page 3

Historian Sarah Evans describes the New Left; as it relates to other points of view, focusing on why it changes in the 1960's. Evans argues that, "although educators defensively proclaimed that they were educating women to be better wives and mothers, they nonetheless offered women essentially the same training as that which prepared men for future careers in professions and business."¹¹ Since the women were becoming more educated they were teaching their own daughters about becoming more independent. The New Left was a cornerstone in many of the movements of the 1960s. Understanding the New Left as a political movement helps, show how it affected women of the 1960s. These ideas were important to many women in the counter culture. While the education was centered on making the women better wives and mothers, these young women were still being exposed to new ideas and beliefs.

The New Left is often referred to as a part of the counterculture. This happens because writers often compartmentalize ideas which they do not understand. In the 1960s, the ever-changing political movements complicated efforts to understand the differences for people who were not involved with groups such as the New Left and the Students for a Democratic Society.

Students for a Democratic Society were a political group that led many campuses the protests that were iconic to the decade. The Students for a Democratic Society were not a large part of any particular campus community. A Reed student notes that "for maximum impact and visibility, it is necessary to have one day programmed for maximum participation of all against war;"¹² of the colleges considered for this study, the Oregon campus with the most activists in Students for a Democratic Society would be Reed College in Portland. This is not a surprising

¹¹ Sara Evans, *Personal Politics The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & The New Left* (New York: Cintage Books A Division of Random House, 1980), page 7

¹² "NBAWADU Strikes," *The Quest* (Portland), April 26, 1968, Reed College edition.

because Portland is a large city and draws more students from around the nation. Since Reed College was in Portland they were able to work with other groups to formulate ideas and work together on protest.

Students for a Democratic Society were a driving force behind the New Left but by the mid 1960s many of its members were “dissatisfied with the group’s lack of ideological coherence and organizational cohesion, and the absence of working democracy.”¹³ According to Echols has this belief because there were too many goals and not enough action. Students for a Democratic Society did not last long in Oregon. After the late 1960’s, they faded from view, along with belief that they were a radical group. Women, like Selah Chamberlain¹⁴ from Reed, started joining groups that supported the New Left, such as Students for a Democratic Society, because they felt they would gain more freedom under a more radical and open minded group then from organizations which had been around for a long time. The change was slow but change was happening. Selah Chamberlain of Reed Collage said in 1967, “now it’s time to do something,”¹⁵ during a march for peace and in support of ending the war in Vietnam. She shows the optimism many young women felt when they were a part of the movement and were feeling that they made a difference.

Often the campus protests in Oregon were small. After one such protest at Reed College in 1967, student activist Roger Lipp observed, “many of you 600, and a fair number of the 200 who did demonstrate, view politics as some sort of game, and not a very interesting one at

¹³ Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), Pg 34

¹⁴ Gary Stonum, "200 Reedies March for Peace," *The Quest* (Portland), October 20, 1967, Reed College edition.

¹⁵ Gary Stonum, "200 Reedies March for Peace," *The Quest* (Portland), October 20, 1967, Reed College edition.

that.”¹⁶ About two hundred people joined various protests at any given time. This is surprising, considering Oregon had long been a place of radical beliefs and standing up for what for what is right. During the 1960s, groups like the Students for a Democratic Society were not focusing on problems close to Oregon universities, but rather on problems in the south. Sara Evans observes, “in the north not only were the meetings and marches likely to be small, but they seemed to further diminished by the vast urban environment and distant, multiple targets.”¹⁷ Oregon is different though because for the most of Oregon is rural, the large cities also have universities in them, which changes how communities view social and political events. Sarah Evans believes because there were too many areas to be covered, many movements were ineffective. Oregon was relatively isolated from larger events happening in the country during the 1960’s. At first the New Left and Students for a Democratic Society, were ready and willing to help with problems being faced around the nation, as suggested in an article in the student newspaper at Reed in May 1960, “students at Reed and other colleges across the country expressed this sympathy by sending telegrams and money to support the Southern students and by picketing in local branches of the chain stores involved in the sit in.”¹⁸ Despite this demonstration of support among Reed students for civil rights in the South, support was not shown to continue. There was no way for the students and other members of the New Left or Students for a Democratic Society to see the impact they were making, and they apparently lost interest and mostly did not continue their involvement in that organization.

The “Women’s Question”

¹⁶ Roger Lipp, "Why Not more?" *The Quest* (Portland), October 20, 1967, Reed College edition.

¹⁷ Sara Evans, *Personal Politics The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & The New Left* (New York: Cintage Books A Division of Random House, 1980), Page 133

¹⁸ "Sit-in Demonstration Set for Tomorrow," *The Quest* (Portland), May 16, 1960, Reed College edition.

Many of the individuals who write on women prior to, during, and after the 1960s look at the question of women but never ask, what is the “Women’s Question.” This idea of gender plays a role in how people act but it does not always change what they want out life. Women are wanting more than being the caregiver to the children, husband, and house. This did not change even with the women’s movement; instead, how they lived is what changed. In the beginning with women’s suffrage, while some women went out alone, many still needed to fit the mold of society and they found men who believed in equal rights and helped the women fight for them. In the 1960’s, however, a women, women no longer needed a man in order to fit in with society. They were a generation with goals and they demand what they felt they needed, and they would to avoid the forms of government and confinements set up by the government.

Women who were involved in many of the groups wanted to be a part of a bigger movement but did the groups, which they joined, address the question of women in society or did they gloss over this idea? Shirley Chisholm brings up this idea, ““Do Women dare?’ we are not asking, ‘Are women capable of a break with tradition?’ so much as we are asking, and ‘Are women capable of bearing with the sanctions that will be placed upon them?’”¹⁹ Were women being treated as equals while they were they doing protest work or, when the meetings started or in the home, were they still expected to fill the role of a woman and cook the food and clean up? “What roles, should women assume?” was a question that does not appear to have been asked very often, although this is an important idea to understand. Women were key players in all of the 1960’s movements.

The women's question also brought up the idea of what is feminism: a woman's right and how women might go about accepting or securing these rights. The two are often thought to go

¹⁹Shirley Chisholm, "Women must rebel," in *Voices of the New Feminism*, ed. Mary Lou Thompson (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), Page 208

together but they do not. Many women who started asking “what are the women’s roles” and “how do we fit in with the larger society” often were not members in any radical or feminist group. They were asking the questions but not always out loud, Edwards’s observes, “according to a woman staff writer, the women ‘clung to their acculturated role of being meek and quiet, not daring to initiate a dialogue.’”²⁰ This was a view from a young woman who went to Willamette. Women were asking the question about women’s role, but also appear to be afraid to ask the questions in any large setting.

The women’s question did not come out of the idea of what is feminism, but rather came about because women started to question what is feminism and where do they belong in a society. According to Sara Evans, “Feminism was nurtured in the contradiction that the intensification of sexual oppression occurred in the same places where women found new strength, new potential, and new self-confidence, where they learned to respect the rebellion of strong women.”²¹ Women turned to the New Left and to the new idea of feminism; because they believed it would provide liberation. While they were promised freedoms and new roles they often found themselves trapped in the same roles that they had before. Evans observes that while women were a part of Feminist groups and the New Left, and they were asking what their role is, many still filled the same roles as before the liberation movement. Young women in the 1960’s were more involved in the world and in college life they were looking for a future life not just a future husband. Because the 1960’s was a time of change, young women sought more ways to show they were independent and willing to fight for what they believed was right.

²⁰ G. Thomas Edwards, *Student Activism at Pomona, Willamette, and Whitman, 1965-1971* (n.p.: Whitman College and Northwest Archives, 2008), page

²¹ Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & The New Left* (New York: Vintage Books A Division of Random House, 1980), page 154

Only by working together could change happen. Articulating a rallying cry of “Solidarity Forever,”²² Sharon Myers a Student at Reed College, urges students and the community to work together to achieve change. Myers wrote that what was pulling the people apart was not the large ideas of the political and national ideas but the smaller problems which divide groups. Myers said, “I would like to request that we forget minor differences we may have among ourselves and act in a unified Manner against a prohibitive law which jeopardizes the freedom of all of us.”²³ Myers wanted the community and the students to work together to help create a better city in Portland. She wanted the different universities and colleges to be united for a cause they supported. Though Myers did not write what she thought the community needed to fight against in 1964, the problems to which she referred may have been more known to the people and often spoken about at that time. Sharon Myers must have felt the need to address the community of not just her university but also beyond that campus. In doing so, she was perhaps unknowing; changing what roles women could take in a political movement. Women no longer assumed just domestic roles in their felt need for change, and they increasingly asked, asking “where do we as women belong in the society?”

Explaining how young women saw themselves, Helen Gurley Brown said “she was so full of tricks and surprise and charm; no guy would notice that she wasn’t rich or pretty.”²⁴ Brown wrote many articles for *Cosmopolitan* on how to be perky and how to be an independent young woman. These girls were a whirlwind force blowing apart get the uptight society of their middle class parents. They were always happy no matter what came their way. Young women of

²² Sharon Myers, "Solidarity Forever," *The Quest* (Portland), April 6, 1964, Reed College edition.

²³ Sharon Myers, "Solidarity Forever," *The Quest* (Portland), April 6, 1964, Reed College edition.

²⁴ Jane Stern and Michael Stern, *Sixties People* (New York: Knopf, 1990), Pg 21

the time did not want to give up the ease and comfort; which they had grown to love. The perky girls read *Cosmopolitan*. This magazine, up until the 1960s, was geared toward women with families, and how to run a household. The makeover of the magazine *Cosmopolitan* in the 1960s shifted the focus to show women how to decorate their little apartment with beanbag chairs or covering an single room with pillows or even blow up furniture. The magazine also wrote on makeup and fake eyelashes and many other ways for young women to stay happy and upbeat.

Among those who were asking where women belong there was a division and common dislike for the new *Cosmopolitan*. The magazine *Cosmopolitan* was shifting away from a magazine geared toward wives and mothers to women who wanted not just freedom in life but also sexual freedom. When women did not like *Cosmopolitan*, according to Jennifer Benjamin, it “wasn't just prudes and conservatives who took issue with the mag: A number of hard-core feminists were anti-Cosmo as well.”²⁵ Young women in Oregon were looking for a way to break free, but this was a new idea and was met with criticism. Women in Oregon were expected to follow strict guidelines and never step outside of what was considered an appropriate role. Edwards writes that in the school year of 1960-1961 at Willamette “provided a single page of rules for men,”²⁶ women though, “had to follow six pages of rules.”²⁷ *Cosmopolitan* were allowing young women to break free and be who they wanted without having to change who they were.

In the 1960's having a magazine tell young women how to keep make-up on overnight or how to get the perfect man or how to get a tan was all very new. In the years before the sixties

²⁵ Jennifer Benjamin, "How Cosmo Changed the World," *Cosmopolitan*, accessed May 20, 2011, last modified 2011, http://www.cosmopolitan.com/about/about-us_how-cosmo-changed-the-world.

²⁶ G. Thomas Edwards, *Student Activism as Pomona, Willamette, and Whitman, 1965-1971* (n.p.: Whitman College and Northwest Archives, 2008), page

²⁷ G. Thomas Edwards, *Student Activism as Pomona, Willamette, and Whitman, 1965-1971* (n.p.: Whitman College and Northwest Archives, 2008), page

magazines were meant to help married women improve their families. Now with women wanting more out of life these magazines offered advice to young single women.

The question of women was changing how women acted. They were becoming more independent, living on their own, and not in college dorms or with their parents. Women of the 1960s started becoming strong and independent, like their mothers or grandmothers during World War Two. Many people felt the young woman who was breaking away from society was only being misled by a devious counterculture. While many women embraced this new lifestyle some men feared these new women: critics like Ted Mahar observed, “the trouble with women is that they are confused.”²⁸ Confused by what is never written, true women of the 1960’s were experimenting with who they were and what they wanted out of life, but to say they were confused is dismissive and misleading and a difficult idea to prove, particularly since no one responded to Mahar’s claim with letters to the editor or in other articles. Men like Ted Mahar, who saw women as being confused and without understanding indirectly forced the women’s question. Women at the University of Oregon may have been confused about what they wanted to do with their lives, but they were definitely not confused on how they were going to get there. They were going to work hard and believe in the idea of women’s rights, and peace in Vietnam.

Women’s Involvement

Women who become involved in radical groups in Oregon were still working within women’s roles even when they joined groups, supposedly about liberation. Writer Sarah Evens brings up the point that many groups in the north had a hard time keeping their members involved in the fight for civil rights. This is because they could not see the impact or the progress being made. Oregon has little evidence of a large movement culture in the 1960s and part of this

²⁸ Ted Mahar, "Guest writer Believes 'Women Are Confused,'" *Oregon Daily Emerald* (Eugene), May 29, 1963, University of Oregon edition.

could be because women who wanted to be involved started to be active, but became disillusioned because they did not see any major change in life around them.

Many young women involved in the 1960s radical movements were a part of a generation raised by parents who were well educated; the mothers were passing on the ideas of breaking out of the restrictive mold society had set for them. Betty Friedan author of *The Feminine Mystique* was read by many young women in the 1960s.²⁹ Friedan was able to bring women's involvement into the question about women. She sparked a debate which was being faced by women everywhere.

Women were becoming more involved at college because they were also starting to go to college for the future and not just to find a husband. All across Oregon, women were starting to join Students for a Democratic Society, women's groups on their campus and the Union of Feminists. Women getting involved in groups were not just trying to change their own lives but the lives of others. Though many new they need to be in large cities to truly make a change. Going to school in at the smaller universities in Oregon meant there would be more conservative views. Thomas Edwards quotes a student from Willamette University, "you cannot trust anyone over thirty,"³⁰ the student also stated and urge "classmates must travel to Eugene or Portland for 'action'"³¹ The western United States was a hot bed for protests in the postwar era. Families moving west brought more open minds with notions of equality and women's rights with them, as well as the idea of protesting for these rights.

Alice Echols focuses not on the liberation of women, but how women's groups were different from other radical groups. She describes the problems women faced in the new feminist

²⁹ G. Thomas Edwards, *Student Activism as Pomona, Willamette, and Whitman, 1965-1971* (n.p.: Whitman College and Northwest Archives, 2008), page 39

³⁰ G. Thomas Edwards, *Student Activism as Pomona, Willamette, and Whitman, 1965-1971* (n.p.: Whitman College and Northwest Archives, 2008), page 31

³¹ G. Thomas Edwards, *Student Activism as Pomona, Willamette, and Whitman, 1965-1971* (n.p.: Whitman College and Northwest Archives, 2008), page 31

groups or other radical groups. If they wanted to be liberated women, than they still had to live up to certain standards set by men from their own groups. This brings up how women dealt with problems with each other and with the problems still given to them by society.

Women joined social groups and participated in protests. Reed college students began protesting in 1964. Jean Shepherd a student at Reed College wrote "I have never met a protester who did not believe himself intellectually superior."³² When people protest, they try to bring awareness to an issue that, they find important. Jean was addressing an issue she found important that fact that very few people who joined a protest new the details of the cause they were fighting for. Even when they knew the details they believed themselves to know everything and did not want to hear other people's point of view.³³ This is why many of the protest appeared to not have a set goal or to achieve the goals set out by the group leaders.

One major problem for women was that when they joined a movement or group, its actions often appeared haphazard to them. They understood their own goals but often could not articulate those goals to the public. Echols brings up the point the Students for a Democratic Society made that "women were to be organized, but once again to fight someone else's battle."³⁴ While there is obviously some degree of women's involvement in various movements and protest groups, evidences of their success is harder to establish.

Many women who were involved in groups which protested often felt there was little gained by the act of civil disobedience. They struggled with the question of what to do and how to act when they came under pressure from the police whether they should stay peaceful or

³² Jean Shepherd, "The Protest Bit," *The Quest* (Portland), October 5, 1964, Reed College edition.

³³ Jean Shepherd, "The Protest Bit," *The Quest* (Portland), October 5, 1964, Reed College edition.

³⁴ Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), Pg 122

respond with violence. During the 1960's young people were not the only ones involved with protests. Jon Baldry who wrote for the Reed College Quest wrote in October 1967, "These middle-age women had clearly defined a positive barrier between them and 'us'"³⁵ Baldry was



Reedies, protesting Viet Nam war, begin 48-hour vigil-fast on steps of Pioneer Post Office. —Photo by Mike Macht

Figure 1 Jon Baldry, "The Strategy for Peace," *The Quest* (Portland), October 20, 1967, Reed College edition.

writing about a protest where these women walked with the students to show support of the cause(see figure 1). In Portland Oregon women from the colleges joined forces with other women who were demanding change in the wider world. Women from *Methodist Fellowship for Social Action*³⁶ often joined the student protest. The women of Portland felt the young women and men had a right to protest against the war and demand social change.

These women were not college age either but included older women who understood the need for change and felt a connection to the young women who were protesting. The Methodist group in Portland felt the need to become one community working towards goals together and not just the Portland community and the college community. Women's involvement in different groups and the counterculture was not solely limited to the women who were college aged. For the most part, however, the largest number of protestors was of college aged women. The view of the 1960s is often one of young people out on the streets demanding change. This is not solely true in Oregon. The *Methodist Fellowship for Social Action* was mentioned in two different years in the Reed College Quest in March 8, 1965

³⁵ Jon Baldry, "The Strategy for Peace," *The Quest* (Portland), October 20, 1967, Reed College edition.

³⁶ Jon Baldry, "The Strategy for Peace," *The Quest* (Portland), October 20, 1967, Reed College edition.

with a *End-War Group*³⁷ and again October 20, 1967 Reed Quest.³⁸ Oregon had both young and older women involved in both social and political change.

Often getting people, not just women, to stay involved in a movement or idea was very difficult if they could not see the effects of the actions they were taking. Sarah Evans brings up this idea in her writing but so does Sandy Clark in September 1963 while writing for the Reed college paper, *The Quest*. "It is significant that 75% of the number at the first meeting demonstrated their willingness to participate in some form of meaningful action by attending these committee meetings; that a sizeable number of Reed students (sic) attended a Freedom Rally...that the following night about 50 took part,"³⁹ This young woman is very concerned by the fact that, her fellow students do not stay involved in a movement. While the protest was deemed successful by group leaders, Sandy Clark says the protest was not as successful because students did not stay involved for the long haul.

Women in Oregon may not have always had some great cause. Sometimes they were expressing concerns they saw in the world around them. In the Reed Quest in April 1968 "Miss Kelly, attributed some of the difficulties to specifically current problems, especially the failure of the changes in the Wilson Fellowship program, and the increase in graduate school applications due to a now shattered hope of easy draft deferment."⁴⁰ In this article from the Reed Quest the writer brings up the idea of student concerns about whether or not they will be able to get into graduate school. Women were facing a problem of being able to continue their own education

³⁷ Don McKinley, "Portland Students Form End-War Group," *The Quest* (Portland), March 8, 1965, Reed College edition.

³⁸ Jon Baldry, "The Strategy for Peace," *The Quest* (Portland), October 20, 1967, Reed College edition.

³⁹ Sandy Clark, "We Shall Be Moved," *The Quest* (Portland), September 23, 1963, Reed College edition.

⁴⁰ Gary Stonum, "Grads and Grade schools," *The Quest* (Portland), April 26, 1968, Reed College edition.

while helping their male peers stay out of the Vietnam War. One of the main points brought up is from a women's point of view. She is voicing concerns because she feels adversely affected because of the draft which affects men.

The Counterculture

The counterculture was a social movement. The movement was not a single group but many groups who were trying to improve their lives and the world by adopting a new lifestyle and new values. The movement differed from group to group; they could not agree on what changes need to be made to make society better or what was fine the way it was. The Counterculture was the large over group with many different groups from in inside which the outside main stream society considered to be on the fringe. Depending on their values, they would join different groups, which supported their views.

There were many different groups, which women joined. The hippies were about finding the earth again and becoming on with nature and the world around them. Hippies were becoming a part of many of America's larger campuses. The students were divided "Unlike hippies the Founders of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) were theoreticians: they were inspired by sociology not Poetry."⁴¹ Campuses in Oregon were no different than any of America's larger campuses though the types of groups which were involved in the counterculture in Oregon were vastly different. John C. McWilliams writes, "It lured young people out of a rigidly structured work world to a life emphasizing individuality."⁴² A student from Reed College brought up this idea, "college looks at itself as a hiatus from the real world of typewriters and bank

⁴¹ Adam Rome, "'Give earth a Chance': The Environmental Movement and the Sixties," *The Journal of American History* (September 2003): page #s, 544 accessed April 10, 2011.

⁴² John C McWilliams, *The 1960's Cultural Revolution* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), page 75

statements,”⁴³ students were no longer going to college just for the academic education, but also for the social aspect.

Many of the counterculture groups came from middle-class America. So while demanding change they often understood the need for working hard continuously. The youth of America no longer wanted to be considered a member of the 1950s proud to be the American small-town kid. Students felt the need to stand up their beliefs even if it meant going against the beliefs of their parents. The free loving peace hippies are a stereotype placed on the 1960's by people of later generations. To place a broad name for a sub-culture, which do not conform to the larger values of their society women of the 1960s and in Oregon were a part of what was main stream belief.

A majority of the people who considered themselves members of the main stream a society frowned upon the young people who were breaking away from the rules they were brought up with. This disregard for the norms of society concerned many of the university professors at some schools especially the University of Oregon. The professors at the University started publishing their own newspaper opposite the *Daily Emerald* called the *Ye almost Daily Rhinestone* (see figure 2). The newspaper use the idea of the owl⁴⁴, as an educated individual who fights to keep young people on the right path, comes and helps turn around students who do not *understand* they are breaking society norms. This is most notably



Figure 2: "Ye almost Daily Rhinestone," Newspaper, November 8, 1966, box 5, Student Publications: Underground, Knight Library, University of

⁴³ Peter Cohon, "Strictly Not for Kids," *The Quest* (Portland), October 20, 1967, Reed College edition.

⁴⁴ "Ye almost Daily Rhinestone," Newspaper, November 8, 1966, box 5, Student Publications: Underground, Knight Library, University of Oregon, Eugene

noticed in a single issue about young women demanding access to birth control.⁴⁵ What was conserving the older population was not just the shifting to more radical thinking but the shifting of moral values and norms as well.

The professors did not just publish one issue, but several spanning the year of 1966. Taking up many of the issues they believed were facing the campus during the mid 1960's and the problems which students were discussing.

Not all universities in Oregon felt the need to join the different counterculture movements. Oregon College of Education was a more conservative school along with Willamette University. While many young people in Oregon were embracing the new lifestyles there were still many students who were pushing the lifestyle away. Students on the campus of Oregon Collage of



Figure 3 Nancy Rainey, "Reflections On a Rainey Day," *The Lamron* (Monmouth), May 24, 1968, Oregon College of Education edition.

Education felt the counterculture was a disease and the must be a cure somewhere. This view is a reaction of how the students were raised and their views on life. In a November 1967 issues a student writes about the 'Epidemic' on the campus.⁴⁶ This idea of students being out of control is true but when looking at the events on Oregon Collage of Education campus this is hard to believe as the was little subversives on the campus. (See figure 3) Some of the women on

college campus did not like the change which was taking place and saw the change as breaking away from roles which they were meant to take part in. Not all the schools or women in Oregon agreed with events which were taking place, many felt that by protesting they disrespecting their nation and their parents. At the smaller universities the protests were often different and subtle.

⁴⁵ "Ye almost Daily Rhinestone," Newspaper, November 8, 1966, box 5, Student Publications: Underground, Knight Library, University of Oregon, Eugene

⁴⁶ November 1967 Judy Day *The Lamron*

Events at which took place at Oregon Collage of Education were different then the large universities in Oregon and vastly different then events happening around the country. The counterculture was a much smaller part of the larger culture movement taking place around the state. While in Portland and other large university would hold large and loud protest against the war in Vietnam students at Oregon collage of Education supported the group *Women Strike for Peace*.⁴⁷ This women's group was a part of a larger national movement which wanted change not merely for the sake of change, but for fear of what could happen to future generations if nuclear war happened. The size of the school influenced the different types of protests that would take place.

When writing or protesting about Vietnam even at the schools which were considered radical such as Reed College journalists still wrote about some groups in a negative light. "These are some of the grubby beatniks whith (sic) yellow teeth who took part in a 36-hour vigil last Tuesday and Wednesday to protest resumption of American bombing of North Vietnam."⁴⁸ In



Figure 4
Pacifist Pickets Protest
President's Policies. February 7,
1966 The Quest. Reed College,
Portland

the picture (see figure 4) the reader sees two young women and a man holding signs at night. The difference with these women was they called themselves pacifists and were not a part of a large movement, but a smaller one. Even with beliefs which were common and sharing common goals, students often disagreed about how they should go about achieving those goals.

Oregon

⁴⁷ Jo Underwood, "Women for Peace Meet," *The Lamron* (Monmouth), November 2, 1962, Oregon College of Education edition.

⁴⁸ Pacifist Pickets Protest President's Policies. February 7, 1966 The Quest. Reed College, Portland.

Campuses around Oregon were starting to feel the pull of the counterculture and radical groups. Students were no longer content with their parents' ideas of what life should be. The universities in Oregon were as different and as diverse as the people in the state. This means that women of the different universities went about asking for changes and being involved in movements in different ways, depending on location.

The movements at each university were varied. John McWilliams brings up an excellent point which can be related to Oregon. While there was many movements and protest they were not wide spread, "the level of student activism and certainly of student civil disobedience and violence in the 1960s was exaggerated."⁴⁹ Some of the movements had to do with social changes, while others had to do with fighting the government and what the government stood for and being forced into a war, they did not believe in. Student activism in Oregon was a quite movement compared to the national events making the news, but even when written and talked about in Oregon the events and people were never the majority.

Student activism was common all over the Northwest, as G. Thomas Edwards, a professor from Whitman College, observed in *Student Activism at Pomona, Willamette, and Whitman, 1965-1971*. Edwards compares the students who were protesting during the late 1960's at the three different universities. While there are three universities mentioned in the text, Edwards focused more on the type of movements and the type of people involved.⁵⁰ Since the focused was not on anyone event looking at who was involved

Edwards identifies categories of student demonstrations, ranging from sit-ins, to protests about the draft and protest about academic rules. In each of these cases, students were standing

⁴⁹ John C McWilliams, *The 1960's Cultural Revolution* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), page 41

⁵⁰ G. Thomas Edwards, *Student Activism as Pomona, Willamette, and Whitman, 1965-1971* (n.p.: Whitman College and Northwest Archives, 2008),

up for their beliefs. This also shows that not only those who went to school at large universities were involved in the counterculture. This also allows the view that not all small schools were for the political right but had students on all sides of the political field.

Protestors in the 1960's were able to spread information faster than earlier movements: A student at Reed wrote, "it is this that gives added significance to all the social movements which are taking place in this county today."⁵¹ With access to news reports from all around the world students in Oregon could know what was happening across the country or around the world when they turned on the news. They could then take a stand if they supported or were against what was happening.

Oregon had all of the makings for a large movement to happen. They had people who cared and wanted to make a change in the world and in the city in which they lived. While there were pockets of unrest however, Oregon was largely quiet during the unrest of the 1960s at least compared to the events unfolding around the nation and world. Women wanted change and they sought change during the 1960s.

While not all of the change was drastic compared to the rest of the United States, many people saw the change in Oregon as a drastic change at the time. Women in Oregon took the quieter approach to change by changing how they lived and then working on the people and then the community around them. Women were working together for a change they hoped would give them more freedoms. Since there were so many movements there was not always large support for anyone event in Oregon. The way of life in Oregon was never the same after the 1960s women had changed their own values and goals for their life and helped reshape Oregon. Women of Oregon's 1960s were both the same as larger movements taking place in the United

⁵¹ K M, "The New Decade-A Time of Challenge for Students," *The Quest* (Portland), April 11, 1960, Reed College edition.

States and also vastly different. Often Women are over looked in history, though this is partly way the movement in Oregon is hard to find. Because women in Oregon made a change and were out asking for change at the time there is proof of their involvement, though not nearly on the large scale as many think. Oregon is far from a backwater state which is unaware of what is happening in the rest of the country. Women just chose to take a stand without making a large battle out of every event.

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