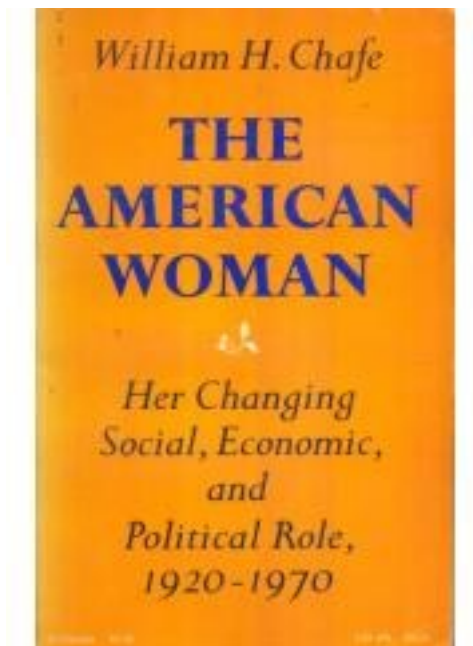


The american women:her changing sociaeconomicand political role1920-1970



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Just a little more than half a century ago, the women of America gained the vote. At the time, many women s rights advocates believed that enactment of theNineteenth Amendment signaled a triumphant turning point in the struggle for sexual equality. Suffragists

predicted that acquisition of the vote would not only give women new leverage in politics but would also help them achieve a greater measure of freedom and independence in the home and economy. "The whole aim of the woman's movement," Carrie Chapman Catt wrote, "has been to destroy the idea that obedience is necessary to women; to train women to such self-respect that they would not grant obedience; and to train men to such comprehension of equity that they would not exact it."TM For many women who had devoted their lives to the struggle for equal rights, victory in the suffrage fight represented a major stride toward those goals. With the benefit of hindsight, it seems clear that much of the suffragists' optimism was misplaced. The revival of feminism in recent years has demonstrated that many women remain profoundly disturbed by the nature of relationships between the sexes. In tones reminiscent of nineteenth-century feminists, Kate Millett and others have denounced America as a patriarchy based on male supremacy and have demanded the overthrow of those institutions which perpetuate female inferiority. By the standards of contemporary

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目录:

[The american women:her changing socioeconomic and political role1920-1970 下载链接1](#)

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