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STOP TAKING OUR PRIVILEGES!

THE ANTI-ERA MOVEMENT IN GEORGIA, 1978-1982

by

KRISTINA M. GRAVES

Under the Direction of Michelle Brattain

ABSTRACT

Graves discusses the important role that women played in the anti-ERA campaign in Georgia during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was a controversial and divisive piece of legislation that polarized both legislators and constituents throughout the United States. Graves uses the anti-ERA campaign in Georgia as a model for studying the women who opposed the ERA on a national level. She writes about the differences between the feminist movement and the conservative grassroots movement, the role that anti-ERA women played in the rise of the New Right, and the legacy of the ERA's failure in contemporary political context. Graves uses interviews and primary resource documents of the women involved in the campaign as well as a plethora of scholarly materials previously written about the ERA.

INDEX WORDS: Equal Rights Amendment, STOP ERA, Phyllis Schlafly, Kathryn Fink Dunaway, Lee Wysong, Georgia, Georgia politics, Georgia General Assembly, Southern politics, New Right, Conservatism, Grassroots activism, Women's movement, Feminist movement

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

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2006

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This thesis is written in loving memory of Thelma Eugene Kingry . . .

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
DNCGWMA	Donna Novak Coles Georgia Women's Movement Archive
ERA	Equal Rights Amendment
GWOHPC	Georgia Women's Oral History Project Collection
KFDC	Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection
NEA	National Education Association
NOW	National Organization for Women
STOP	Stop Taking Our Privileges

INTRODUCTION

In 1923, three years after women in the United States won the right to vote, Alice Paul, leader of the National Women's Party and the campaign for suffrage, authored the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). This amendment was designed to provide equality for women, a group that historically had been denied access to economic, political, and social equality on the basis of their sex. The amendment read:

1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.
2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.
3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.[1]

The ERA was first introduced to Congress in 1923. Sponsored by Senator Charles Curtis and Representative Daniel Anthony, nephew of suffragist Susan B. Anthony, the legislation failed to pass out of committee in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. From 1923 to 1970, Alice Paul and generations of feminists continually advocated for the passage of the ERA against fierce opposition from politicians, political and social organizations, and even women who would benefit from the passage of the amendment. For over fifty years, the ERA experienced only a modicum of success.

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[1] Donald G. Matthews and Jane Sherron De Hart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), vii.

In 1946, the legislation failed in the Senate, 38-35. In 1950, the Senate passed the ERA but added a rider to nullify any potential for equality to be enforced throughout the country. It was not until 1970 that decisive action to get the ERA ratified was taken and the subsequent movement for ratification became a major force in the United States.

In the 1920s, after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party began the campaign to ratify the ERA. Suffragists hoped that the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment would lead to the success of the ERA, but they were mistaken, and the bill remained in committee for over fifty years. After World War II, women who had worked in the factories during the war were sent home to resume their positions as wives and mothers. The 1950s was a time of public conformity, but that would change as the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War brought the need for social change to the forefront of Americans' attention. In 1963, the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan helped to launch the modern women's movement. Friedan's assertion that women were unhappy and wanted more in their lives than marriage and motherhood incited women to act on their own behalf. Across the country, women were already involved in protests against the Vietnam War and the segregation laws of the South. Their experiences with patriarchal domination in these movements led them to realize that they needed a movement of their own. Women took up many causes in the feminist movement, but the most significant one was the passage of the ERA.

Founded by Betty Friedan in 1967, the National Organization for Women (NOW) campaigned in support of the ratification of the ERA. The fifty-year-old legislation would become one of the major issues of the budding feminist movement. In June 1970, after many months of tireless advocacy and a filed discharge petition by Representative Martha Griffiths

of Michigan, the ERA left the House Judiciary Committee and went to the floor for a vote. In 1971, the ERA was passed, without amendment, by the House, 354 to 24. One year later, on March 22, 1972, the ERA was approved by the Senate, 84 to 8, and Senator Sam Ervin and Representative Emanuel Celler, both who opposed the passage of the ERA, set a time limit of seven years for its ratification by the states.[2]

Although the ERA served as a source of contention on the national level for over fifty years, it experienced its fiercest battles during the campaign for state ratification from 1972 to 1982. Initially, the ERA received widespread support from a number of powerful lobbying groups and was ratified by thirty-five states from 1972 to 1977. Despite the seemingly popular support of the ERA, many groups fought against its ratification. From the very beginning, pro-ERA and anti-ERA groups engaged in a combative struggle to determine the fate of this legislation. In 1972, Phyllis Schafly created the National Committee to Stop ERA, which would serve as the organizing and lobbying body for the anti-ERA grassroots movement. Opponents of the ERA launched a decisive campaign, attempting to get state legislatures to pass rescission bills. The movement was successful. Several states that initially voted in favor of the ERA voted to repeal their ratification. In 1978, Congress extended the original deadline until June 30, 1982 to ratify the ERA. Despite the apparently indecisive nature of state legislatures throughout the country, the legislation remained only three states shy of ratification. In 1982, the deadline for ratification came and went, and the ERA subsequently failed to be made a law.[3]

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[2] *National Organization for Women*, Washington D.C.: National Organization for Women, database on-line, accessed at http://www.now.org, 1 May 2005.
[3] Ibid.

To understand why the ERA failed, one must ask:

- What justification did legislators use for not voting in favor of the ERA?
- How did the ERA's reception differ from state to state?
- How did people's religious, political, economical, and cultural views affect their perceptions and support of the ERA?

The ERA, as an amendment, was very simple. It stated that people should not be discriminated against on the basis of sex. However, the simplistic nature of the ERA became one of its downfalls, for the vague description left it open to wide interpretation. During the ratification process, the ERA experienced intense and constant scrutiny from the American public and politicians alike.

The ERA was introduced to the Georgia General Assembly in 1973, where it was immediately assigned by the House leadership to a study committee. The amendment would remain in committee in the House until 1982 when the House voted against the ERA, 116 to 57. In 1976, the Georgia Senate defeated the ERA, 33 to 22, and again in 1980, 32 to 23. It was not surprising that the General Assembly voted against the ERA with such overwhelming enthusiasm, for Georgia was the first state to vote against women's suffrage in 1919. In fact, the General Assembly did not ratify the Nineteenth Amendment until 1970.[4]

When people think of the ERA and its subsequent failure to be ratified, it is assumed that all women would have supported the legislation and that all men would have opposed it. In contrast, women were the most vocal opponents of the ERA, an amendment from which

[4] Women's Oral History Project, "A Brief History of the Equal Rights Amendment in Georgia." Atlanta, Georgia: Georgia State University Special Collections, Women's Collection, 2006.

they would have, in theory, benefited and gained more equality under the law and in day to day life. Many of the women who opposed the ERA were in favor of other legislation that benefited women but could not support this amendment. Religious, political, and cultural definitions of womanhood played an integral role in how women approached the ERA and how the movement defined itself in the face of radical feminism during the 1970s and 1980s.

Georgia serves as an excellent model for studying the women who opposed the ERA. Since the failure of the amendment, the ERA has become a controversial subject within academia. Most of the scholarly texts written about the ERA are derived from the perspective of feminist activists who became feminist scholars. Naturally, their viewpoint of the ERA shaped their methodological approach to the history of the amendment. Anti-ERA activists have been known to be somewhat reticent to discuss their role in the movement with historians because of the tendency for some feminist scholars to suggest that their viewpoints, and only theirs, are the norm and that anti-ERA women are an anomaly, therefore demonizing the women involved in said movements. Because of this approach, there is very little historiography on the women of the anti-ERA movement. Therefore, this thesis will focus on creating an accurate and fresh assessment of the women involved in the anti-ERA movement.

CHAPTER ONE

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE

With this thesis, I hope to provide a detailed account of the women involved in the anti-ERA movement in Georgia during the 1970s and 1980s. The growing interest in the rise of the New Right has led to an emerging genre on conservative women and the importance of their roles and participation in the conservative movement. This scope of this project became clear to me after taking a directed readings course on the American feminist movement with my advisor, Dr. Michelle Brattain. In reading about the ERA and the women's liberation movement, I began to wonder about their counterparts, the unnamed women who rejected feminism and worked to secure traditional roles for women. Much of my desire to know the other side of the story played into the formation of this thesis, and, with the support and guidance of Dr. Brattain, I decided to frame my research around the idea that the anti-ERA movement *was* a woman's movement, despite its rejection of second wave feminist politics and any notion of liberation.

As a feminist myself, I was intrigued and slightly appalled by the idea of politically active women advocating on behalf of the fulltime homemaker. To me, the two seemed paradoxical and slightly hypocritical; however, the role of a historian is to document the past with an open mind. If we, teachers and students alike, are to learn about the complex nature of the women's movement, then we must open ourselves up to the possibility that the women's movement was actually two separate movements, one that advocated equality and liberation and another that advocated for protection and traditional roles. Women are by no means a

homogenous group, and they should not be relegated to such an indignity by scholars. In researching and writing this thesis, I worked very carefully to distance myself from my own inherent feminist tendencies and to present an accurate, nonjudgmental account of the women involved in the anti-ERA movement. It is my hope that this thesis will act as an open door into the field of anti-ERA and antifeminist activism, because women's history should speak for *all* women, even the voices that are the hardest to hear and understand.

When I decided to investigate the women of the anti-ERA movement in Georgia, I determined that preliminary explorations of political theory and the historiography of the ERA were needed before the primary research phase of my project took place. The texts that I chose for my secondary research material were selected on the basis of several key factors, including: feminist theory and pro-ERA academia, which demonstrates the mindset of the pro-ERA women and the current trends in the contemporary feminist movement; ERA historiography, which examined the ERA from pro- and anti- viewpoints; antifeminist theory and anti-ERA academia, which enabled me to understand better the viewpoint of the women involved in the anti-ERA movement; and conservative political theory, which provides the broader scope and political scene in which these women based their political experiences.

In addition to the secondary resource materials, I spent countless hours at the Georgia State University (GSU) Special Collections Department examining primary research materials in the forms of archival documents and oral histories. Morna Gerard, archivist at GSU Special Collections, was very helpful to me during the research process. She pointed me in the direction of a previously-written thesis about the ERA in Georgia by a former graduate student, Jeffrey Jones. She was very generous with her time as I sorted through a number of documents and oral histories of women involved in the ERA efforts, all of which

proved to be valuable resources in understanding the political and historical context in which pro- and anti-ERA women were actively engaged. Without Ms. Gerard's knowledge and guidance, this project would never have come to fruition. The Georgia Women's Movement Oral History Project, hosted by GSU Special Collections, was created in 1995 and has a plethora of resources for anyone interested in learning more about the ERA and the women involved in the debate surrounding the amendment. The oral histories that comprise this project had significant relevance to my own research because they provided me with first-hand accounts of how pro-ERA women viewed their political counterparts. The oral histories that were particularly relevant were: Cathey Steinberg, who was the primary sponsor of the 1981-82 ERA legislation in the Georgia House of Representatives; Sherry Sutton; the legislative liason for ERA Georgia in 1980 to 1981; Carrie Nell Moye, a prominent Atlanta activist and proponent of the ERA who was well-known for debating Phyllis Schlafly; Nellie Dunaway Duke, a proponent of the ERA and Chair of the Georgia Commission on Women; and Cynthia Hlass, an Atlanta native and activist who was heavily involved in the ERA movement.

The Carol Ashkinaze papers, also housed at GSU Special Collections, played an integral role in the formation of this project. Carol Ashkinaze was a reporter with the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* from 1976 to 1989 and covered the ERA movement in Georgia as well as other women's issues both statewide and nationally. Her collection consists of her professional writings for the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* and some personal correspondence, the former being more helpful to my research.

Much of the primary resource material on the anti-ERA movement in Georgia is located at Emory University Special Collections. The department has two collections that proved to

be extremely useful to me: ERA Georgia (Manuscript #622) and the Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection (Manuscript #618). ERA Georgia contains records and materials from the official pro-ERA organization in Georgia during the 1970s and 1980s. The collection included written correspondence among members, minutes from chapter meetings, campaign finance disclosures, press clippings, and printed paraphernalia such as lapel pins, notecards, posters, t-shirts, and pamphlets. All of these items enabled me to gain a better understanding of how the pro-ERA women viewed themselves and the anti-ERA movement.

The Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection proved to be the most valuable primary resource material at Emory University. Kathryn Fink Dunaway was a political activist in Atlanta and served as the Chair of the STOP ERA Committee from 1973 until the time of her death in 1980. In addition to the STOP ERA Committee, Dunaway was heavily involved in the Georgia Federation of Republican Women and the Daughters of the American Revolution. She had a long history of activism in Atlanta and was regarded as a major force in the anti-ERA movement. Her collection includes correspondence and printed materials concerning the ERA, antifeminism, motherhood, and women's traditional roles in Georgia. Because of the many roles she played in a multiplicity of organizations, Dunaway's collection is highly regarded as a specialized compilation for those engaged in studying the anti-ERA movement and conservative women's studies.

I attempted to contact several of the key players in the anti-ERA movement for interviews; however, many of them did not return my calls, nor did they express an interest in being interviewed about their participation in the anti-ERA movement. Morna Gerard stated that many of the women involved in conservative grassroots politics are skeptical of academia and refuse to participate in graduate work because they fear that scholars will use it

as an opportunity to harass them about being on the "wrong" side of an issue.[1] One woman did take my call and even consented to answer my questions via e-mail. Though I disagree with her politically, I found Phyllis Schlafly to be a warm, articulate, and generous person in the course of our correspondence. Her answers to my questions allowed me to make a connection between the events that occurred in Georgia during the ERA ratification debates and the larger political scene. I am very grateful for her assistance.

I also used the internet for a portion of my research, as I believe that the content of these texts, most of which are contemporary resources, will provide a much needed connection between the past and the present involvement of women with regards to activism and the current ERA movement. The websites that I used were: The Georgia Women's Movement Oral Project, the online extension of the collection, which contained abstracts, transcripts of interviews, and information about the history of the ERA; the Eagle Forum, which was the home-base for the STOP ERA Committee and provides historical information about the movement and commentary on the ERA; Equalrightsamendment.org, a project of the Alice Paul Institute, which provided information about the history of the ERA; and the National Organization for Women, which was one of the major proponent organizations of the ERA in the 1970s and 1980s. This website contained commentary and the means with which women can continue to be involved in the ratification of the ERA.

It should be noted that, for the general purposes of understanding, I use the words *feminist*, *pro-ERA* and *women's liberation* to describe the proponents of the ERA and of feminism. I use the words *antifeminist*, *anti-ERA*, and *conservative* to describe the opponents of the ERA and the rejection of feminism. I use the term 'women's movement' to

[1] Morna Gerard, interview by author, 1 July 2005, Atlanta, Georgia.

describe the pro-ERA activists and the anti-ERA activists, because they both were movements that consisted of women and acted in the interests of women, albeit in very different ways. I use the term *activist* to describe both the pro- and anti-ERA women because both groups of women were actively involved in using their personal experiences to further a political cause.

From September of 2001 until May of 2006, I had the great honor of working at the Georgia General Assembly. I have learned a great deal about the political climate of Georgia and I applied my own personal knowledge and experience to this project. For the past five years, I have witnessed some incredible moments in Georgia history: the downfall of the Democratic Party and the subsequent rise of the Republican Party to power in the state legislature; the election of Sonny Perdue, the first Republican governor in the state since Reconstruction; and some of the most restrictive reproductive and civil rights legislation to be considered by a state legislature. These experiences have shaped and defined my own personal beliefs, and, though I have made a serious attempt to look fairly at conservatism and the women involved, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my own inherent bias toward conservatism and the New Rights.

Finally, I would like to explain the method behind the organizational madness of this thesis. The main topic is an examination of the STOP ERA movement in Georgia; however, I also explore themes within the national movement and national policy as well. The reason for this is because the STOP ERA Committee was a very top-down organization with Phyllis Schlafly making the decisions and the individual affiliate chapters carrying out her orders. Certainly, there was some autonomy from state to state, but, for the most part, the STOP ERA Committee acted as a single unit, and this, ultimately, is the reason they were

successful. There were no divisive political battles within the anti-ERA movement, and, though the women came to the battle for different reasons, they shared a singular vision. Therefore, it can be assumed that any references to National STOP ERA Committee policy can be extended to the Georgia movement, for much of the policy was the same.

Review of the Literature

Though many issues captured the attention of the women involved in the modern feminist movement, the ERA served as the focal point of the movement during the 1970s and 1980s. The ERA received support from lobbying groups such as the National Organization of Women (NOW), National Education Association (NEA), and the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). Marches, conferences, and rallies were organized and held across the nation as the state legislatures voted on the ERA. These activist techniques were not limited to the pro-ERA movement, for the anti-ERA movement also had a strong grassroots approach that garnered widespread support, particularly in the Southern states.

Most of what has been written about the ERA has been from the point of view of the pro-ERA movement. During the 1970s, the women's movement altered academia as women's studies programs and feminist organizations became a part of the curriculum and extracurricular campus life. Fueled by the desire to write a long neglected history about women, feminist scholars immediately set out to write about the ERA. Many of the activists became academics, which explained why most of the scholarship on the ERA was written from the perspective of the pro-ERA movement. Feminist scholars explored the history of the ERA in a way that reflected some of the shortcomings of second wave feminism by

assuming that all women supported the ERA and not accepting that many women were not driven by the same desire for equality. To develop a better understanding of the role of women in the anti-ERA movement, one must explore the current literature that exists in the field of ERA scholarship. This includes texts on feminist theory, Southern womanhood, the history of the ERA from a pro-ERA perspective, and the history of the ERA from an anti-ERA perspective.

Feminist Theory and Pro-ERA Academia

In *Daughters of Canaan: A Saga of Southern Women*, author Margaret Ripley Wolfe states that Southern women are often portrayed as the consummate victims who "have neither been able nor willing to extricate themselves from circumstances in order to shape their own destiny or to influence their region." Wolfe contends that this sort of thinking is not objective, nor is it historically accurate. Women in the South have often been "agreeable accessories to men in history" and are "products of both time and place." Wolfe's text explores Southern women's history from the colonial period to the mid- twentieth century and contends that "the understanding of southern women will permit neither blind devotion to New England models of feminism . . . nor fastidious commitment to only the grand historical schemes." [2] Wolfe's text is useful for creating a framework to study Southern women who opposed the ERA, for she does not assume that all women have the same goals, politically or personally. She utilizes archival material, oral histories, and preceding texts to

[2] Margaret Ripley Wolfe, *Daughters of Canaan: A Saga of Southern Women and the American Past* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 5.

demonstrate that women, as a group, are multi-faceted in their opinions and actions and that exploring one portion of that group is not an accurate history.

In "Second Wave Feminism(s) and the South: The Difference that Differences Make," Jane Sherron De Hart writes that "The South . . . was surprisingly also the place where a more radical branch of the women's movement evolved." The South as a geographical region has been very traditional, very religious, and deeply suspicious of the potential intervention of the federal government. Many Southerners saw the ERA as an intrusive amendment forced on them by Congress. Many Southern women "felt they had much to lose [in terms of societal status and the protection of men] with the altering of the gender contract." De Hart insists that Southern women felt the full weight of difference and what equality for their sex would mean in the South. She explains that Southern women constantly explored the issue of gender in their communities and that many women who were involved in the women's movement were against the ERA because they believed it was a redundant, intrusive amendment. De Hart states that "It is tempting to assume that, as white middle-class southerners, these women would naturally have more [prejudice] than feminists everywhere [else]." This assumption is incorrect, and, to gain a better understanding of the ERA and the reasons it failed, historians must broaden their view of women, the South, and conservatism.[3]

In *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, Susan Faludi explores the conservative backlash against feminists and the women's movement during the 1980s. Faludi makes no apologies for her pro-feminist perspective when approaching the issue of

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[3] Jane Sherron De Hart, "Second Wave Feminism(s) and the South: The Difference That Differences Make," in *Women of the American South*, ed. Christie Anne Farnham (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 274-275, 287.

the ERA by stating that, "When the New Right men [and women] entered national politics, they brought their feminist witch-hunts with them." The text provides historians with an understanding of how and what feminists thought about the 1980s. *Backlash* is firmly against the anti-ERA and anti-feminist movements but is a valuable text for exploring these movements because it allows historians to see how pro-ERA women viewed the women in the anti-ERA movement. Faludi draws attention to the ferocity with which the New Right approached the women's movement, for "the New Right would follow in the next several years [with legislation], and they were virtually all aimed at slapping down female independence wherever it showed a face." Faludi does not offer a fair assessment of the New Right but demonizes it as many feminist scholars have done since the failure of the ERA. However, it is Faludi's firm dedication to one side of the issue that makes this text valuable, for it demonstrates how adamant the members of each side were about the ERA. [4]

Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America since 1960, written by Flora Davis, explores the entire feminist movement from 1960. Davis explains in her chapter on the ERA that the amendment lost because of "antifeminists [who] wanted to return women to their traditional roles."[5] She continues by stating that anti-feminists, both men and women, wanted to keep laws that protected women and kept them under male reign. They feared that the ERA would invalidate those laws, leaving women open to attacks on their character and perceived purity. Davis suggests that the women who were against the ERA had respectability in the South that pro-ERA women did not have and that this respectability allowed them to create a strong public opposition to a very controversial amendment.

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[4] Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 234, 236.
[5] Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America since 1960* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 386, 389.

Davis is on the side of pro-ERA women, evident by her statement that, "In describing the possible consequences of the ERA, antifeminists made a number of unlikely, even outrageous predictions."[6] In fact, she dismisses many of the sentiments expressed by the women of the New Right and does not take into account that, to anti-feminists, the concerns raised were very real.

Historiography of the ERA

In 1984, Jane J. Mansbridge published her seminal work, *Why We Lost the ERA*, a text that explores "not why the ERA died but why it came so close to passing." Despite Mansbridge's personal pro-ERA stance, the text is a relatively fair assessment of both pro-ERA and anti-ERA women. The author does not demonize the anti-ERA women but suggests that, despite their differing viewpoints of the amendment, they had a lot in common with the pro-ERA movement. Mansbridge suggests that the ERA offered "no tangible benefits" and that the women who fought for ratification did so for the general belief in equality of women. In contrast, opponents of the ERA worked against the amendment because they feared the possible outcomes of gender equality, but "they had only to disrupt an emerging consensus, not to produce one."[7]

Sex, Gender and Politics of the ERA, by Donald G. Matthews and Jane Sherron De Hart, examines the ERA in North Carolina, focusing on the state ratification process and how it relates to the national ratification movement. North Carolina was one of the Southern states that voted against women's suffrage in the early twentieth century and, like most Southern

[6] Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 389.
[7] Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 2, 3.

states, had a history of racial and sexual tension. The text looks at the ways the pro-ERA and anti-ERA movements demonized the other side in their attempt to influence the state ratification of the amendment. According to Matthews and De Hart, the ERA "politicized women as had no other issue since suffrage." Like Mansbridge's text, the focus of the book is not on why the ERA failed but on what the failure says about women involved in the movement. In addition, the text focuses on the conflicts between cultural definitions of gender and how they affected the opposing sides. Matthews and De Hart explain that "the people who went out of their way to emphasize ERA as a feminist instrument of gender revolution were anti-ERA women" and that the creation of an "us versus them" mentality is what ultimately led to the failure of the ERA in North Carolina.[8] Finally, Matthews and De Hart based their research on interviews conducted with members from the pro-ERA and anti-ERA movements. This approach helps to create a balanced, accurate, and unbiased portrayal of the ratification process in a Southern state.

In 1995, Jeffrey Jones examined the many facets of the ERA movement in Georgia in his master's thesis, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment." Jeffrey Jones, a former graduate student from Georgia State University, focused his work on examining the entire movement including the pro-ERA and anti-ERA viewpoints. The anti-equality sentiment that contributed to the demise of the ERA in Georgia was already prevalent in the South. Jones attributes the failure of the ERA to several factors including "an intense and ideological controversy" on the issue of gender and the definitions of womanhood.[9] Rather than repeat verbatim the previously-held perceptions about the ERA, the author creates a new

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[8] Donald G. Matthews and Jane Sherron De Hart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), ix, 216.
[9] Jeffrey Jones, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment" (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 1995), 1.

approach for studying the ERA in a Southern state. Jones assertes that the ERA failed because of fear of federal intervention, lack of support on the national level, misinformation distributed by the anti-ERA movement, and regional cultural differences. Jones goes on to assert "that traditional explanations for the failure of ERA give inadequate attention to the culture in which southern legislatures defeated the ERA."[10] Jones, like many up and coming historians, chooses to examine Southern history on its own merit, rather than relegating the South to the position of official stepchild in historiography. In addition, his work does not focus on the ERA in terms of gender, but focuses on the broader political context of the time.

Anti-Feminism and Anti-ERA

As previously stated, much of the literature about the ERA has been written from the perspective of the pro-feminist and pro-ERA women. According to Morna Gerard, head of the Women's Collection at Georgia State University Special Collections, many anti-ERA women are hesitant to speak about their experiences with feminist scholars.[11] Many women involved in the anti-ERA movement feel that feminist scholars become confrontational and agitated when they encounter women who do not share similar views. Therefore, there is a lack of research on the anti-ERA movement in the historiography, a void which prevents historians from engaging in an in-depth discourse on the political, social, economic, and cultural ramifications of the ERA's failure and the women who were involved in its demise.

[10] Jones, 3.
[11] Morna Gerard interview.

In *Women of the New Right*, Rebecca E. Klatch states that the feminist movement during the 1960s and 1970s "integrated [women] into the mainstream of political life". However, women did not always become feminists in their political activism, for the "escalation of political participation . . . meant the increased involvement by women opposed to the goals . . . of feminism." To understand better the mindset of the women involved in the anti-ERA movement, one must study the ideology that drives anti-feminists. Klatch's scholarly work is a good introduction for historians who are writing about the anti-ERA movement because of the way it explains conservatism, the New Right movement, and the women involved in this particular political arena. She focuses on the different mindsets between fiscal conservatives and social conservatives and explores how these differences define political affiliation and action in the public arena. Klatch, though she identifies as a feminist scholar, puts aside her personal political leanings to gain the trust of conservative women, for she adopts "a non-argumentative approach" and "defined [her role] entirely in terms of listening and absorbing the other world view." Women involved with the New Right are not a monolithic group but have differences amongst themselves. Social conservatives operate under the premise that the United States is a moral nation based on religious faith and that the government has a responsibility to uphold that morality. Laissez-faire conservatives believe the opposite and feel that the government has no right to intrude on personal matters. It is important to understand how a conservative woman self-identifies if one is to "move beyond the association of right-wing women solely with anti-feminist activities" and have an unbiased discourse on the anti-ERA movement.[12]

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[12] Rebecca E. Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 3, 17, 11.

In *The Right Women: A Journey through the Heart of Conservative America*, Elinor Burkett writes that "half of the nation's women believe that a strong women's movement is important to their lives, [but] two-thirds refuse to call themselves feminists." Burkett, like Klatch, examines conservative women as intelligent, witty, and open individuals instead of the stereotypical "pawn or plaything of the 'ruling class' . . . intolerant of diversity." If feminism is about choices for women, then one must ask why the feminist movement condemns women who choose to act in a manner contradictory to feminism. Burkett shares a story about an interview she conducted with Barbara Ledeen, leader of the Independent Women's Forum. Ledeen told Burkett that "'The women's movement was supposed to be about choice, but it has never done anything to give these women choices. 'Choice' is our word, not theirs. Choice is not just about abortion.'" Many anti-feminists feel this way about the women's movement. Homemakers and traditionalists' disdain for radical feminism helped to fuel the anti-ERA movement, for these women were afraid of losing their right to make choices for themselves. *The Right Women* is a good resource for historians who are interested in developing a better understanding of the motivations and actions of anti-ERA women in Georgia. Burkett states that her text is "neither an attack on feminism nor a defense of antifeminism, but a travelogue through the lives of women who are living, and rewriting, feminism" and that women in the United States are constantly balancing and reconciling traditional roles with contemporary feminism.[13]

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[13] Elinor Burkett, *The Right Woman: A Journey through the Heart of Conservative America* (New York: Scribner Press, 1998), 19, 21, 23.

In *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, Donald Critchlow provides an in-depth look at the woman who is considered to be largely responsible for the rise of modern conservatism among women. Phyllis Schlafly, founder of the STOP ERA Committee and the Eagle Forum and leader of the anti-ERA crusade, is one of the most fascinating women in American history because she gained her public following and reputation by arguing that women should be content in their roles as wives and mothers and that liberation was not necessary. Critchlow presents a stunning portrait of Schlafly and her influence in "the remarkable changes that took place in the larger politics of the last half of the twentieth century." His text is important because it provides historians with a detailed account of how Schlafly became active in grassroots conservative politics and how she convinced the leadership to recognize "the importance of women in the emergence of the grassroots Right."[14] Critchlow's scholarship is also significant because he was able to gain access to Phyllis Schlafly's personal correspondence and papers, which sheds new light on the platform and operation of the STOP ERA Committee during the ratification debate.

Conservatism and Political Theory

Conservative women are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the modern conservative movement. Often accused of "using female intermediaries" to gain support amongst women, the New Right movement is a powerful political machine.[15] To understand the motivations and thought of women like Phyllis Schlafly, Kathryn Fink Dunaway, and Lee Wysong, one must understand the rise of modern conservatism in the latter part of the

[14] Donald Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 3, 7.
[15] Faludi, *Backlash*, 239.

twentieth century. Outside the context of conservatism, the anti-ERA movement might seem to be an aberration. However, the reality is that the women involved in defeating the ERA created a powerful grassroots movement that would skyrocket the New Right to the forefront of mainstream politics in America.

In *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*, cognitive linguist George Lakoff offers an important approach to understanding the conservative and liberal mind frame. In order to develop a greater respect and appreciation for the role that women played in the conservative movement, one must explore more clearly the differences with which conservatives and liberals construct their political language. Lakoff states that "words don't have meaning in isolation," and the same remark can hold true for symbols and movements, for recognizing that conservatives view the world differently helps to paint the women of the anti-ERA movement in a more understandable light. Furthermore, Lakoff explains that both conservatives and liberals view politics in a familial model with the difference being that conservatives view the government as having a "Strict Father model" that emphasizes respect for authority and self-discipline and that liberals view the government in terms of a "Nuturant Parent model" that focuses on individualism and respect gained through affection and freedom to choose.[16] These two very different models provide historians with an alternative means of understanding how conservative women conceptualized an issue like the ERA in the world.

[16] George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 29, 13.

In *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservativism*, Kevin Kruse explores the role that race led to the rise of conservatism in Atlanta. Race played a major factor in the ratification of the ERA in Southern states and Kruse's book examines the origin of the "white flight" movement in Atlanta. During the Civil Rights movement, Atlanta and the surrounding metropolitan area "witnessed little in the way of violence" but experienced a segregationist backlash that manifested in the form of boycotts of public spaces. According to Kruse, the mass exodus of whites from the city resulted from the peaceful integration of city spaces. Rather than fight back physically, whites in Atlanta moved beyond the reaches of the city and formed areas that are now considered to be suburban communities. A large percentage of these communities continue to vote conservatively, choosing Republican candidates for their elected representatives. Atlanta is widely known as "the city too busy to hate," but Kruse explains that fear, hate and economics played a major role in the abandonment of public space and the rise of a conservatism that would precede the antifeminist movement.[17]

In *Suburban Warriors: The Origin of the New American Right*, McGirr presents a case study of Orange County, California, as the birthplace of modern conservatism rather than focusing on the national campaign to elect Goldwater. The 47th Congressional District of California is widely known in contemporary political circles as a district that consistently votes Republican and has a "mixture of nostalgia for a simple American past."[18] Women were the main proponents of the New Right in Orange County, and, like the women of the anti-ERA movement in Georgia, these "suburban warriors" became involved in politics as an

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[17] Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 114, 41.
[18] Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origin of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 20.

extension of their duties as wives and mothers and as "true upholders of national good."[19] The Orange County movement was significant because it paved the way for conservative women like Phyllis Schlafly, who would use local bases to create a strong national coalition of conservative women to fight against the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. McGirr's text is important for the study of the anti-ERA movement because it demonstrates the mindset of social conservative women who viewed their political role as an extension of their private role in marriage and family.

The ERA was a controversial and emotionally charged issue that had political and historical repercussions for all Americans. This was especially true for the women involved in the pro-ERA and anti-ERA movements. The pro-ERA literature demonstrates that feminists involved in the ratification of the ERA felt that anti-ERA women were traitors and pawns of the conservative New Right and often characterized these women as being silly, unintelligent, and antiquated in their beliefs. By contrast, the absence of anti-ERA histories speaks volumes about the hostility that pro-ERA historians feel toward the anti-ERA movement. Many anti-ERA supporters felt they were being attacked by feminist historians when questioned about their experiences in the anti-ERA movement. As a result, anti-ERA women were then and continue to be distrusting of academia and hesitant to share their stories. So that one may gain a full appreciation for the ERA and the diverse roles that women played in its ratification, historians must focus not only on the pro-ERA opinions but also on the anti-ERA viewpoints as well. It is only after one reconciles the two perspectives that an accurate historiography may be realized.

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[19] McGirr *Suburban Warriors*, 4, 166.

CHAPTER TWO

OVERVIEW OF THE ERA

Alice Paul died on July 9, 1977, six years after the ERA was passed by Congress and the campaigns for state ratification began across the country. She never bore witness to the decade of contentious debates and pro-ERA versus anti-ERA fighting on the state level. She never glimpsed the finale as the ERA failed to gain an additional three states by the deadline of June 30, 1982. Alice Paul was well aware of the controversial dynamic that her amendment brought to the American political landscape. She dedicated her entire life to improving the lives of women and believed that the ERA was the most common-sense approach; however, many Americans disagreed with her. In the 1920s, feminists involved in labor unions and the Progressive movement feared that "'equal rights' meant 'ending special benefits.'" Paul and the women who fought for the ratification of the ERA in the early twentieth century experienced a smaller scale of the battle that was to come in the latter twentieth century, for, "the women's movement [was] divided into two camps: those in favor of an equal rights amendment and those who opposed it."[1]

The fight between women who wanted equality and women who wanted "special benefits" was heated and ultimately was the reason that it took fifty years for the ERA to successfully pass Congress.[2] Eventually, the National Women's Party disbanded in the 1930s as women abandoned the ERA cause and became politically active in other movements, but Alice Paul

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[1] Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), 8; Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America since 1960* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 27.
[2] Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 9.

never gave up. She continued to be actively involved in the promotion of the ERA until her death and was "a little contemptuous" of the "new generation" of feminist activists.[3] By that time, a new wave of feminism was running rampant throughout the nation and more and more women were becoming actively involved in the demand for the ERA to be passed out of Congress. Alice Paul left American women an indelible legacy, one of passionate debate and an issue that ultimately led to the resurgence of a new conservatism.

The ERA led a stagnant life from the time of its introduction until the final passage from Congress in 1971. During the 1940s, the Republican Party temporarily "revitalized the ERA by placing it in the party's platform." At this time, the Republican Party was considered the moderate party that represented business and the elite in the North. The Democratic Party had its roots in a coalition that included labor, second-generation immigrants, African-Americans, and the South. It was in the South that the concept of equality for women was considered by many to be an abomination. In 1944, the Democratic Party adopted the ERA as part of its own platform, but many Southern Democrats refused to acknowledge it, for "paternalism may indeed have been more firmly entrenched in the American South than anywhere else in the country." Much of the party's political support of the ERA was due to the changes brought by World War II. With men at war, women and minorities were left to fill jobs that initially belonged to white men. However, during World War II, "women workers producing war materiel demonstrated that they could do virtually any job," and politicians "sought to capitalize on the feelings of gratitude" by supporting the ERA.[4]

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[3] Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1999), 56.
[4] Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 9; Margaret Ripley Wolfe, *Daughters of Canaan: A Saga of Southern Women* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press), 5; Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women's Issues 1945-1968* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 3.

In the 1950s, support for the ERA began to dwindle. Men returned home from war, anxious to return to work and expected to find women waiting for them at home, not in factories or at desk jobs. As a result, women were let go from their war-time jobs, and "the anxiety of readjustment translated into a desire for the reinstitution of traditional family life supported by traditional sex roles." It was this reprisal of tradition that Betty Friedan railed against in her 1963 classic

The Feminine Mystique, in which she gave voice to the millions of women who felt isolated and alienated from society and wanted more out of life than being someone's wife and mother. This set the stage for the second wave of the feminist movement in the United States and the resurgence of support for the ERA in Congress. In 1970, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) "interpreted Title VII as invalidating protective legislation" and eroding concerns held by union and labor groups with regards to the ERA.[5] As a result, the ERA gained more support from representatives and senators in Congress, forcing action to be taken on the amendment.

In May of 1970, the Congressional Senate Subcommittee held hearings on the ERA. Senator Birch Bayh, Chairman of the subcommittee, supported the amendment. In June of that same year, Representative Martha Griffiths filed a discharge petition to "pry the ERA out of the House Judiciary Committee," which was chaired by Representative Emanuel Celler, a staunch opponent of the ERA.[6] In 1971, the ERA was sent to the floor of the House of Representatives, where it was debated for one hour before passed by a vote of 350 to 15. In March of 1972, the Senate approved the ERA by a vote of 84 to 8; however, there were several attempts to amend the ERA.

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[5] Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 10.
[6] Ibid.

For the opponents of the ERA, the passage of the amendment represented "decisive proof that the Congress wanted ERA to wipe out any and all distinctions between men and women." One such amendment was the Wiggins Amendment, which stated that the ERA "shall not impair the validity of any law . . . which exempts a person from compulsory military service." A similar amendment was proposed in the Senate, but ultimately both amendments failed, and the ERA passed without change. The only addition made was "an arbitrary time limit of seven years for ratification" set by Senator Sam Ervin and Representative Emanuel Celler. These events laid the foundation for the debates between proponents and opponents of the ERA on the state level. Almost immediately, pro-ERA activists worked for an extension of the original deadline because they were "apprehensive that the time limit might expire and kill the amendment altogether."[7]

In order to develop a better understanding of the complexities that arose on the state level ratification process, one must explore those who supported and opposed the ERA on the national level. By identifying the major players in the national pro-ERA and anti-ERA movements, scholars can better determine how the relationship between federal and state government affected the ultimate success of the ERA, particularly in a state like Georgia that had a history of resentment toward the federal government and perceived threats of intervention.

National Proponents of the ERA

"A book by itself does not make a movement," states Susan Brownmiller in her feminist memoir, *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution*.[8] Still, one cannot argue the power of Friedan's

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[7] Phyllis Schlafly, "The Legislative History of the ERA," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 10 (November 1976), folder 5, box 11, Kathryn Fink Dunaway Collection, Special Collections, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia [Hereafter, KFDC]; *National Organization for Women*, Washington D.C.: National Organization for Women, database on-line, accessed at http://www.now.org, 1 May 2005; The Heritage Foundation, "The ERA: Is Seven Years Enough?" *The Backgrounder* 42 (November 1977), box 11, KFDC.
[8] Brownmiller, *In Our Time*, 3.

words when she states that "We [American society] can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: 'I want something more than my husband and my children and my home." During the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, men and women were involved in movements to protest the Vietnam War and to show support for the Civil Rights struggle, and it was "against this background of turmoil" that the feminist movement evolved. According to Brownmiller, the feminist movement was initially comprised of a diverse group of women from a multiplicity of cultural, economic, religious, racial, and sexual backgrounds, but that "as the movement grew in size and strength its diversity and healthy decentralization were slighted." The second wave of the feminist movement arose from the need to "equalize the laws of all American states" and to promote women as more active participants in the political, cultural, and economic system. It is important to recognize that the feminist movement has been "one long, continuous women's movement rather than two, separated by a forty-year hiatus" and that the issues relevant to women during the early twentieth century were still considered important by the national feminists in the 1960s.[9] The founding of NOW in 1967 marked the beginning of the women's movement's "first new mass-membership organization" and the start of campaigns to ratify the ERA as well as to repeal anti-abortion laws, "decisions that splintered the organization" and the nation.

[9] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1983), 32; Brownmiller, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 24, 9; Riane Tennenhaus Eisler, *The Equal Rights Handbook* (New York: Avon Publishing, Year Unknown), 198, box 6, KFDC; Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 27, 47.

Sarah Weddington, the famed attorney who argued before the Supreme Court in 1973 stated that, before *Roe v. Wade*,

> Women were trying to tell others about how to prevent pregnancy, but information was not readily available. And then the abortion issue was one where we all knew so many horror stories and there was a real urge to say, we ought to change the law.[10]

It was abortion, not the ERA, that "became the first feminist cause to sweep the nation," and that it would be an issue that the feminist movement would never be able to disassociate itself from during the years of ERA ratification. Some feminists felt that linking abortion to the ERA was a mistake; including Alice Paul who, like many nineteenth-century feminists, felt that abortion was an exploitation of women and gave men permission to take advantage of them. Of course, feminists were concerned with other less divisive issues, such as changing the laws regarding domestic violence, pay equity for women, and sexual discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Weddington remembers "a time when rape, at least in Texas, was much more focused on the woman's character . . . and yet the police would tell you, 'Don't resist; you'll get killed." The feminist movement tackled a number of important issues; however, they were mostly responsible for creating a "transformation of consciousness . . . [and] changed the way [many] American women saw themselves."[11]

While the feminist movement viewed itself as being an open, diverse group, it was portrayed otherwise by media and anti-feminists alike. Brownmiller asserts that "the media's habitual use of a single individual to define or symbolize a political issue led to the increasing identification of feminism with a mere handful of visible" people, such as Betty Friedan,

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[10] Sarah Weddington, interview by Diane Fowlkes and Charlene Ball, 15 April 1998, interview W95-08, transcript, Georgia Women's Oral History Project Collection, Georgia State University Special Collections, Atlanta, Georgia [Hereafter, GWOHPC].

[11] Brownmiller, *In Our Time*, 102; Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 8; Sarah Weddington interview; Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 52.

Bella Abzug, Gloria Steinem, and Germaine Greer. Carrie Nell Moye, a feminist and resident of Atlanta, stated that the feminist movement was not about what choices women made but about providing women with a choice in the first place and that, "if you chose to be a homemaker, be a homemaker . . . a woman does something because she chooses to do it, not because she has to do it."[12]

The media and the anti-feminists portrayed the movement in very different terms and did not hesitate to use the mistakes of feminists against them. In a pamphlet distributed by the STOP ERA Committee, anti-feminists quoted Gloria Steinem as saying, "'By the year 2000 we will, I hope, raise our children to believe in human potential, not God.'"[13] An edition of *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* reported one member of the feminist movement as allegedly having said, "'We're not here to glorify homemakers. We're here to try to change a way of life.'" In the same report, anti-feminists referred to Bella Abzug and Gloria Steinem as "the little clique of women's libbers" who wanted to eradicate everything traditional and respectable in America.[14] This perception would remain a permanent fixture in the hearts and minds of many Americans and would adversely affect the ratification of the ERA in more conservative regions of the country, such as the West and the South. Furthermore, it would mobilize women who did not identify with the feminist movement to organize political opposition to the ERA and those who supported it.

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[12] Brownmiller, *In Our Time*, 9; Carrie Nell Moye, Interview by Janet Paulk, 1 September 2001, transcript, GWOHPC.
[13] Kathryn Fink Dunaway to "Honorable Legislator," STOP ERA Committee (3 January 1979), Box 1, ERA Georgia Collection, Special Collections, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia [Hereafter, ERA Georgia].
[14] Phyllis Schlafly, "The Commission On International Women's Year *or*, Bella Abzug's Boondoggle," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 9 (January 1976), Box 11, KFDC.

National Opponents of the ERA

The prominence of the feminist movement and the success of the ERA in Congress contributed to the rise of a new movement, a conservative women's movement that gave a voice to women who did not identify with feminists like Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem. For these women, the ERA represented a legislative nightmare that brought forth images and fears of "military conscription for 18-year-old girls, coed bathrooms and homosexual rights." Conservative, anti-feminist women did not view themselves as part of a greater movement or even as a counter-revolution but, by extending their roles as mothers and wives, as promoters of a "moral vision" that encouraged women to be the guardians of "social order."[15]

In *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*, Lisa McGirr states that a woman's conservatism or liberalism was not indicative of the amount of education she had and that conservatives "sought to assert their vision of the nation and the world [through] education." According to Donald Critchlow, author of *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, Phyllis Schlafly grew up in a home with parents that, "although traditional in their views of the family that derived from their religious faith, believed their daughters should not be any less ambitious or educated than boys." This is not to suggest that the anti-feminist movement is a monolithic group that "shares a single set of beliefs and values."[16] Rather, just as the feminist movement was diverse in nature, the anti-feminist movement was a mixture of educated and uneducated, rich and poor, Northern and Southern, black and white women who believed in promoting the interests of the "rational, self-interested individual" and the family as "the sacred unit of

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[15] Judith Warner, "She Changed America," *The New York Times Book Review*, 29 January 2006, 10; Donald Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 18

[16] Lisa McGirr, *Surbuban Warriors: The Origin of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 179; Critchlow, *A Woman's Crusade*, 19; Rebecca Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 4.

society."[17] It is important to understand that the grassroots conservative movement did not pop up spontaneously as a result of the social change of the 1960s but arose gradually throughout the twentieth century. This political culture led to the rise of a conservative movement and the nomination of Barry Goldwater for presidential candidacy at the 1964 Republican Convention. Though Goldwater was soundly defeated by Lyndon Johnson, the network of conservative voters and organizations he inspired would contribute to the election of Ronald Reagan, a staunch California conservative, as president in 1980.

It is these roots that conservative women, such as Phyllis Schlafly, founder of the STOP ERA Committee, used to create a national grassroots campaign against the ratification of the ERA. According to McGirr, women were "very much a part of the constituency of the Right" and "overrepresented among the rank and file of the movement." McGirr goes on to state that, in the early 1960s, women were much more active in grassroots conservatism than the men in their lives and were often responsible for "becoming involved and then bringing their husbands into the cause." [18] However, while some anti-feminists were not previously involved in politics before their activism in the anti-ERA campaign, a number of women involved in the anti-ERA movement had political experience on the local and state level. This gave them a significant advantage when it came time to ratify the ERA from state to state. In contrast, the feminist movement was more experienced with national politics and did not have a good grasp of the complexity of local grassroots politics.[19]

Initially, those who opposed the ERA were part of the grassroots conservative movement out of Orange County, California and part of the anti-communism movement. Men and women who identified as conservatives were viewed in a negative light by Democrats and Republicans alike

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[17] Klatch, *Women of the New Right*, 4-5.
[18] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 87.
[19] Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 387.

until the nomination of Barry Goldwater. Goldwater owed much of his success to the publication of Schalfly's *A Choice Not an Echo*, but he maintained distance from her because "his advisors felt, [she] was just too conservative." Schlafly has been described as being "an unlikely candidate for a life spent on the antifeminist front lines."[20] Schlafly, born Phyllis Stewart, was raised to understand "the importance of education, cultural refinement, and family." She attended Washington University for her undergraduate degree in political science but chose to work her way through college rather than accept a scholarship. After finishing her bachelor's degree, Schlafly attended Radcliffe College, which was affiliated with Harvard University at the time, for her master's degree. Schlafly excelled at school, and it was in graduate school that she "declared herself a conservative." According to Critchlow, her work in graduate school "reflected an idealism shared by many young Americans as the World War II drew to a close" and "she impressed her professors with her obvious intelligence." After her time at Radcliffe, Schlafly met and married Fred Schafly, the man who would serve as her husband and political partner throughout her lifetime of activism. Schlafly went on to become a prominent voice in the anti-communist movement, ran for two Congressional campaigns, and wrote books on a wide variety of conservative issues.[21]

Though Schlafly was no doubt the most public and vocal opponent of the ERA, she was not alone in the anti-feminist movement. In an article written for the *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, Paul Freund, a professor at Harvard University, stated that "If we want to see more women in law firms . . . and I, for one, do – we must turn elsewhere than the proposed amendment."[22] United States Senator Sam Ervin, Jr. claimed that "the ERA is the most

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[20] Judith Warner, "She Changed America."
[21] Critchlow, *A Woman's Crusade*, 19, 24; Judith Warner, "She Changed America."
[22] Paul A. Freund, "The Equal Rights Amendment Is Not The Way," *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review* 6 (March 1971), folder 3, box 6, KFDC.

destructive piece of legislation to ever pass Congress." Jean Noble, a spokeswoman for the National Council of Negro Women, called the ERA the "liftin' and totin' bill," because in her mind, "if the Amendment becomes law, we [the black community] will be the ones liftin' and totin'."[23]

Just as a number of organizations supported the ERA, a large portion of groups opposed the ERA, including the Family Forum, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the National School Boards Association, the Young Republican National Federation, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the John Birch Society, and the American Farm Bureau.[24] In an interview conducted with Phyllis Schlafly on October 25, 2005, Schlafly stated that "the feminist movement is not about women's achievement; otherwise they would be lauding Margaret Thatcher, Condi Rice, Elizabeth Dole and Mother Angelica." Schlafly's sentiment reflects a prevailing theme in the anti-feminist movement, the belief that women do not have to identify as feminists to be "capable of great accomplishment."[25] The ERA was a platform that gave Schlafly, and women like her, some legitimacy in the political arena. Women, both feminist and anti-feminist, conceded that Schlafly represented an intellectual conservative voice. Margaret Miller Curtis, a feminist proponent of the ERA in Georgia, stated, "the case she [Phyllis Schlafly] makes is a coherent one, not the raving of a fanatic . . . the dilemmas she outlines are real, and they are all dilemmas that responsible feminists anguish over too."[26]

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[23] Phyllis Schlafly, "Who Opposes The Equal Rights Amendment?" *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 7 (July 1974), folder 5, box 11, KFDC.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Phyllis Schlafly, interview by author, 25 October 2005.
[26] Margaret Miller Curtis, "Phyllis Schlafly and the ERA," *McCall's*, April 1982, 103, folder 2, box 8, Margaret Miller Curtis papers, Donna Novak Coles Georgia Women's Movement Archives, Georgia State Special Collections, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia [Unless otherwise indicated, all papers consulted at GSU were part of the Donna Novak Coles Georgia Women's Movement Archives. Subsequent citations are indentified by the specific manuscript collection consulted.].

For feminists, the passage of the ERA was an optimistic glimpse of a possible future filled with the hope of equality for women. For anti-feminists, the ERA marked the beginning of an intense battle over an "emotionally loaded subject" and further evidence that the feminists and liberals in the federal government were going to destroy America.[27] The split between national feminists and anti-feminists became even more divisive once the state campaigns for ratification took place. In states like Georgia, where conservatism and paternalistic attitudes about women reigned, the ERA debate was perceived as being much more than a piece of legislation. It was an attempt on the part of radical forces to completely alter everything that Southerners held dear.

The Political Landscape of Georgia 1978-1982

In her article, "Second Wave Feminism(s) in the South: The Difference that Differences Make," Jane Sherron De Hart states that "The South – home of the traditional southern lady – was surprisingly also the place where a more radical branch of the women's movement evolved." The women's movement in the South took on a very different tone than that of the women's movement in the North and Western states like California. The regional differences made it difficult to gain support in the South for issues that the national leaders of the women's movement considered important, such as abortion, altering traditional gender roles, and the ratification of the ERA.

De Hart asserts that,

> For women living in a world in which personal identity, social legitimacy, economic viability, and moral order were rooted in traditional gender categories, calling those categories into question in the name of gender-neutral law meant that feminists must want men and women to be 'the same.'[28]

[27] Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 387.
[28] Jane Sherron De Hart, "Second Wave Feminism(s) in the South: The Difference that Differences Make," *Women of the American South*, ed. Christie Anne Farnham (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 274, 281.

Southern feminists had to work very hard to disassociate themselves from being viewed in tandem with Northern feminists because of their perceived radicalism. In many ways, the Southern feminist movement proved to be more radical because of its subtlety. Nevertheless, the anxiety among men and women in the South "aroused by the enormity of the social change demanded by feminism had acquired concrete focus in the ERA." One of the main failures of the modern feminist movement is that, in rejecting aspects of mainstream culture and viewing themselves as "morally and ethically superior," feminists did a lot to damage their own movement in the South. For example, during the ERA debate in Georgia, Gloria Steinem was invited by pro-ERA groups to participate in a march on Capitol Hill in Atlanta. Many pro-ERA women felt that this was a very bad idea, for "Georgians considered Steinem radical and threatening, and her presence was likely to have an adverse effect on the legislature."[29]

The political landscape of Georgia, and the South in general, played an integral role in the defeat of the ERA. Jeffrey Jones attributes the defeat of the ERA, not to the women like Phyllis Schlafly who opposed the ERA, but to the culture that was "dominated by the patriarchal family and church" created by "Georgia's antebellum plantation economy." Prior to the women's movement, Georgia laws were not friendly toward women. Abortion was a criminal offense that was punishable by imprisonment for "not less than one nor more than ten years," and exceptions were made only in the case of rape, incest, or if the mother's life was in danger. This held true for a number of laws concerning the rights of women, for the Georgia General Assembly was and remains comprised of a dominant male membership, few of whom are willing to "expend political capital for a controversial cause" like the ratification of the ERA.[30]

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[29] De Hart, "Second Wave Feminism," 281; Wolfe, *Daughters of Canaan*, 198.
[30] Jeffrey Jones, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment" (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 1995), 3; Factfinders, "Georgia Code in 1973," folder 8, box 6, KFDC; Ibid., 4.

Cathey Steinberg, sponsor of the ERA in the Georgia House of Representatives, experienced patriarchal and sexist attitudes even on issues that were less controversial than the ERA and designed to promote women's health and safety under the law:

> During my first session (1977), the bill [modernizing the Georgia rape code] came up on the floor [of the House]. I never saw a group be so obnoxious in my entire life. They made jokes, they whistled, they hooted, the made comments like, 'she deserves what she gets,' and they laughed and they chuckled . . . I said to myself, 'I may never pass a bill on the floor of this House, but as long as I am here this will never happen again . . . If I did another thing [in the House], they would never treat women's issues this way.[31]

The political landscape of Georgia was hostile, and it was this arena in which the fight for ratification of the ERA took place. Pro-ERA activists and legislators chose to be optimistic, claiming that a chance for ratification in Georgia was possible despite warning from anti-ERA legislators like House Speaker Tom Murphy, who stated that "he could 'never' support the ERA because he has 'never had but one letter from [his] district in favor of it, and that lady moved out of the district.'" Despite opposition to the ERA, many legislators supported other legislation for women that addressed issues such as domestic violence and eliminating a part of Georgia code that defined "a husband as 'head of the family' and making his wife 'subject to him.'" Representative Wayne Snow, a Democrat from Rossville, Georgia, told the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, regarding the legislation, that "Most of us [legislators] are opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment, but I think it's time for us to stand up and be counted as a state that recognizes that wives and women have rights too."[32]

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[31] Cathey Steinberg, interview by Janet Paulk, 21 & 28 March 1997, transcript, GWOHPC.
[32] Carol Ashkinaze, "Georgia 'One of Most Likely' To Ratify ERA," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 6 February 1981, folder 6, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers; Carol Ashkinaze, "Bill Would De-'Subject' Ga. Wives," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 5 Feb 1981, folder 6, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers.

On January 4, 1979, the STOP ERA Committee in Georgia issued a publication addressing legislation and issues "deem[ed] unwise, unnecessary and harmful to the preservation of families and women of Georgia." Some of these proposed bills included the previously mentioned bill that would de-subject wives under Georgia law, a revision of the divorce laws that would allow for a no-fault divorce, and changes in federally-mandated childcare. Anti-ERA activists believed that the proposed legislation would "be at taxpayers' expense with huge, new bureaucratic agencies" and give control of families to the federal government.[33] In 1981, the Georgia General Assembly looked at "40 bills aimed at upgrading women's status" in the state of Georgia, including a domestic violence bill that was sponsored by anti-ERA legislator Representative Roy Barnes, who would go on to become Governor of Georgia in the 1990s. The 1981 legislative session was described by one legislator as having a "'heightened awareness . . . among all legislators, pro- and anti- ERA, that there really are laws that discriminate unfairly against women.'"[34] Some of the proposed legislation passed with overwhelming success, while other legislation, such as the bill that would eliminate the "'head of household'" distinction for husbands, did not pass. A majority of these bills were "vigorously opposed by STOP ERA, the Eagle Forum, and Mothers on the March, because of their alleged 'interference' in family matters."[35]

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[33] Kathryn Fink Dunaway, to "Honorable Legislator," KFDC.
[34] Carol Ashkinaze, "At Least 40 Bills Aimed at Upgrading Women's Status Have Been Place Before '81 Legislature," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 27 January 1981, folder 6, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers.
[35] Carol Ashkinaze, "Some Women's Bills Pass Though ERA Not Approved," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 29 March 1981, folder 7, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers.

Consideration of the ERA

Despite the changing attitudes toward legal rights for women, attitudes toward the ERA and everything it represented did not change, for, as Phyllis Schlafly stated, "there was never any real danger of Georgia ratifying ERA. The legislators saw through the propaganda for it. ERA was very hard-fought in Illinois, Florida, North Carolina, and Oklahoma. But Georgia was a piece of cake."[36] From 1973 to 1981, the ERA was consistently discussed in the Georgia General Assembly, much to the hope of the pro-ERA activists and the dismay of the anti-ERA activists. During the 1973 legislative session, the ERA was introduced and immediately sent to the House Special Judiciary Committee. Rather than vote the ERA out of Committee, the Chairman, Representative Andy Roach, assigned the ERA to a study committee, where it stayed for one year. Many pro-ERA activists felt "'tricked'" and that their views were not represented by his decision. An article in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, written on February 25, 1973, states that "They [pro-ERA activists] all concede that chances of either house passing ERA are slim but, . . . they want ERA put to a vote, if for no other reason, to see who their enemies really are."[37]

In 1974, the ERA was sent to the floor of the House by the Special Judiciary Committee *without* recommendation, a distinction that demonstrates the lack of legislative support behind the amendment. That year, the House defeated the ERA by a vote of 104 to 70. The next year, the Georgia Senate defeated the ERA by a vote of 33 to 22. In 1976, Betty Friedan, Kate Millett, and Gloria Steinem held a rally at the Capitol, where they "addressed about 2000 people in support of the ERA." 1978 to 1981 proved to be the most volatile years for ERA ratification efforts in Georgia. According to Cathey Steinberg, "people were afraid to put the ERA in because the Speaker didn't want the Equal Rights Amendment in the House. Therefore it kept

[36] Phyllis Schlafly interview.
[37] John York, "Women Feel 'Tricked;' Rights Bill Not Dead," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 25 February 1973, Margaret Miller Curtis papers.

going only in the Senate. Women up until then were afraid." In 1980, the Georgia Senate again defeated the ERA, this time by a vote of 32 to 23. In Georgia, the ERA proved to be a divisive piece of legislation that "generated some of the most bitter exchanges ever heard on the floor of the House or Senate." Representative Steinberg re-introduced the ERA "without fanfare" after the thirtieth legislative day, known as Crossover Day. After the thirtieth day, legislation introduced in either the House or the Senate can be assigned to a committee but no further action can be taken. Joyce Parker, then the President of ERA Georgia, told the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* that the pro-ERA movement believed there to be "'a very real increase in momentum for ratification.'"[38] Despite the optimism of pro-ERA activists and legislators, the ERA was soundly defeated in the House by a vote of 116 to 57. The resounding blow delivered to the ERA from the Georgia General Assembly further reinforced to feminists across the nation that the South was a bastion of patriarchal prejudice.

The Pro-ERA Movement in Georgia

In 1982, pro-ERA journalist Carol Ashkinaze argued that the ERA "threatens no one, except the person who would keep me down. Many of those who plan to vote against it can't even articulate their reasons." Southern feminists were a different breed of activist, for they were the first ones to recognize "the difference that differences makes" when it came to politics and perceptions of gender.[39] In the South, feminism took on a decidedly alternative persona, a more diplomatic, often concessionary approach to equality that could be explained and justified to the

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[38] Women's Oral History Project, "A Brief History of the Equal Rights Amendment in Georgia." Atlanta, Georgia: Georgia State University Special Collections, Women's Collection, 2006; Cathey Steinberg interview; Carol Ashkinaze, "Move to Pass ERA Readied for House," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 18 March 1981, folder 7, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers; Carol Ashkinaze, "Equal Rights Amendment Filed With Georgia House," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 19 March 1981, folder 7, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers.

[39] Carol Ashkinaze, "What Sort of Friend Is Lawmaker If He Votes Against the ERA?" *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 16 January 1982, Carol Ashkinaze papers; De Hart, "Second Wave Feminisms," 275.

men in their lives. Southern feminists rejected the public misconception that, to support equality for women, feminists had to reject men as friends, partners, lovers and husbands. While national feminists despaired at making the ERA a focus because they felt it made the women's movement into a "single-issue movement," many Southern feminists embraced activism around the ERA because it was considered a safer issue than abortion or homosexuality. According to Sherry Sutton, a pro-ERA activist from Atlanta, "anti-ERA people were saying . . . the ERA was just another way to have abortion on demand. And I remember thinking then what a shame that we had to sort of play down our involvement with such important people." The fact of the matter was that radical feminists were not very involved in statewide efforts to ratify the ERA, for they considered it "far too moderate a reform" and believed that the system was flawed and would need more work than a general amendment like the ERA. However, liberal, more mainstream feminists like Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan felt that working within the system was the best way to create change in the lives of women. Southern feminists followed this line of thought, believing that "sexism, like racism, was institutional as well as personal."[40]

Nellie Dunaway Duke, Chairwoman of the Georgia Commission on Women, was heavily involved in the pro-ERA movement. She became active in politics during the 1975-76 legislative session when the Georgia General Assembly was reviewing laws that affected women, and she read a footnote in the Georgia code that said, "'the above not apply to women, idiots, or children.'" According to Duke, she has "'been going after them [the legislature] ever since.'"[41] For a number of Southern women, the ERA became their introduction into the women's movement, and the "simple, egalitarian words of the Amendment itself . . . lead to an

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[40] Sara Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century's End* (New York: The Free Press, 2003), 5; Sherry Sutton, interview by Janet Paulk, 8 November 1998 and 7 March 1999, transcript, GWOHPC; Evans, *Tidal Wave*, 172; De Hart, "Second Wave Feminisms," 276.
[41] Nellie Dunaway Duke, interview with author, July 2001, Atlanta, Georgia.

epiphany akin to the experiences" of feminists in the 1960s. During the 1980s, Duke paid close attention to the battle for ratification, especially to the women who were opposed to the ERA. She remembers that the reasoning behind the defeat of the ERA was to protect women because they did not need equality but enjoyed having special rights. Duke is symbolic of many of the women who worked for the pro-ERA movement in Georgia. She was an area coordinator for ERAGA, a member of Women4ERA, and spoke in support of the ERA to a number of civic organizations around the state. Her activism demonstrates the fine line that Southern feminists walk in politics and with regards to women's issues.[42]

Like many women involved in the pro-ERA movement, Duke identified herself as a feminist, but only "in the sense that [we] advocated equality for women. I don't hate men."[43] Duke argued that confrontation and anger are counter-productive and that collaboration with like-minded men was preferred by many in the pro-ERA movement in Georgia. One reason for this is that Southern feminists approached gender roles in a different manner than the more radical feminists of the North. Sherry Sutton, a native Atlantan and pro-ERA activist remembers, "I learned to keep my mouth shut more, to take in what everybody thought, rather than just thinking, you know we've got this liberal agenda, and, by God, we are going to ram it through." Unlike Duke, Sutton was not already involved in local politics before becoming involved in the campaign to ratify the ERA. She was the legislative liaison for ERA Georgia from 1980 to 1981 and witnessed the height of the debate over the ERA at the Georgia General Assembly.

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[42] Evans, *Tidal Wave*, 173; Nellie Dunaway Duke interview.
[43] Nellie Dunaway Duke interview.

According to Sutton, Georgia was not a state that national feminists considered to be very important in the ERA fight:

> She [Eleanor Smeal] was at that point, president of NOW and not friendly at all to me, and I mean [she] just felt like . . . Georgia was a waste of time . . . she was right, and of course, they were focusing where they felt like they had a chance . . . So we were all stressed to the max . . . not having any kind of blueprint to follow, not knowing anything except that we knew we wanted to do it ourselves.[44]

The perception of pro-ERA women as being a radical lunatic fringe of the feminist movement was not the rhetoric of the anti-ERA movement, but was reinforced by the actions and words of certain members within the pro-ERA movement. For example, in a 1978 article of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, a pro-ERA legislator felt positive the ERA would pass the "male chauvinist fortress of the Georgia legislature," remarking that "'Hopefully, we can drive them crazy enough so they will change their minds, harass them enough to get it passed.'" This perception was further enhanced by the issue of race, for Atlanta in the 1970s and 1980s was still reeling from the Civil Rights movement and the phenomenon of white flight, which "not only create[d] a separate movement of white resistance in Atlanta but . . . fragment[ed] the coalition" of whites and blacks that were working together for racial equality in the South.[45]

Race had been a major factor in the political alignment of the South from the colonial era to the late twentieth century. De Hart states that "it is tempting to assume that, as white middle-class southerners, these women would naturally have been more racist than feminists elsewhere," but that, as a general rule, white and black feminists worked together in a more cohesive manner because of their work on the forefront of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s.[46]

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[44] Sherry Sutton interview.
[45] Henry Eason, "Assembly Advocates Still See ERA As Impossible Dream," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 10 October 1978, box 5, KFDC; Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 41.
[46] De Hart, "Second Wave Feminisms," 287.

For many Southern feminists, both black and white, "it was a political consciousness born of day-to-day experience, self-scrutiny, and self-understanding, as well as a long tradition of community activism" that defined their work and the relationship between black and white progressives in the South.[47]

In the hearts and minds of many black men and women, the campaign to ratify the ERA was considered to be "'a white woman's cause.'" It was believed to be a political campaign designed for women who were not poor or a minority in the United States, a campaign for women who were more worried about how to spend their "leisure time" than worried about economic and political survival. As a result, black women were not heavily involved in the pro-ERA movement, for it was viewed as another way in which black women would be "'exploited by white women trying to advance themselves.'" Despite black women's attempts to isolate themselves from white feminists in the ERA campaign, anti-ERA activists in the South had no qualms about linking the ERA to issues of race. Anti-ERA activists often followed a conservative view of the Civil Rights movement, seeing it as an attempt "by tyrannical government to shape the personal relations of its citizens . . . [and] interpreting the feminist agenda in the same way."[48] Unlike the feminist movement, the anti-feminist, anti-ERA movement was less diverse in demographics and with regards to the issues it addressed. The feminist movement in Georgia attempted to tackle a wide array of issues, while the anti-feminist movement focused on a general concept of moral consensus and traditional values.

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[47] De Hart, "Second Wave Feminisms," 287.
[48] Carol Ashkinaze, "ERA More Than 'White Woman's Cause," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 18 October 1980, folder 4, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers; Donald G. Matthews and Jane Sherron De Hart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 43.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STOP ERA MOVEMENT IN GEORGIA

"The Equal Rights Amendment," stated Mrs. Ann Ramson of the Georgia Women's Political Caucus, "stimulates so much sound and fury that emotions shout down facts." Once believed to have widespread support from women nationwide, the ERA failed in large part because of the activism and opposition of women. Many groups, both pro- and anti- believed that the ERA "would have had no significant immediate tangible impact on women's lives." Even House Speaker Tom Murphy stated that he did not believe the ERA would cause "any of those dire, disastrous things they're talking about . . . to happen." Nevertheless, debate around the ERA became shaped by perceptions of what the amendment would do rather than by a true understanding of the legal ramifications of passing such an amendment. Each side argued for and against the ERA on the basis of moral principles, the belief in equality versus the belief that women needed protection. In the realm of symbolic politics, the ERA stood out like a beacon, a lightening rod for activists on both sides of the aisle. For opponents, the focus was on "what the ERA would 'say,' not what it would do."[1]

[1] Ann Ramson, "Replies to Nelson Price's Column," Source Unknown, Date Unknown, folder 10, box 6, KFDC; Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 47; Carol Ashkinaze, "Murphy Says He Doesn't Believe ERA Would Have Disastrous Consequences," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 14 November 1981, folder 15, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers; Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 109.

In his article, "The Social Basis of Antifeminism: Religious Networks and Culture," Jerome Himmelstein argues that abortion rights and the ERA are "the two most important . . . set of women's issues that have been the focus of intense political conflict" in the latter part of the twentieth century. Himmelstein provides two theories of antifeminism that are necessary to understand the mind of an anti-ERA woman. He suggests that antifeminism, as a philosophy, is "a response to the status anxiety engendered by social change." In the early 1960s and 1970s, the feminist movement was promoting many drastic societal changes in the name of equality; however, many women felt threatened by the perceived radicalism of these women and worried that their own lives would be altered against their will. While feminists "urged women to stand on their own feet," a number of women were concerned that the protections granted to them under existing laws would be eroded, leaving them vulnerable in a dangerous world.[2]

Himmelstein's second theory is that the women who promote an antifeminist belief or sentiment have "the most to fear from any measure, like abortion or ERA, that seems to threaten the tenuous security they find in marriage and family." This suggests that antifeminists share with feminists a common fear of male-domination, but, rather than promoting independence and equality, antifeminists take refuge in the familiar institutions of marriage and family and rely on an established ethical code, usually religious in nature, to prevent men from taking advantage of them. Religion further enhances this point of view, for, as Klatch states, "'life is a lot more sane and livable if you know where you stand. Women need to know that somebody will have the authority and make the decision, and that your job is to be happy with it."[3] Certainly, issues of abortion and the ERA are very polarizing for women, whether feminist or antifeminist; however,

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[2] Jerome Himmelstein, "The Social Basis of Antifeminism: Religious Networks and Culture," in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 25 (1986), 1;Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 69.
[3] Himmelstein, "Antifeminism," 2; Rebecca Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 45.

it is very important not to demonize those who identify with more traditional roles for women. Himmelstein urges researchers to tread carefully when examining the role of antifeminist activism and "not be too hasty to characterize the Antis as moved by feelings of vulnerability and as being essentially dependent, passive creatures." Phyllis Schlafly believes that it is the feminist movement, not the antifeminist movement, that "paints women as victims of an oppressive male-dominated society" and that, in her mind, "American women are the most fortunate creatures on earth."[4]

The women of the antifeminist movement were not victims of society, despite attempts made by feminist scholars to portray them as such. The women involved in the anti-ERA movement were politically active, astute individuals who were heavily involved in the conservative grassroots movement that arose in the 1960s. In many respects, anti-ERA women were more politically active than their counterparts. It is important to recognize that anti-ERA women are, at the very core, activists who "do not merely have an opinion; they have been mobilized in some way to act upon it." To assume that activism, by definition, is limited to the promotion of liberal ideologies is erroneous, and yet, when it comes to examining the women involved in the STOP ERA movement, it is often forgotten that these women were more than glorified housewives. Part of the problem was that anti-ERA women did not self-identify as activists nor did they identify the STOP ERA campaign as a movement. Sherry Sutton, a pro-ERA Atlanta woman, stated that "I've always loved the word 'movement' because of what it says. If you'll notice, right-wingers never used that word. They never talk about . . . anything like that because they see that as kind of a dirty word, radical, and out of the mainstream."[5] Regardless of whether they identified in these ways, the women involved in the anti-ERA movement helped to mobilize

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[4] Himmelstein, "Antifeminism," 6. Phyllis Schlafly, interview by author, 25 October 2005

[5] Himmelstein, "Antifeminism," 2; Sherry Sutton, interview by Janet Paulk, 8 November 1998 and 7 March 1999, transcript, GWOHPC.

the growing conservatism in America and lead it not only to a stunning defeat of the ERA but to a backlash against the successes of the modern feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

Origin of the Movement

The STOP ERA Committee was created in 1972 by Phyllis Schlafly. Schlafly, a prominent member of the growing conservative grassroots movement and a proponent of Barry Goldwater for president in 1964, believed that "a woman should be treated 'like a woman, not a man, and certainly not a sex-neutral person.'" Like the social conservatives in the antifeminist and anti-ERA movement, Schlafly viewed the world through a lens where the central theme was Christianity and believed America to be "a country founded upon religious beliefs and deeply rooted in a religious tradition." The 1972 passage of the ERA by Congress gave anti-ERA women a cause to rally around in the name of womanhood and the promotion of the American dream. It also gave Schlafly, who had previously been labeled as too conservative by her association with the anti-communist movement and the John Birch Society, "a respectable issue on which to build support." Prior to the ERA, Schlafly had never given feminism and the women's movement much consideration in terms of voicing her opposition. The growing power of the feminist movement and the backlash of the antifeminist movement would "[reflect] a turn in grassroots conservatism" that would become synonymous with Schlafly.[6]

[6] Donald G. Matthews and Jane Sherron De Hart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 69; Rebecca Klatch, *Women and the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 22; Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America since 1960* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 387; Donald Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 216.

According to Schlafly, the difference between a feminist and a woman who is active in politics is that

> People who call themselves feminists are almost always pro-abortion, pro-gay rights, and disdainful of the role of fulltime homemaker. They look upon caring for children as a menial, non-rewarding activity. I know that women are capable of great achievement.[7]

Despite the popularity of the feminist movement, more and more women were "very much a part of the constituency of the Right" and very involved in conservative politics throughout the country. It is ironic that women in the South have "often made feminist gains for reasons having nothing to do with feminism" and even have to do with activism against the feminist movement.[8] The STOP ERA Committee in Georgia is an excellent example of this point. The women involved in the anti-ERA movement were able to be publicly vocal in their opposition to the ERA without feeling hypocritical because they felt that,

> By divorcing their personal liberation from their public stands on sexual politics, they could privately take advantage of feminism while deploring its influence. They could indeed 'have it all'- by working to prevent all other women from having that same opportunity.[9]

The ERA was introduced in the Georgia General Assembly in 1972, but the real battle between pro-ERA and anti-ERA activists took place during 1978 through 1981. In 1972, Georgia was not considered a priority by either NOW or the national STOP ERA Committee. Sherry Sutton remembers that the pro-ERA movement was trying to get the amendment ratified in Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida.[10]

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[7] Phyllis Schlafly interview.
[8] Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origin of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 87; Catherine Clinton, "Introduction," in *Half Sisters of History: Southern Women and the American Past*, ed. Catherine Clinton (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 11.
[9] Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 256
[10] Sherry Sutton interview.

As the campaign to ratify the ERA in Georgia grew stronger, the national STOP ERA Committee began to organize a powerful opposition movement. This movement operated under the belief that allowing the ERA to be ratified in Georgia would "'be in total rebellion to God.'" Utilizing the connections established through church networks and conservative grassroots politics, the STOP ERA Committee established a powerful lobbying force in the state of Georgia. From 1978 to 1981, the STOP ERA Committee organized town hall meetings with legislators, outreach meetings and prayer groups within church communities, and media savvy publicity, such as bake sales for legislators in the Capitol Rotunda and having guest speakers, such as Phyllis Schlafly, at their events. These women operated under the notion that feminism has "a shocking tendency to paint all women with the same brush and to turn to the state for the collective redress of their grievances." The members of the STOP ERA Committee, like many conservative women, "abhor the idea of some patriarchal state interfering or intervening in [their] life, even in the guise of helping or protecting."[11] It is this mindset that contributes to the rise and popularity of the anti-ERA movement in Georgia and the success of the STOP ERA Committee as a lobbying force.

In the minds of anti-ERA women, feminists were wrong to support the ERA, for "any given woman is likely to get more out of using her rights than demanding them."[12] They believed that there was a hidden agenda behind the push for the ERA, one which would destroy homes and families by pushing for increased federal jurisdiction, allowing gays and lesbians equal rights, sponsoring abortions financed by the federal government, forcing women out of the home and

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[11] "ERA Opponents Plan Strategy," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 1980, Margaret Miller Curtis papers; Elinor Burkett, *The Right Woman: A Journey Through the Heart of Conservative America* (New York: Scribner Press, 1998), 49

[12] "Calling time on ERA," The *Washington Star*, 12 July 1978, folder 2, box 6, KFDC.

into jobs, and requiring women to participate in the draft.[13] Many of these issues were created in the minds of the anti-ERA activists but felt nonetheless real to them. The devaluing of the family and replacement of housewife as the most sacred position for women led many women to become active against the ratification of the ERA. In a copy of *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, Philip Kurland, a professor of law at the University of Chicago Law School, stated that the ERA was "'largely misrepresented as a women's rights amendment when in fact the primary beneficiary will be men.'" Anti-ERA women feared that the ERA would wipe out Social Security benefits for wives by discarding the "principle of law that [states that] a husband must support his wife or widow in retirement."[14] The world view of anti-ERA women was that legal protection was required to keep men from taking advantage of women. The notion of separate spheres for men and women makes perfect sense in the mind of an anti-ERA activist, for the dangerous outside world belonged to men and the safe harbor of family and legally-protected marriage belonged to women.

Leaders of the STOP ERA Committee

"'God has made us special,'" stated Emmaline Phillips, an anti-ERA activist, to the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. "'He never put us in bondage, and let's work hard to keep an amendment from doing so.'"[15] The women who comprised the anti-ERA movement in Georgia came from a wide array of backgrounds and experiences. Not all women who opposed the ERA opposed feminism or other legislation designed to protect women, and some of the anti-ERA activists came from the feminist movement. One such woman was Eliza Paschall, a anti-ERA activist in

[13] "Calling Time on ERA."
[14] Phyllis Schlafly, "ERA Takes Away Rights From Wives," The *Phyllis Schlafly Report* 7 (November 1973), folder 7, box 6, KFDC; Phyllis Schlafly, "How ERA Will Affect Social Security," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 8 (October 1974), folder 7, box 6, KFDC.
[15] "ERA Opponents Plan Strategy."

Georgia who "was very much a feminist and then turned and became an anti-feminist" during the campaign to ratify the ERA. Formerly an active participant in the Civil Rights movement and a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Paschall "simply changed her mind" and discarded "the staunchly held feminist principles" she had held for many years to embrace the new conservative women's movement that was growing in its opposition to the ERA and other feminist causes. Paschall, once a card-carrying member of NOW, took "pleasure in trotting out her former feminist credentials" for the world to see how she converted to the Right. Paschall wrote in *Atlanta Journal Constitution* that "I have become [aware] that the ERA is totally unnecessary. If not being for it means being against it, then I am against it." She went on to state that "more than 100 laws of the state of Georgia extend legal rights to women and not to men, whereas less than a dozen laws extend rights to men and not to women." Paschall drew attention to the very issue that anti-ERA women feared, the erosion of protective legislation for women in a multitude of areas ranging from the draft to domestic violence protection. Furthermore, Paschall added that she was "convinced that the biggest obstacle to women's full enjoyment of their legal rights is the preoccupation with ERA ratification." After the success of the anti-ERA movement's prevention of ratification, Paschall went on to work for Ronald Reagan in Washington D.C. and was touted as a traitor to the feminist cause who "Georgia feminists will surely take a degree of comfort" in no longer being associated with her.[16]

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[16] Cathey Steinberg, interviewed by Janet Paulk, 21 & 28 March 1997, transcript, GWOHPC; Carol Ashkinaze, "Atlanta's fallen-away feminist," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 1 June 1984, folder 8, box 5, Carol Ashkinaze papers; Eliza Paschall, "The ERA Is a Fraud," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 13 August 1978, folder 2, box 6, KFDC; "Atlanta's fallen-away feminist."

Despite this harsh criticism from her former colleagues, Paschall continued her activism, stating that

> Betty Friedan, whom I love and respect but with whom I disagree on this issue, says we need the ERA as a symbol. We don't need symbols and shrines to individual freedom and dignity. In our Constitution, our laws, our votes and in ourselves, we've got the real thing. Let's use it![17]

Paschall is just one example of the complexity with which feminism and anti-feminism in the South are to be addressed. Political activism is an important part of Southern culture, and, for conservative women, "political activism is interpreted as part of the self-sacrificing and altruism essential to the female role." While feminists rejected any notion of tradition and southern womanhood, conservative women picked up the banner of activism and carried it into the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The women of the anti-ERA movement in Georgia are just one example of the multitude of roles that women have played in Southern politics. For the women involved in the anti-ERA movement, their role as housewife led naturally to their role in politics, for "being a housewife includes cleaning up the political world."[18] This explains why a number of women who opposed the ratification of the ERA supported the passage of other legislation that was designed to protect women's interests.

From 1978 to 1982, pollsters predicted that Georgia would be a state that would ratify the ERA with great ease, citing "strong support for the Equal Rights Amendment in districts represented by ERA opponents or undecided legislators."[19] However, the pollsters did not take into account the surge of opposition that would resound from a large percentage of Georgia women, activists like Kathryn Fink Dunaway, Chairman of the STOP ERA Committee in Georgia. Dunaway was involved in politics from an early age and was often described by her

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[17] "The ERA Is A Fraud."
[18] Klatch, *Women of the New Right*, 46.
[19] Carol Ashkinaze, "Polls Indicate ERA Opponents Out of Step with Constituents," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 8 January 1982, folder 1, box 5, Carol Ashkinaze papers.

peers as "dedicated, highly respected, she talked a mile a minute, very pleasant, never took offense." Her husband, John Dunaway, was a former state legislator, and, by listening and watching him for years, Dunaway gained an insider's knowledge of the political system in Georgia. She was active in the Republican Party, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Georgia Federation of Republican Women. Dunaway and Schalfly, whose own husband was an attorney, were "both in Republican circles," and, when it became apparent that Georgia was going to take action on the ERA, Schlafly asked Dunaway to be the chairman of the STOP ERA Committee in Atlanta. Dunaway became involved in the anti-ERA movement because she did not believe that equality and equity were the same and that it was more important to draft specific bills to correct specific problems. Until the failure of the ERA in 1982, Dunaway and Schlafly kept a continuous correspondence about the plan to prevent the ratification of the amendment. On several occasions, Schlafly came to Atlanta as a guest speaker and stayed with Dunaway and her husband rather than in a hotel.[20] The close-knit ties between the two anti-ERA women suggest a strong bond that is exemplary of the other women involved in the movement and of a broader belief that political activism was a widening of women's separate spheres.

Lee Wysong served as the Co-Chairman of the STOP ERA Committee in Georgia, serving under the leadership of Dunaway and Schlafly. Wysong, raised in Atlanta by politically active parents, held strong beliefs about the role of government in individual's lives. She was active in the Daughters of the American Revolution, where she met Dunaway and, as a result, became involved in the STOP ERA Committee. Initially, Wysong had misgivings about being in a leadership role. Nevertheless, she maintained her position as co-chair until the failure of the ERA was cemented in 1982. Wysong did not want to be in a leadership role but continued her

[20] Lee Wysong, interview by Jeffrey Jones, 4 March 1995, box 1, Jeffrey Jones papers; Kathryn Grayburn, "'STOP ERA' Supporters Urge Women To Reject It," *The Neighbor*, 23 January 1974, folder 2, box 6, KFDC; Lee Wysong interview.

work out of respect for Dunaway, who died in 1980. "She [Dunaway] did all the organizing of chapters and supporters. I did all the debating," Wysong recollected to Jeffrey Jones in 1995. "Debating made her very very nervous." Wysong's involvement was due in large part because she felt that feminism was "a phony dangerous concept" and that it meant "that women are abused and deprived and must fight this role and just match men in every way." She was opposed to the ERA because she believed it would have a horrendous effect on marriage and family and that it would cause women to lose privileges rather than gain equality.[21] Wysong acknowledged that women were drawn to the anti-ERA movement for a variety of reasons but that, in her mind, reducing the amount of interference from the federal government was the key issue. The anti-ERA movement played host to women who were concerned about any number of issues being brought up by the opposing side. Certainly, some women were more concerned with the issue of abortion, while others were more focused on the perceived threat to a wife's legal right to her husband's social security. Regardless of the reasons, the women of the anti-ERA movement became a powerful force in Georgia and presented a united political platform that led to a crushing defeat of the ERA.

The STOP ERA Platform

"Like nationalism and some forms of religious conversion," Jane Mansbridge states in *Why We Lost the ERA*, "some kinds of political activity engender a transformation of self that requires reconfiguring the world into camps of enemies and friends."[22] Clearly, the anti-ERA activists and the pro-ERA feminists felt that the opposing side was the enemy in a fierce battle for world views. The anti-ERA movement felt that the feminist movement was nothing more than a group

[21] Lee Wysong interview.
[22] Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 179.

"full of hippies, a great number of who were flagrantly homosexual." Wysong characterized the feminist movement as a group of women who did not like men and wanted to pit women against men in every area. The leaders of the anti-ERA movement used this persona to their advantage and were very careful to construct an image of themselves that appealed to the legislators and the broader public. In other words, the anti-ERA movement encouraged their members to "act like a lady, dress like a lady" at all times.[23]

The platform of the anti-ERA movement was the main contributor to their success. Unlike the pro-ERA activists, the anti-ERA participants had a firm grip on the complex nature of state politics and used this to their advantage. Many of the leaders in the anti-ERA movement were involved in state politics by means of other organizations, while the pro-ERA movement had most of its leadership on the national level. Proponents of the ERA hoped to keep the ERA discussion centered on legal issues, but opponents were not afraid to roll up their sleeves and address the deep-seated emotional issues surrounding the notion of equality for women and what the ERA would do to the bedrock of Southern society. The decision to address the emotions and concerns surrounding the ERA led to an eventually victory for the STOP ERA Committee, both nationwide and on the state level. The main concern was the fear that the feminist movement would lead to the erosion of the family as a sacred unit in society. Anti-ERA activists believed that the "institution of the family is advantageous for women for many reasons" and that "family gives a woman the physical, financial and emotional security" that she needs in life.[24] For this reason, the anti-ERA movement centered their activities by focusing on issues that they believed would lead to the erosion of the family.

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[23] Lee Wysong interview.
[24] Phyllis Schlafly, "What's Wrong With 'Equal Rights' for Women?" *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 5 (February 1972), folder 7, box 11, KFDC.

The STOP ERA platform expressed an alternative version of liberation for women and discounted "the claim that American women are downtrodden and unfairly treated," describing these ideas as a major fraud perpetuated by the evil feminist movement.[25]

The STOP ERA Committee made their first advancement in Georgia in 1973 when the Georgia House of Representatives sent the ERA to the Special Judiciary Committee. Hearings were held on the amendment and, both proponents and opponents of the ERA were present to speak to the bill. Initially, pro-ERA activists believed that there would be very little opposition to the amendment because polls indicated that there was broad support for the ERA but the climate changed when anti-ERA activists arrived on the scene. According to Wysong, the differences between the two sides were "so dramatic" that it left no doubt in the minds of legislators that the ERA would be a divisive issue. Prior to this point, the ERA had been solely a national issue associated with Schlafly, who would rail against the ERA in her newsletter, *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*. Members of the Georgia chapter of the STOP ERA Committee subscribed to the newsletter and distributed it at meetings and at the Capitol. In the reports, legislators read about a number of issues that concerned the anti-ERA activists, including the presence of women in the military and how they "can seriously affect the ability of the armed forces to handle defense emergencies."[26] This concern, plus the potential for women to be drafted under the ERA, gave legislators one of many reasons to vote against the amendment. In the South, the mental image of men going abroad to defend their country and women remaining stateside to keep the home fires burning was still a popularly-held belief. The military presence in Vietnam and the savage conflict witnessed by a nation in the 1960s and 1970s reinforced this belief in many parts of the country, but particularly the South. The draft remained a constant

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[25] "What's Wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women?"
[26] Lee Wysong interview; Phyllis Schlafly, "What Sex-Equality Means in the Military," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 13 (September 1979), folder 7, box 11, KFDC.

source of fear for the women of the anti-ERA movement, much more so than the pro-ERA movement. The pro-ERA movement accepted that the ERA would allow the federal government to draft women into military combat because "their ideology called for full equality with men, not for equality with exceptions." However, most feminists did not consider the draft issue to be a serious one because "most feminists opposed the draft" on general principle and were unable to comprehend the importance of the military in the South and the strict gender roles that formed around it. Because the anti-ERA women were fully aware of the importance of the military in Georgia with its numerous bases across the state, they were able to exploit this concern by sending "a host of teenage girls . . . to tell legislators that they did not want to be drafted and sent into combat."[27] The tactics used by the anti-ERA movement proved to be most effective in creating opposition to the amendment among the legislators. As a result, the ERA remained an inactive piece of legislation for many years.

Another issue that the STOP ERA Committee in Georgia addressed was the issue of homosexuality. The radical feminist movement in other parts of the country seemed to embrace same-sex relationships, and, in Georgia, this taboo lifestyle offended a large number of people. For the anti-ERA women, homosexuality represented a threat to the traditional, nuclear family of man, woman, and child. Wysong stated that one of the reasons so many women expressed opposition to the ERA was because it "would have given blanket privileges to homosexuals." In an issue of *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, published in September of 1974, passing the ERA is equated with allowing the homosexual agenda to "interfere with our right to have a country in which the family is recognized, protected, and encouraged as the basic unit of society."[28] A lot of the anti-ERA response to homosexuality had to do with the manner in which the radicals in

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[27] Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 3, 71, 66.
[28] Lee Wysong interview; Phyllis Schlafly, "ERA and Homosexual 'Marriages,'" *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 8 (September 1974), folder 7, box 11, KFDC.

the feminist movement conducted themselves. Meanwhile, the feminist movement was torn on the issue of sexuality, especially with regards to the role it played in the ERA debate. Betty Friedan was widely known for disparaging the connection between feminism and lesbianism by referring to lesbians in the movement as "the lavender menace." Friedan felt that linking the lesbian agenda with feminism would result in a severe backlash. In many ways, she was right, for the conservative women who became involved in the anti-ERA movement felt threatened by feminism and lesbianism. In their minds, not only were feminists telling them that it was wrong to enjoy being a wife and mother, they were encouraging women to leave their families and become lesbians. Wysong recalled a hearing on the ERA during 1973 where a pro-ERA delegation attended dressed in purple pant suits and baseball caps with "We Are Proud to Be Gay" emblazoned across the front. Blatant, in-your-face actions such as these, according to Wysong, firmly cemented in the legislators minds the connection between homosexuality and the ERA.[29]

One of the main components of the STOP ERA Committee platform was focusing on the issue of abortion. In Georgia, abortion had been illegal for a number of years until the landmark Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, which ruled that laws preventing abortion were illegal and violated a woman's right to privacy and freedom to choose. Conservative women, like those involved in the STOP ERA movement, were appalled that a woman would choose to reject "the moral order" of society by having an abortion. In the minds of these women, the family and motherhood were sacred institutions provided to women by God, and, "when a woman [chose] an abortion in order to place a career above motherhood," she was challenging God.[30]

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[29] Brownmiller, *In Our Time*, 71; Lee Wysong interview.
[30] George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 268.

The ERA was viewed as amendment that would provide "easy, rampant abortion" to women, despite a state's desire to curb this procedure. The combination of abortion and federal intervention resonated deeply in the South and made it nearly impossible to get the ERA ratified in Southern states like Georgia. Pro-ERA activists had to be very careful to separate themselves from groups that supported abortion rights, but anti-ERA activists welcomed the joint relationships formed between the STOP ERA Committee and anti-abortion groups in the state. In fact, one of the main anti-abortion groups, Mothers on the March, was comprised of members that split from STOP ERA to attack the amendment from an exclusively anti-abortion perspective.[31] Abortion and the ERA were part of the same platform for many women involved in the anti-ERA movement, for both issues were believed to lead to the erosion of the family unit and the status of housewives and motherhood by encouraging unnecessary liberation. The connection established between anti-feminism, anti-ERA, and anti-abortion activists and organizations would continue to be prevalent into the early twenty-first century.

A large percentage of the anti-ERA concerns were based on the fear of losing even more status in society. The growing feminist movement encouraged women to leave the home and work, and, therefore, housewives lost a significant amount of status. It would be very easy to portray these conservative women as simple-minded relics of a long-forgotten South. A more apt description of the women involved in the anti-ERA movement would be that the statements they made, however false as facts, were true to their perceptions of the world, for "as statements of *meaning* they were undoubtedly true."[32] George Lakoff, a professor of linguistics at the University of California in Berkeley suggests that politics, specifically American politics, is centered on the "link between family-based morality and politics [that] comes from one of the

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[31] Charles Rice, "ERA: Easy, Rampant Abortion," *The Wanderer* 13 February 1975, folder 4, box 6, KFDC; Lee Wysong interview.
[32] Mathews and De Hart, *Politics of ERA*, 136.

most common ways we have of conceptualizing what a nation is, namely, as a family." For the women of the anti-ERA movement, the concept of family was symbolic of a much larger issue than their own experiences. If the nation, America, and the state, Georgia, are symbolic of a family, then it could be reasoned that the feminist movement was attempting to destroy not only the basic unit of society, but society as a whole. Lakoff explains that the use of language and metaphor allows human beings to reach conclusions and develop a perception of the world that affects our understanding of politics. Because the conservative women involved in the anti-ERA movement were active in politics and matters of the state, they were very patriotic; therefore, any sign of a threat to the larger family (i.e., the nation) should be prevented. The ERA was symbolic of the larger threat to these women, because it connected issues like military combat, homosexuality, and abortion with federal government intervention. The amendment itself was rather simple, fifty-two words that gave women equal standing as men in the face of the federal government, but it would be "a mistake to assume that the second and third paragraphs, giving Congress the power to enforce the ERA . . . are as easily understood."[33] This misunderstanding enabled the women of the anti-ERA movement to create opposition to an amendment that had broad support in the initial years of its passing Congress.

[33] Lakoff, *Moral Politics*, 13; Carol Ashkinaze, "Lack of 'States' Rights' On ERA Is What Gives Conservatives Fits," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 9 January 1982, folder 1, box 5, Carol Ashkinaze papers.

Grassroots Action

The STOP ERA Committee was successful in Georgia and nationwide because of its affiliation with the Eagle Forum. Founded in 1972 and cited as "the alternative to women's lib," the Eagle Forum was a pro-family volunteer organization founded by Phyllis Schlafly, which had an extensive network of conservative volunteers and media outlets throughout the country.[34] The anti-ERA movement in Georgia was able to use this vast network of conservative-minded people to draw attention to their platform and to provide a strong base of opposition to the ERA. At the height of the ERA frenzy in Georgia, the STOP ERA Committee launched a communications system that enlisted the aid of volunteers. This formalized version of a phone tree was present in every congressional and state district so that the anti-ERA movement would "be able to rally our side quickly and efficiently."[35] This system would enable all the leaders of the movement to mobilize volunteers for an appearance at the Capitol or encourage volunteers to call legislators on the day that important legislation was to be discussed in committee or on the House or Senate floor.

In addition to phone trees, the STOP ERA Committee had access to the mailing addresses of volunteers. The leadership mailed copies of *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* and *The Eagle Forum Newsletter* as well as STOP ERA propaganda to their members. Newsletters that asked the women of Georgia "Are You Sure You Want To Be 'Liberated'?" and "Do You Want To Lose Your Right To Privacy?," were sent out statewide and touched on feelings that echoed in the hearts of many conservative and even moderate women in the South. They also mailed out pamphlets that urged women to reject the ERA to protect the "homemaker's right to get Social

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[34] *Eagle Forum*, Alton, Illinois: Eagle Forum, Database on-line, Accessible from http://www.eagleforum.org, 5 May 2006

[35] Kathryn Fink Dunaway, "Letter to Mrs. Rene Welch," STOP ERA Committee, 15 June 1977, folder 8, box 4, KFDC.

Security benefits" and create a society that will continue to "recognize the value of the wife and mother in the home."[36]

STOP ERA also addressed political issues that were relevant to the ERA in their letters and pamphlets. In a letter written for mass publication to media outlets, Dunaway and Wysong commented on a ruling made by the Georgia Supreme Court during the ERA debate, stating that

> Judge Charles Wofford's ruling that alimony payments are unconstitutional in Georgia should be reversed for the sake of the divorced woman who has been a full time homemaker. Such rulings as this are to be expected if the so-called Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution of the United States should be ratified.[37]

By demonstrating ways that the ERA could potentially harm the women of Georgia, the STOP ERA movement gained enormous support as the debate raged on from 1978 to 1982. According to Wysong, this shift occurred as a result of people learning about the potential ramifications of the ERA and realizing that they were on the wrong side of the issue. Wysong cites Eliza Paschall as an example of this shift in political consciousness, stating that Paschall "was a logical woman" who "always had an open mind." The strength and determination with which the anti-ERA movement attacked the feminist movement and proponents of the ERA were "a testament to the strength and standing of the women's movement" in the latter twentieth century.[38] The anti-ERA movement was a well-oiled political machine that adopted the grassroots techniques of the liberal movements in the 1960s to bring their views to a broader audience. The anti-ERA movement was successful because its proponents knew how to best utilize the media to their advantage, how to effectively lobby state legislators, and how to work with anti-ratification campaigns in other states.

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[36] "Ladies, Have You Heard?" STOP ERA Committee, Date Unknown, folder 12, box 10, KFDC; "Don't Let 'ERA' Tear Up Your Social Security Card," STOP ERA Committee, Date Unknown, folder 12, box 10, KFDC.
[37] Kathryn Fink Dunaway, "Letter to News Media," STOP ERA Committee, Date Unknown, folder 15, box 7, KFDC.
[38] Lee Wysong interview; Faludi, *Backlash*, 232.

The Use of Media

One of the main reasons that the anti-ERA movement was so successful was because of its media savor faire. The leaders of the movement, such as Dunaway and Wysong, had been active in state politics with other organizations and were well-versed "in the apocalyptic jargon of the threat of communism and civil rights," which they used to predict the dangers of the ERA to women if it were to be ratified. As a result of their previous activism, they were very knowledgeable about state politics and the important role that media played in the perception of issues. Dunaway and Wysong took advantage of the fact that pro-ERA activists had very little money and experience with state politics. Because ratification was determined from state to state, the anti-ERA movement was able to use its contacts with reporters and television and radio personalities to promote its stance on the controversial amendment. Dunaway and Wysong, as well as the other members of the STOP ERA Committee, were very aware of the perception of feminists as "radical liberals" who were "just mean."[39]

The anti-ERA movement paid very close attention to the actions of the pro-ERA movement and did everything it could to counter those actions. In a 1979 edition of *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, it was noted that the pro-ERA movement was attempting "to shift the battleground for the decision about ratification *from* the state legislatures *to* the media." This was a decision that turned out to be detrimental to the pro-ERA movement but worked to the advantage of the anti-ERA movement. One of the factors that helped the anti-ERA movement was the loss of interest in ratification by proponents and moderates. The ERA "lost much of its momentum" as the amendment was rendered more controversial as the years passed.[40] In Georgia, the ERA was

[39] Jeffrey Jones, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment," (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 1995), 103; Lee Wysong interview.
[40] Phyllis Schlafly, "Women's Magazines Promote ERA – But Deny Equal Rights," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 13 (December 1979), folder 4, box 11, KFDC; Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 388.

popular amongst a small portion of influential people within the circles of local liberal activism, but, according to Jones, the idea that men were responsible for "safeguarding a woman's virtue from worldly vices dominated" the rest of the state. The anti-ERA women were proponents of this "hierarchical social order" and used the image of a 'southern belle' to perpetuate their fears about the ERA to the rest of Georgia.[41]

"All of the women's magazines together,'" stated Helen Gurley Brown, then editor of *Cosmopolitan*, "may not be as effective as Phyllis Schlafly with her rabble-rousing TV appearances." However, the women of the anti-ERA movement in Georgia were the exact opposite of this description, portraying for the world that they were the exact replica of "southern belles and ladies." Demonstrating to the populace and the legislators that they were traditional Southern women who still needed protection from the dangers of the world was very important to their cause. Dunaway and Wysong were adamant that the volunteers within the STOP ERA Committee were always "respectable" in public appearances, serving as a stark contrast to the pro-ERA activists who often showed up to hearings and press conferences in jeans and t-shirts with controversial slogans emblazoned across the front. In a debate on the ERA that took place in May 1973, Friedan told Schlafly that she would like to burn her at the stake when it came to the ERA. Schlafly's response was poised, articulate and demonstrated no signs of anger or antagonism: "I'm glad you said that, because that just shows that the intemperate, agitating proponents of the ERA are so intolerant of the views of other people."[42] This interaction is reflective of the anti-ERA movement's approach to the media when it came to debating the merits of the ERA. It also demonstrates how the pro-ERA activists failed to understand the significance of the media and the audience when it came to political discourse.

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[41] Jones, "Georgia and the ERA," 104.
[42] "Women's Magazines Promote ERA – But Deny Equal Rights;" Clinton, 5; Phyllis Schlafly, "Let's Stop ERA," *New Guard*, September 1973, folder 5, box 13, KFDC.

The STOP ERA Committee in Georgia took its direction straight from Schlafly and the national leadership of the organization, which emphasized politeness, calm, and poise when in a public forum. Dunaway and Wysong created a guide for television appearances to assist their volunteers with creating the best public face. The purpose of this was to make sure that the women involved in the anti-ERA movement were the exact opposite of the proponents of the ERA in dress, presentation, and manner, signifying to the rest of the state that the conservative women were the true representatives of womanhood in Georgia. The volunteer guide was created "to strengthen our Stop ERA position by helping our representatives put forth their best image." The guidebook provided instructions and suggestions for every aspect of a woman's personal appearance. In regards to makeup, it emphasized that "makeup is necessary for any type of camera appearance" and that blush "should be worn under all circumstances." Volunteers were encouraged to examine magazines and observe the models for an idea of how makeup was to be applied, for "the strength of coloring you look for in your lip, eye and cheek makeup should be in direct relation to the amount of contrast in your hair, eye and skin color."[43]

The guide also stated that a lady's hair should always "look feminine" and that her clothing must "be well-fitted and never snug." Clothing was to be tasteful, simple, and elegant. The preference among STOP ERA women was to wear skirts instead of pants, which were associated with the women's liberation movement. When on stage or in front of a camera, women were instructed to sit with their backs straight and to "keep feet and knees close together" to avoid inappropriate positions.[44] Finally, they were told to avoid nervous twitching, to speak calmly and with authority, and to practice speaking in front of the mirror before going to a public forum.

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[43] "Television and Stage-Type Appearances," STOP ERA Committee, Date Unknown, folder 4, box 12, KFDC.
[44] Ibid.

All of these suggestions coalesced to create the picture perfect image of a Southern lady who relished her traditional role as homemaker and proponent of the values of traditional womanhood.

The anti-ERA activists worked hard to promote their viewpoints in the media. In 1973, radio and television stations were granting proponents air time to discuss the ERA. The National STOP ERA Committee drafted a letter that stated "the majority of women who do not support the movement known generally as 'women's lib' or 'feminist'" were often discriminated against in the media and not given an opportunity to present their side of the story. This letter was sent to every available media outlet in the states that had campaigns against ratification. In Georgia, the STOP ERA Committee demanded that their viewpoints be heard by the media and that the organization welcomed "public affairs programming on issues affecting women" as long as the anti-feminist viewpoint was included. The letter to news outlets also stated that "women should be portrayed with dignity and good taste" and that the members of the STOP ERA Committee "do not agree with feminists that portrayals of women in traditional roles . . . is somehow an insult to the abilities or intelligence of women." According to Sutton, "there was such an outcry from the anti's that they [the media] actually gave them equal time to respond" even though the proponents had paid for their time on the air. Furthermore, the anti-ERA movement had gained such strength and support by that time, and radio stations "were deluged by the anti-ERA people because all that had to happen was one person in a church made a few phone calls, and it could generate literally thousands of phone calls to radio or TV stations."[45]

[45] "Broadcast Licensees and Women's Organizations," STOP ERA Committee, Date Unknown, folder 3, box 12, KFDC; Sherry Sutton interview.

The anti-ERA movement was incredibly organized, and it worked to its advantage when it came to the media. The members wrote editorials for newspapers and spots for local radio and television that urged women to contact their legislators and ask them "to vote against this evil piece of legislation." They used public perception of feminism as a radical movement that would destroy America to appeal to the women who were "uncomfortable at either Phyllis Schlafly's or Gloria Steinem's end of the mythical spectrum." When they engaged in a public debate with a member of a pro-ERA organization, the anti-ERA volunteer was prepared for all possibilities: "If opposition tries stalling with irrelevant questions go on offensive and say what you were going to say – simply say 'I'm glad you said that and …'"[46] They held press conferences and public debates on the ERA, demonstrating to the public that they were poised Southern ladies who were not interested in equality with men but preferred specific legislation that targeted specific societal problems. By manipulating public opinion, the anti-ERA movement was able to turn the tide of support for the ERA and prevent it from being ratified in Georgia.

It is not surprising that anti-ERA activists took such efforts to present a public face that represented Southern societal notions of womanhood. Throughout the debate on ERA, reporters did not hesitate to bend the truth to make a better story, repeating "the wildest and most colorful statements of both sides" and making "no attempt to find out whether there was any basis of such claims."[47] Anti-ERA activists were well aware that perception played an integral role in politics, having born witness to the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and the manner in which both blacks and whites portrayed themselves in an effort to win their cause. The members of the STOP ERA Committee in Georgia understood the importance of portraying their cause as the right cause for Southern women and did not hesitate to play on the racial tensions that existed in

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[46] "Tips for TV," STOP ERA Committee, 9 January 1975, folder 3, box 3, KFDC; Burkett 20; "Tips for TV," STOP ERA Committee, Date Unknown, folder 3, box 3, KFDC.
[47] Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 390.

the state, for the entire debate about "the bathroom issue was also a remind of the civil rights struggle that put an end to the racial segregation of public toilets." It is no coincidence that the New Right movement that brought these women into politics was associated with previous backlash campaigns, such as "the Ku Klux Klan revival and . . . the John Birch Society's anticommunist campaign in the postwar years."[48] Race played a huge role in the construction of the public debate around the ERA, for, if women were considered equal under the law, then there would be no barrier of protection between white women and black men. Thus, the importance of media in presenting these concerns was considered crucial by the women of the anti-ERA movement in Georgia.

The ERA was primarily a symbolic issue for both the proponents and the opponents of the ERA. For those in support of the amendment, the ERA was "a symbol of the nation's commitment to women's rights."[49] For the opponents, the ERA was a symbol of a declining nation, one that valued the ambiguous notion of equality over tradition and protection of women. While the STOP ERA Committee was established in Georgia as a preventative measure against potential ratification, the real debate between proponents and opponents did not pick up steam until the 1980s, when it seemed that the legislature would give the amendment serious consideration.

Lobbying Efforts

The main advantage that the anti-ERA movement had over the pro-ERA movement was its knowledge of local politics. Because the women involved in the Georgia chapter of the STOP ERA Committee were well aware of the inner workings of the political process, they were able

[48] Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 390; Faludi, *Backlash*, 231.
[49] Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA*, 87.

to tailor their message and actions to gain the support of the legislators. Proponents viewed the tactics as "dirty and unfair," but, to the opponents, they were working within the confines of the political system in which they placed so much faith.[50] They were also consistent in their rhetoric, reinforcing over and over again that they were the true representatives of what Georgia women wanted - to be protected.

In addition to arguing that the ERA would have disastrous consequences for women, anti-ERA activists believed that the ERA would "have a widespread and harmful effect on men." In a 1975 edition of *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* entitled "How E.R.A. Will Hurt Men," it was explained how the amendment would fundamentally alter the gender roles in society by taxing husbands on the "assumed 'earnings' of his wife as a homemaker." This same report went on to detail how the ERA would lead to a loss of laws that would ensure a husband's ability to "establish the domicile" and "have his children carry his last name." The report also stated that companies and workplaces would be required to "pay equal wages though some men do more work that is more dangerous, more unpleasant, requires more physical strength, or takes more time." By drawing a comparison between the ERA and loss of rights for men, the anti-ERA movement in Georgia was able to set the tone of the debate in the Georgia General Assembly. The leaders and volunteers of STOP ERA manipulated Southern male perceptions of gender roles to gain support in the legislature by claiming that the amendment would provide liberation for "offbeat and the deadbeat male – that is, to the homosexual who wants the same rights as husbands."[51] The idea of giving equality to homosexuals and to men who did not fit into the

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[50] Sonja K. Foss, "Equal Rights Amendment Controversy: Two Worlds in Conflict," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65 (1979), 280.
[51] Phyllis Schlafly, "How E.R.A. Will Hurt Men," *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 8 (May 1975), folder 4, box 11, KFDC.

traditional gender roles of the South offended many legislators, most of them male, and, as a result, the ERA failed to gain widespread support in the Georgia General Assembly.

Dunaway and Wysong led a movement that had strong roots in local politics and thus had a network that was already in place for them to "stop the momentum of radical forces determined to destroy the family." The anti-ERA movement borrowed many of the lobbying tactics used by the pro-ERA movement. Despite using similar political tactics, the women of the STOP ERA movement distanced themselves from the pro-ERA movement in every other way, for they perceived feminism to be the detriment to the family and the values of the "'descendants of Scarlett O'Hara.'"[52] One of the main ways that the anti-ERA activists effectively lobbied the members of the Georgia General Assembly was by writing the legislators and sending bulk mailings to their individual districts. In an election-year letter addressed to a candidate for the state legislature, Dunaway wrote about the ERA:

> Many people are under the mistaken impression that this amendment means more job opportunities for women, equal pay for equal work, appointment of more women to high positions, admitting more women to medical schools and other desirable purposes. It does none of these things.[53]

Dunaway goes on to tell the candidate that American women are "the most privileged" in the world and that it would be his/her responsibility, were he/she elected, to protect "the rights of women who wanted to be women and men who wanted to be men."[54] While the proponents of the ERA tried to portray their movement as representative of all women, the opponents of the ERA were adamant that theirs was the true movement for women and that any movement or issue connected with feminism was harmful to the delicate balance of Southern society.

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[52] "How E.R.A. Will Hurt Men."; Carol Ashkinaze, "Stop ERA' Rally Held At Capitol," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 26 March 1981, folder 7, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers.
[53] Kathryn Fink Dunaway, "Dear Candidate," STOP ERA Committee, Date Unknown, folder 17, box 1, KFDC.
[54] Ibid.

Georgians, like many Americans, "had a gut reaction to any suggestion that women could be aggressive and powerful." The STOP ERA Committee sent questionnaires to legislators, asking them if they were in favor of a "Constitutional Amendment to require identical treatment of men and women including military draft, combat duty, family support and child support?"[55] Candidates for public office were also sent questionnaires that inquired if a candidate required assistance with fundraising during the campaign. This suggests that the women involved in the anti-ERA movement were interested in more than just the ERA. They opposed any candidate or bill that would jeopardize the protection of women and women's special privileges. Agnes Domingos, then a candidate for State Senate District 26, wrote back to Dunaway

> It is heartening to hear at last from an organization opposed to ERA. The pressure on General Assembly candidates from "pro" groups and individuals is alarming. Any commitment to equal opportunity does not include this dangerous constitutional amendment.[56]

Another way the STOP ERA Committee lobbied the Georgia General Assembly was by taking "basketful of letters" to be distributed, in person, to members of the legislature.[57] Volunteers would carry baskets filled with letters to each legislators, both from the committee and constituents in the district, and hand them to the legislator while they were at the Capitol. These letters stressed the importance of the legislative process and charged the legislators to "preserve the legal rights of women and the dignity of womanhood by voting NO on the ERA."[58] This way, legislators were constantly bombarded by the concerns of women who were opposed to the amendment and it proved to be an effective tactic.

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[55] Davis, 398; "Questionnaire for Candidates for the Georgia Legislature," STOP ERA Committee, 26 August 1980, folder 9, box 7, KFDC.
[56] Agnes Domingos, "Questionnaire for Candidates for the Georgia Legislature," STOP ERA Committee, 26 August 1980, folder 9, box 7, KFDC.
[57] Ashkinaze "'Stop ERA' Rally Held At Capitol"
[58] "'Stop ERA' Rally Held At Capitol."; Kathryn Fink Dunaway, "Dear Candidate," STOP ERA Committee, August 1976, folder 16, box 4, KFDC.

The leaders of the STOP ERA Committee were frequent visitors at the Capitol. In addition to the baskets of letters, volunteers distributed boxed lunches for legislators and had a table for baked goods available to members and staff. Dunaway was the main figure in the organization of these tactics, and often she would walk around the Capitol looking for "signs of trouble." Dunaway was unyielding and determined that the ERA would not be ratified in Georgia. Dunaway's death in 1980 did not stifle the movement, for she left a well-organized group of women who would actively campaign for that goal. During the 1980-1981 legislative sessions, anti-ERA volunteers "swarmed through the Capitol by the hundreds" and demonstrated to the legislators that the women of Georgia did not want equality. Just as they were instructed to dress like ladies for television and stage performances, volunteers were encouraged to do the same for their appearances at the Capitol. According to Wysong, the STOP ERA Committee did not allow anyone "unkempt" or who "wore slacks" to attend their functions.[59] This way, the STOP ERA volunteers were able to present to the legislators an appealing alternative to the women who were advocating for the ratification of the ERA and for the broader platform of the feminist movement. The members of the STOP ERA Committee did not just attend hearings on the ERA; they were opposed to any bill that might cause the government to intervene in family affairs. One such example was a domestic violence bill that was considered during that same legislative session. Wysong was quoted by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* as having said that the wording of the bill was "very objectionable in that it would put us [citizens of Georgia] in the position of having to protect anyone who lives with somebody else and gets beaten up once in awhile."[60] Needless to say, the heated political environment served to further confuse the legislators of

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[59] Carol Ashkinaze, "Stop ERA Tries to Take Up the Slack," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 22 January 1981, folder 5, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers; Lee Wysong interview.
[60]"Stop ERA Tries To Take Up the Slack."

Georgia, as well as those in many other states, and left them "susceptible" to the viewpoints of women like Phyllis Schlafly and the other activists within the anti-ERA movement.[61]

The "Cookie Jar Express" was another example of a lobbying tactic employed by the STOP ERA movement in Georgia. The STOP ERA movement carried "cookie jars" door to door and took "quarters and dollars from people from all walks of life." They earned enough money to fund a state-wide road trip for the members of the Committee, which enabled them to gain 500,000 signatures for "Pro-Family Resolutions."[62] These kinds of creative fundraising efforts gave the STOP ERA Committee an edge when it came to lobbying the members of the Georgia General Assembly. Because the Committee was able to maintain this kind of financial support, it was able to maximize its resources and further spread its message.

One of the most effective lobbying efforts that the STOP ERA Committee had was bringing in Phyllis Schlafly to speak to constituents and legislators alike. Described as "an articulate, dynamic speaker," Schlafly appeared at numerous functions in Georgia during the key years of 1978 to 1981. She spoke at luncheons hosted by the local STOP ERA Committee in Atlanta as well as at events hosted by STOP ERA chapters in other Georgia cities.[63] As the leader of the national STOP ERA, Schlafly guided the basic principles of chapter affiliates throughout the nation. Her top-down approach to organization and politics left little room for in-house squabbling amongst members of the different chapters of the STOP ERA. In Georgia, she hand-picked Dunaway to lead the organization and had a special connection to the state. While Georgia was never a focus for the STOP ERA Committee the way it was in some states, Schlafly had a special connection with Georgia because of her connection to Dunaway. As a result, Schlafly was a constant presence in the Georgia movement and had an enormous impact on the

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[61] Wolfe, *Daughters of Canaan*, 198.
[62] Joyce Taylor, "The 'Cookie Jar Express,'" Unknown Source [photocopy], folder 5, box 6, KFDC.
[63] "Press Conference," STOP ERA Committee, 28 June 1974, folder 3, box 4, KFDC.

Georgia General Assembly. Ultimately, Schlafly's appearance mobilized women to be involved in a movement in which they would not have otherwise had an interest, for "focusing on the social and legal ramifications of ERA, Schlafly allowed a broad coalition to be formed that included conservatives and establishment Republican women." One of her more significant visits included an invitation to speak to the members of the Georgia General Assembly. During her speech, Schlafly told the legislators that the women of Georgia did not want equality when they had such wonderful men to protect them. She went on to state that the ERA would be dangerous and a detriment to the foundations of Southern society. Schlafly received a standing ovation by both the House and the Senate. The following day, Carol Ashkinaze wrote an editorial blasting Schlafly's comments in "Mrs. Schlafly Has Gone Too Far," but the damage had already been done.[64] Georgia went on to deliver a profound defeat to the ERA before the ratification extension deadline of June 30, 1982, but the conservative grassroots movement was just beginning to establish itself as the dominant political voice in the South.

[64] Critchlow, *A Woman's Crusade*, 219; Carol Ashkinaze, "Mrs. Schlafly Has Gone Too Far," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 25 April 1981, folder 8, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE AFTERMATH

Overall, the ratification of the ERA failed in all Southern states, including Georgia, and the national STOP ERA Committee experienced success in a way the national feminist movement never could. The pro-ERA movement, both nationally and in Georgia, experienced conflict over organization and strategy, while the anti-ERA movement was less divided. The leadership of Schlafly created an autocratic structure for state campaigns; therefore, there was not much room for state campaigns to differ the way that the feminist movement differed from coast to coast. On the eve of the ratification deadline, the ERA was three votes shy of becoming American law, but the states that had not ratified the amendment were "deeply conservative, either southern or else Mormon-dominated, except for Illinois," which was the home state of Schlafly.[1]

The fight for ratification in Georgia was not a high-profile example compared to the battles in other states. As previously stated, Schlafly asserted that Georgia was never a priority for the national STOP ERA Committee; however, other states were very important to the anti-ERA movement.[2] The women involved in the Georgia ratification battle, under the direction of Dunaway and Wysong, paid close attention to the movements in other states, especially the neighboring Southern states like Florida and North Carolina. According to Wysong, there was concern among the anti-ERA movement that, if Georgia ratified the ERA, then other Southern states would follow suit. This fear was compounded when the Congress ratified an extension

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[1] Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America since 1960* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 390.
[2] Phyllis Schlafly, interview by author, 25 October 2005.

deadline from March 22, 1979 to June 30, 1982. The extension outraged many involved in the anti-ERA movement. Opponents deemed the extension unfair and argued that it was a slap in the face to the political process set up by the founding fathers. Phyllis Schlafly stated that the extension and the ERA proponents were like "'a losing football team demanding that a fifth quarter be played to allow them time to catch up.'" The anger sparked by the extension created a new groundswell of anti-ERA activism in many states. This led to resurgence in the state-wide campaigns like Georgia, which began to pay closer attention to the ratification processes in other states. In the case of anti-ERA activism, the "symbiotic link between a mobilized grass roots and the national and regional conservative elites enabled the movement to reach new heights of success."[3]

The leadership of the anti-ERA movement in Georgia was fanatical about keeping tabs on other campaigns, "conscious of the importance of electoral politics in achieving their goals." Dunaway subscribed to copies of newspapers from coast to coast and took notes on the different strategies employed by other state campaigns. The subscriptions provided an opportunity to see what other states felt about national politics. In the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, an anti-ERA volunteer wrote about "economic boycotts designed to deny them [the states] tourist and convention business."[4] The pro-ERA movement sponsored boycotts in Atlanta, as well as Chicago, New Orleans, and Miami, from 1972 to 1982 and anti-ERA activists used every opportunity to rail against the actions of proponents. The pro-ERA movement tried to use the extension to create new momentum and organize "a boycott of convention cities in un-ratified

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[3] Lee Wysong, interview by Jeffrey Jones, 4 March 1995, box 1, Jeffrey Jones papers; Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 391; Carol Ashkinaze, "Judge's ERA Ruling May Backfire On Ratification Foes," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 26 December 1981, folder 16, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers; Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origin of the New America Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 112.
[4] McGirr 113; *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 24 July 1978, folder 3, box 6, KFDC.

states."[5] However, its hope was short-lived, for no state ratified the ERA and many rescinded their ratification. The Georgia General Assembly refused to seriously consider the ERA until 1980, but it was a lost cause for proponents from the very beginning. The women in the anti-ERA movement in Georgia employed tactics used by other states to demonstrate their opposition and outrage to the boycotts. In Atlanta, a major convention center in the Southeast, the boycott "cost the city more than $12 million in convention revenues." Politicians and business leaders in Atlanta tried to convince the pro-ERA movement that their tactics would not work in the South and that "the city should not be 'penalized unfairly for the actions of the state of Georgia, over which it was no control.'"[6] Many politicians and activists within the pro-ERA movement were fearful that the boycott would result in mass opposition to the ERA. Their fears were realized, and the anti-ERA women were successful in taking the stalling momentum surrounding the ERA and using it to their own advantage.

The ratification extension further intensified the care with which the anti-ERA movement in Georgia paid attention to the campaigns in other states. By examining the feelings of women who oppose the ERA in other states, the Georgia movement was able to better understand its place in the national STOP ERA movement. Some of the papers that the leaders of the STOP ERA Committee in Georgia kept an eye on were the *Knoxville Journal*, the *Raleigh Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *San Diego Union*, the *Courier Express* in Buffalo, New York, and *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland, Ohio. The regional diversity of the newspapers and journals to which they subscribed demonstrated the importance that the anti-ERA movement placed on working together across state lines to achieve its goals.

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[5] Jeffrey Jones, "Georgia and the Equal Rights Amendment," (Master's thesis: Georgia State University, 1995), 78.
[6] Carol Ashkinaze, "Impact of the ERA," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 29 October 1977, folder 2, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers.

The Extension of the Ratification Deadline

The Washington Star called the extension of the ratification the result of "transcendent zeal rather than careful constitutional reasoning." The United States House of Representatives approved the ratification extension by a vote of 233 to 189. The extension deadline created a public outcry from conservatives and even some moderates and liberals across the nation. In Georgia, Dunaway mobilized the anti-ERA movement to become more active in the lobbying the Georgia General Assembly. The fight for ratification lost support in other states because legislatures believed the extension was unethical and that the ERA had been defeated fair and square. Overall, the ERA lost support because of the ratification extension and the manner in which anti-ERA forces manipulated the perception of the extension, calling it a "dubious means to a desirable end." Georgia's response was similar to those in other states with anti-ERA leaders and volunteers proclaiming that "to alter the amendment procedures with the extension they demand would . . . cause even greater damage than a further delay in the ratification of the E.R.A." When the Georgia General Assembly defeated the ERA for the final time in 1981, anti-ERA groups from across "the State and Nation [brought a] message of appreciation and joy for a job 'well done'" by the women of Georgia.[7]

To the anti-ERA women in Georgia, the extension of the deadline served to compound their fears about the ERA granting the federal government more power. In the minds of these Southern women, the federal government had too much power. Schlafly, Dunaway, and the rest of the anti-ERA movement "insisted that government had already begun to undermine the family in the name of equality" by passing intrusive legislation and denying states the right to make

[7] "ERA extension: fast and loose," *The Washington Star*, 17 August 1978, folder 9, box 6, KFDC; "Extending the ERA," *Pittsburge Post-Gazette*, 18 August 1978, folder 9, box 6, KFDC; "The Right Way to Fight for E.R.A.," *The New York Times*, 4 July 1978, folder 9, box 6, KFDC; Kathryn Fink Dunaway to "Legislator," STOP ERA Committee, February 1974, folder 7, box 4, KFDC.

decisions for themselves. For the women involved in the STOP ERA movement in Georgia, "the Equal Rights Amendment was about behavior," and the association with feminism and the ERA with a decline in society was heightened by the extension. The anti-ERA movement, under the direction of Dunaway and Wysong, made it clear to legislators that the ERA would make it more difficult for local politicos to govern and create policy for their communities. "We do not want it said of our Georgia Legislators" Wysong stated in a letter to the members of the Georgia General Assembly, "that, like some of our National Representatives, they voted for ERA to 'get those militant women off my back.'"[8] The threat of losing power was an incredibly motivating factor for the members of the Georgia General Assembly, and the members of the STOP ERA Committee were able to capitalize on this fear and create a power opposition to the amendment.

The extension also proved controversial because it was believed to be a plot between the federal government and the "well-financed women's libbers, who do not speak for the majority of American women." Anti-ERA activists were opposed to the interference of federal politicians into state matters, and, in their minds, the proponents were "milk[ing] funds to finance their lobbying campaign directed at pressuring State Legislators into voting Yes on ERA." This fear was compounded by the fact that then President Jimmy Carter, a native of Georgia, was an outspoken proponent of the ERA and continued to have enormous pull in the Georgia General Assembly, which was primarily composed of Democrats. This perceived interference which infuriated the STOP ERA Committee was cemented when President Carter gave support to the ERA by "giving it national exposure through speeches and interviews."[9] However, President Carter could not afford to give much attention to the ERA because he was focused on other

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[8] Donald G. Mathews and Jane Sherron De Hart, *Sex, Gender and the Politics of ERA* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 2, 176; "Dear Legislator." 1974.

[9] "Dear Legislator." 1974; Phyllis Schlafly, "Are You Financing Women's Lib and ERA?" *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 7 (February 1974), folder 5, box 6, KFDC; Jones "Georgia and the ERA," 88.

international issues during his administration. Despite the President's support, the anti-ERA movement was too strong and too determined to see the amendment defeated. In the end, the momentum that pro-ERA activists had hoped to gain had changed little about the nature of the debate or the power of the STOP ERA Committee, both in Georgia and in the nation. The opponents asserted that the money used to fund the ratification campaigns came from the collection of taxes from the American public and that the ERA was the dream of feminists and communists in the federal government who wanted to ruin America. Though the argument was not based in reality, to the women of the anti-ERA movement, it felt very true and confirmed all the things they already believed about the women's liberation movement and the federal government. Wysong stated that "We, of the STOP ERA Committee of Georgia, realizing that our job had just begun, plan to continue educating the public." For many of the anti-ERA activists, there was an intense desire to continue their political activism, especially after the success of defeating the ERA. The women involved in the anti-ERA movement created one of the strongest lobbying powers in the South and the nation, and the seeds of victory planted by the women of the STOP ERA Committee were not fruitless, for they led to the rise of the New Right and the election of President Ronald Reagan in 1980. Reagan, a staunch anti-feminist and opponent of the ERA, gave the conservatives a political clout that the women of the pro-ERA movement could not counter. In addition, he persuaded the Republican Party to remove support for the ERA from its platform, even though the party had supported the amendment since the days of Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party.[10] The campaign to ratify the ERA lost its momentum after the election of Reagan in 1980 and the rise of a national conservatism.

[10] "Dear Legislator." 1974; Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 393.

On June 30, 1982, the ERA failed and passed into American history as the ultimate symbol, not of women's equality but of the defeat of the women's liberation movement and modern feminism.[11]

The Failure of the ERA

Six months before the ratification extension expired, the Georgia House of Representatives defeated the ERA by a vote of 116 to 57 and "the margin of defeat shocked ERA supporters and exceeded the predictions of its chief opponents." Speaker of the House Tom Murphy was surprised by the margin of difference between proponents and opponents and believed the reason for such an upset was due to the "pro-ERA lobbying tactics" that were "dirty" and "ugly." The reality was that the ERA never had a chance in a state like Georgia, which "provided fertile soil for the flowering of conservative politics." The South with its tradition of racial and sexualized tensions proved that the notion of equality for women was threatening to many people in society and that the region remained a traditionalist stronghold that wanted to cling to the gender roles of the past. The foundations of Southern society were rooted in the belief that gender equality was an incredible "departure from the literal word of God."[12] In the grand scheme of national ratification, Georgia was not a particularly special case. Unlike states with highly contested campaigns, Georgia was never considered a threat by the ERA opponents. Granted, there was a state campaign to defeat the ERA, but it was considered a preventative measure to ensure the failure of the ERA in surrounding southern states. While some of the members of the Georgia General Assembly who voted against the ERA did so because they viewed the amendment as a

[11] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 260.
[12] Carol Ashkinaze, "House Crushed ERA 116-57: Margin of Defeat Shocks Supporters, Exceeds Predictions of Opponents," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 21 January 1982, folder 1, box 5, Carol Ashkinaze papers; Jones, "Georgia and the ERA," 103, 104.

frivolous piece of legislation, it did not account for the number of 'nay' votes that led to its defeat. Others refused to vote for the ERA because it was a controversial issue and they feared that their constituents would not re-elect them if they were accused of giving in to the feminist movement. The *Atlanta Journal Constitution* described the vote count as "an avalanche" that could be felt throughout the state and the nation. Afterwards, while anti-ERA activists celebrated, the proponents of the ERA looked for reasons for the failure of the amendment. Many pro-ERA activists argued that the amendment failed because of "that old thinking of women being less than [men], women being second class," but that was a very simplistic explanation for the reasons the ERA failed.[13]

History has a nasty habit of repeating itself, especially when it comes to social movements. In fact, many of the arguments made about the ERA were the exact same arguments made by anti-suffragists in 1920 about the Nineteenth Amendment. The states that refused to ratify the ERA were the same states that rejected the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Almost all of them were Southern states that approached the ERA in a manner similar to the way opponents of the ERA treated the amendment from 1972 to 1982. Activists and leaders within the anti-ERA movement were convinced that the members of the Georgia General Assembly voted against the amendment after learning about the potential disastrous effects the ERA would have on the state.[14] However, it is possible that the legislators that voted against the ERA were always opposed to the amendment and were simply relieved to have a public voice that they could claim as their constituency when they cast their vote. According to Cynthia Hlass, a proponent of the ERA in Georgia, the feminist movement lost the campaign because "we were

[13] "House Crushes ERA 116-57."; Sherry Sutton, interview by Janet Paulk, 8 November 1998 and 7 March 1999, transcript, GWOHPC.
[14] Jones, "Georgia and the ERA," 105.

probably a little too much 'in their faces'" and that they should have been "more 'laid back'" and not argued with the legislators while trying to convince them to vote for the amendment.[15]

The ERA was defeated in Georgia for the same reasons it was defeated throughout the country. Proponents of the ERA pointed fingers at Phyllis Schlafly as the person to blame, but the reality is that the ERA failed on its own merit because it was ambiguous and no one had a clear understanding of what the amendment would do for women. The opponents of the ERA did not have to prove the merits of the amendment, and, as a result, their campaign to portray the ERA as damaging to women and family was a successful one, especially in Georgia. Hlass believes that several factors affected the failure of the ERA in Georgia, one of which was the switch that Eliza Paschall made from proponent to opponent:

> This was a woman that I greatly respected. Later, for some unknown reason, she turned completely around and decided the ERA wasn't needed and started writing letters to all the papers. I think that hurt [us] a great deal. I think that people do have a right to change their minds . . . I never confronted her . . . there wasn't anything we could do about it.[16]

Other issues played a role in the failure of the ERA. Certainly, religion was one of the main reasons the ERA failed in Georgia. Sherry Sutton addresses this very point, stating that "the biggest obstacles have been the politics of the whole thing – the politics of it and the opposition from some of the religious community."[17] The South was considered a bastion of traditional religious values that bred faith-based activists from both sides of the political spectrum. There were a number of churches in Atlanta that supported the ERA, but most of the religious community in Georgia were opposed to the amendment for fear that it would ruin the institution of family and offend God. Another reason the ERA failed in Georgia was because of the close connection between feminism and gay rights, a connection that the anti-ERA movement did not

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[15] Cynthia Hlass, interview by Joyce Durand, 30 April 1997, transcript, GWOHPC.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Sherry Sutton interview.

hesitate to exploit and use to further the notion that the ERA would destroy society by allowing such offensive behavior. Hlass argues that the anti-ERA campaign was successful because it "used everything" against the proponents, including making comparisons between homosexuality and the ERA and "whether they were representing NOW or not really didn't seem to matter to the opposition." Leaders within the anti-ERA movement used every issue, every tactic possible to defeat the amendment, while proponents of the ERA had to be very careful not to offend legislators and the general public. Race also played a key factor in the failure of the ERA, for "the vast majority of feminists and NOW members were white." Failure on the part of the pro-ERA movement to "recruit black women" speaks to the differences between black and white women in the South, for white women were able to be politically active, but many black women were "more concerned about working and getting their children through school and getting into a better area" of Atlanta.[18] For the anti-ERA activists, race was important because many of the conservatives in the legislature were still reeling from the perceived injustice of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and were not too keen on having a repeat of the federal government forcing equality on their state.

The fearless determination on the part of opponents is just as much a factor in their success as their political savoir faire. Hlass stated that the opponents' stance on the ERA was defeatist and negative toward men and "didn't give men very much credit to think that just because the ERA was passed they had to run out and leave their children and their wife and not pay anything."[19] Nevertheless, this fear played an integral role in the creation of an anti-ERA movement, and, in the end, many women in Georgia were more concerned with protecting what little rights they had than with branching out and seeking equality under the law. By failing to

[18] Cynthia Hlass interview.
[19] Ibid.

recognize the importance of "the deep-seated conservative ideological traditions" that the anti-ERA movement proclaimed as their platform, the pro-ERA movement neglected to create a true debate on the merits of the amendment and the importance of symbolic equality.[20] In addition, Democrats in Georgia, both liberals and moderates, underestimated the impact that this tradition would have with voters in the far corners of the state and therefore, failed to reach out to those voters. The rise of the conservative grassroots movement in Georgia was no mistake, no aberration, but the result of a sustainable network of activism and politics created by the momentum and power of the anti-ERA movement.

The effect that the anti-ERA movement had on state politics in Georgia is an important one and should be examined in order to develop a better understanding of the significance of the anti-ERA movement. Some of the legislators who voted for the ERA went on to become staunch conservatives when they realized the Democratic Party was losing ground in the South. One example of this was Zell Miller, then Lieutenant Governor, who "suffered a political slap-in-the-face" for supporting the ERA.[21] However, in 1990, Miller led a victorious campaign for the governorship of Georgia. Miller won as a moderate Democrat and was very careful to distance himself from the liberals within the national Democratic Party, the women's liberation movement, and the issue of the ERA. As Miller moved higher and higher in the ranks of Georgia politics, he aligned himself more to the right, proclaiming himself as a conservative Democrat. He switched sides in the abortion debate, and, as a member of the United States Senate, Miller voted with the Republican Party more than the Democratic Party. Miller is just one example of a politician who was affected by the rise of conservatism in the South. The anti-ERA movement in Georgia had a lasting impact on the political system, for it brought

[20] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 148.
[21] Jones, "Georgia and the ERA," 106.

respectability and effectiveness to the conservative grassroots movement and established the South as a major political force in the United States. As a result, contemporary Democrats are careful to portray themselves as conservative traditionalists and keep their distance from the National Democratic Party, which is perceived in the South as being far too liberal.

Nationally, the anti-ERA movement was highly motivated by the success of its campaign, while the pro-ERA movement was devastated by the loss. The disappointment and frustration of losing what at first appeared to be a sure thing took its toll on the women's liberation movement. Conservatives realized their power was due to the success of the anti-ERA movement and began to mobilize for a cultural war to "reclaim" America from the liberals, "despots," homosexuals, feminists, and other groups that they perceived to be a threat on traditional values. Furthermore, the election of Reagan to the presidency in 1980 gave the conservatives a vocal public spokesman for their cause, even though Reagan himself "sought to limit the fanaticism and militancy of his grassroots supporters." Meanwhile, proponents of the ERA began to explore new issues, culturally and politically, that had an impact on women and approached those issues with "renewed vigor." Despite the failure of the ERA to be ratified, it had an important impact on the political system. The issues that arose as a result of debating the ERA continue to affect this country, such as abortion, homosexuality, definition of family, and the role of government in the daily life of its citizens. "We didn't win," Sherry Sutton stated, "but I do think that we got a lot of progress – we made a lot of progress over the years [that followed the failure of the ERA].[22] The ERA brought attention to the need to rethink and revise many of the laws in the United States that affect women and families. Some scholars argue that the ERA was becoming more and more unnecessary because these laws were already being changed, and, therefore, the ERA would have had no significant impact on women's lives. This explains why some states

[22] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 196; Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 410; Sherry Sutton interview.

rescinded their ratification of the ERA in the latter part of the 1970s and why many legislators switched their votes from 'yea' to 'nay'. Even proponents of the ERA began to be less and less convinced of its "revolutionary potential" and decided that the ERA was a dead issue. The failure of the ERA did not kill feminism, but it did cripple the momentum that the feminist movement had gained throughout the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, for, as Brownmiller said, "It is a happier task to chart a movement's explosive rise than to record the slow, seepage, symbolic defeats, and petty divisions that attend its decline."[23]

The Dissolution of the Women's Liberation Movement

"There was a lot of criticism on how things should have been done different," stated Sherry Sutton in an interview on the ERA, "not just in Georgia but everywhere. I think that had we done things differently, it would have been a more institutionalizing thing that wouldn't have the long ranging effect." No doubt, the legacy of the ERA in Georgia is more than just a failed amendment; it is the dawning of a new political movement, an emerging conservative consciousness that quickly became affiliated with the political mainstream of America. The women's liberation movement became the target of "backlash" from this new political power, and, throughout the 1980s, feminists watched as one-by-one the laws and objectives they fought for were torn to shreds by the anti-feminists and the neo-conservatives on the Republican Party. Susan Faludi, author of *Backlash*, asserts that "a backlash against women's rights succeeds to the degree that it appears *not* to be political, that it appears not to be a struggle at all."[24] The success of the anti-ERA movement created a new brand of activist, a woman who is politically active an independent but rejects the very movement that advocated for her liberation. The anti-feminism

[23] Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time: Memoir of Revolution* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1999), 327.
[24] Sherry Sutton interview; Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), xxii.

that was prevalent throughout the 1980s and 1990s was the direct result of the new conservatism and the dilution of the feminist movement. Reeling from the failure of the ERA, many feminist activists "retired from the fray" while others searched for a new issue that would unite the differing voices within the movement.[25]

One of the key issues that the feminist movement could never overcome with regard to the ERA was the underground and radical branches that had "begun to polarize the women's movement." This was especially difficult for Southern feminists who had to create a less-hostile, in-your-face movement that would not offend the established political patriarchy.
The identification of feminism with radical elements was controversial and ultimately led to the downfall of the ERA as well as gave conservative women a new sense of dignity and respectability in the political arena. Dunaway noted that the "growing identification of ERA pushers with extreme radicalism" would work to the advantage of the STOP ERA Committee, both in Georgia and nationwide.[26] The women's liberation movement had many public faces and voices that represented its movement but no discernable leader who could define strategy and policy.

In contrast, the anti-feminist movement had a more autocratic set-up with Phyllis Schlafly as the head of a single national organization and chapter affiliates throughout the country. Schlafly made every decision about the STOP ERA platform and affiliate leaders, like Dunaway and Wysong, carried out those decisions. The lack of a cohesive message from the pro-ERA movement created inconsistencies in its message, which allowed the anti-ERA movement to step in and disrupt a growing consensus toward equality. Sutton stated in her interview that the women of the anti-ERA movement and the legislators who voted against the ERA were "very

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[25] Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 410.
[26] Judith Coburn, "The Issue That's Splitting Feminists," *The Village Voice*, April 1975, folder 20, box 3, KFDC.

traditional" and "voted what was in their hearts."[27] Hlass explained that the ERA may have failed, but opportunities were created for women as a result of the debate, for "it empowered women" and "changed our whole way of life."[28] She also feels that feminism in Georgia is still going strong but that it is not necessarily perpetuated by women, for

> It changed the way men viewed women. I believe firmly, even though we still have sex discrimination, that a majority of men do respect women. I'm not sure that they are willing to give up all the power. If I had it, I wouldn't really be excited about giving it away. I think that there are understanding men out there.[29]

Feminism is not dead, despite the strong counterrevolution that anti-feminists have created in response to the political and cultural changes instigated by the women's liberation movement. The women's movement has broken off into smaller movements centered on particular issues and agendas, such as abortion, pay equity, childcare programs for working mothers, pornography and the sex industry, and even bringing feminism into marriage and faith rather than rejecting them outright. Southern feminists have been negotiating these issues for years, long before the rest of women's liberation movement began to consider them as relevant to women's lives. The anti-ERA movement in Georgia was no different from other movements in neighboring Southern states, but the pro-ERA movement in Georgia was very unique in that it learned to make concessions and create a public persona that was more appealing to the conservative forces within the state. Nevertheless, the radical women's liberation movement of the North gave anti-ERA activists a negative image of feminism, which caused them to reject the more subtle form of Southern feminism that the pro-ERA movement in Georgia tried to espouse. Not only that, but many Northern feminists attacked women in the Southern movement for not being feminist enough, and this betrayal led the anti-ERA movement to view the feminist movement as petty

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[27] Sherry Sutton interview.
[28] Cynthia Hlass interview.
[29] Ibid.

and non-representative of all women. Sutton states that change can be simple and revolutionary at the same time. In the 1970s and 1980s, less than half a century ago, it was still considered "a radical thought that women should be treated equally with men."[30]

Today, women in Georgia work in a wide array of jobs, attend college classes, buy property and have loving relationships with men and women, but many of them do not call themselves feminists because of the negative connotation associated with that word. In this, the anti-ERA and anti-feminist forces have prevailed, for independent women are distancing themselves from the very movement that fought for all of these rights. Even Steinberg believes that "most young women, they would not define feminism the way I do. They would say they are not feminists. The word feminist has been so abused and misunderstood"[31] She goes on to state that her definition of feminism is a desire to act for the betterment of women's lives, and that, contrary to what the anti-feminists say, it has nothing to do with hating men.

The Rise of Neo-Conservatism

The anti-ERA movement changed the dynamics of politics in Georgia and the rest of the United States. The power and ability of the anti-ERA advocates to preach their message is indicative in the amount of backlash toward the women's liberation movement that occurred in the years after the ERA time extension expired and in the policies created by the administration of President Ronald Reagan. After the ERA failed, the STOP ERA Committee hosted "victory dinners" in Washington D.C. and in some states where the ERA was defeated. Feminist and journalist Carol Ashkinaze wrote, "If ever there was a time when we needed a shot in the arm,

[30] Sutton Interview
[31] Sherry Sutton interview; Cathey Steinberg, interview by Janet Paulk, 21 & 28 March 1997, transcript, GWOHPC.

this is it."[32] The post-ERA time period might have been considered a depressing time for feminists, but, for conservatives like Phyllis Schlafly and Lee Wysong, it was cause for celebration. Not only had the ERA been defeated, but the conservative grassroots movement had gained such momentum and strength that a conservative was in the Oval Office and "the 'relaxation' of federal legislation banning sexual harassment and job discrimination" was taking place. Anti-ERA women felt that the feminist movement had created a decline in American society and that "with a drastic lowering of standards, women got into man's world; they got equality but at the awful price of their superiority." Some scholars and feminist activists believed that the backlash was a result of the effectiveness of the women's liberation movement and that "people don't waste ammunition on dead prey."[33]

Nevertheless, Schlafly and the rising New Right movement created a culture that rejects feminism by "doing their best to fan the rising flames of conservatism" and advocating for a return to traditional values that has become cemented in contemporary political rhetoric.[34] While it disturbs many in the feminist movement, both past and present, that women are rejecting the feminist movement while "reaping its benefits," it still stands that the women of the post-ERA generations have more opportunities than their predecessors. Despite attempts to turn back the clock, women are gaining more independence and are more successful now that they were before the debate surrounding the ERA. Even anti-ERA activists benefited from the women's movement, which irritated pro-ERA activists to no end. Conservative women, such as Schlafly and Wysong, have made names for themselves in politics by making a career of telling

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[32] CarolAshkinaze, "A Decade of Women's Liberation Has Brought Changes," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 26 June 1982, folder 4, box 5, Carol Ashkinaze papers.
[33] Carol Ashkinaze, "If they're still taking potshots, ERA movement must still be alive," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 24 July 1982, folder 5, box 5, Carol Ashkinaze papers; Rebecca Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 169; "If they're still taking potshots, ERA movement must still be alive."
[34] Carol Ashkinaze, "The post-feminist generation," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 24 December 1982, folder 6, box 5, Carol Ashkinaze papers.

women that marriage and family should be their priority. The irony of the situation is obvious, especially when one considers that the women's movement began to work harder to embrace all choices and "matured to the point where marriage and motherhood are legitimate goals too."[35]

In "Dismal Failure Of ERA Big Victory For Women," William Rusher makes a case that women are better off without the ERA, despite "whatever measures of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation its supporters may apply." He goes on to state that it was the anti-ERA activists who placed "new battle honors to the flagstaff of American womanhood" and praised them for their ability to see beyond to tricky language of the amendment.[36] It is no surprise that the ERA failed because of an upsweep of conservatism, but what shocked many feminist activists was the vocal opposition of women with regards to the amendment. In the post-ERA years, these women went on to become active in local, regional, and national politics.

Feminists had to resign themselves to the simple fact that not all women shared "the depth of our commitment" just because they were women and that other factors were important in the construction of an individual's political identity. Cathey Steinberg told the *AJC* in reference to female legislators that voted against the ERA that "it's upsetting to see a woman stand up and say the ERA may not be necessary."[37] However, Steinberg also acknowledged that local politics played an integral role in the decision to support or oppose the ERA. If a legislator's constituency was not in favor of the amendment, then it would be very difficult for that legislator to justify supporting it. It is not shocking that feminists and anti-feminists find each other's attitudes and perspectives appalling. Moral politics is a crucial element in the development of

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[35] Carol Ashkinaze, "Feminism has matured," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 5 December 1989, folder 1, box 6, Carol Ashkinaze papers.
[36] William Rusher, "Dismal Failure Of ERA Big Victory For Women," *New York Times*, Date Unknown, folder 3, box 8, Margaret Miller Curtis papers.
[37] Carol Ashkinaze, "Some ERA Backers Bare Claws Over Female Lawmaker's Stand," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 18 January 1982, folder 1, box 5, Carol Ashkinaze papers.

political ideology, and, for conservative women in the South, religion, race, and gender roles were integrated into the notions of morality. Traditionally, the Republican Party has operated on a platform of less is better when it comes to the federal government, but the rise of the New Right fundamentally altered that platform. The new conservatives like Schlafly, otherwise known as neo-conservatives, believed that the role of government should be limited and not include forcing intrusive legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the ERA on the American people. In their mind, the purpose of the new conservative politics is to change American culture and create a new definition of "what counts as a good person and what the world should be like." Similarly, social position in society has an enormous impact on a woman's political alignment by "giving one a distinct set of political interests and predispositions" but also by "giving one access to the resources . . . necessary for political education and mobilization."[38] Access to resources is a constant in the political rhetoric of both parties, regardless of the issue. Feminists fight for a woman's right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy while anti-feminists believe that moral responsibility trumps personal desire. Feminists want women to have access to birth control, child care, jobs, and education. Anti-feminists want women to have the choice to refuse these things and make marriage and motherhood a priority.

When Ronald Reagan left the White House, after serving two terms as president, he was widely considered one of the most popular presidents in American history. Reagan's popularity amongst Republicans and Democrats demonstrates how powerful the conservative movement had grown since the days of Barry Goldwater and the campaign of 1964. In large part, the conservative movement owes its strength and power to women, for they played an important role

[38] George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Thinks* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 222; Jerome Himmelstein, "The Social Basis of Antifeminism: Religious Networks and Culture," in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 25 (1986), 4.

in the mobilization of the movement around the issue of the ERA. Currently, Nancy Schaefer and Renee Unterman, two state senators and Republican women, have tremendous influence when it comes to legislation that deals with "women's issues." Though they come from very different parts of the state, they are both conservative women who follow the mold of Schlafly, Dunaway, and Wysong. As state senators, they exert their influence, time, and energy on issues that affect women, but by no means are they to be considered feminists. In many ways, these women have succeeded as members of the Georgia General Assembly by restricting the rights of other women and telling the legislature that women do not want those rights. Since her election in 2004 and in every subsequent legislative session, Senator Schaefer, a rural Republican, has introduced legislation to tighten the restrictions on abortions. She is successful in getting her legislation passed because she uses the familiar anti-feminist rhetoric used by the women of the anti-ERA movement; women should be protected from the evils of society and God should have a place in public life. Senator Unterman, a Republican who represents a portion of suburban Atlanta, takes a softer approach and often makes heartfelt appeals to the "gentlemen" of the Senate to consider her legislation for the betterment of the women of Georgia. It is clear in both of these women that conservatism and anti-feminism are not relics of the ERA debate, but are alive and well in contemporary times.

CONCLUSION

The anti-ERA movement chronicled in this thesis had a fundamental impact on the political culture of Georgia, as well as the greater United States. Historians and feminist scholars in other fields of study have long neglected the *other* women's movement. It is my hope that this project opened a door to the field of conservative women's studies and anti-feminism, for if we, as scholars, are to truly understand the importance and validity of the women's liberation movement, we must understand its counterpart movement. A common theme in feminist discourse on conservatism is to assume that conservative women are uneducated, weak-willed, and victims of societal conception of gender roles. In reality, conservative women are a dynamic force, both personally and politically. They are vibrant activists who feel passionate about their causes, whether it is fighting against the ratification of the ERA or abortion as a means of birth control for women. The women who comprise a majority of the neo-conservative platform believe in "the firm and unquestioning assertion of biblical principles and traditional values."[1] These principles and values lead them in a direction that differs from that of the women's liberation movement. In their minds, notions of liberation and equality are unrealistic and dangerous to women. In other words, these women are also operating for the betterment of women, albeit from a very different world view from feminists.

In the course of our correspondence, Phyllis Schlafly mentioned the names of conservative women that have been ignored by feminist scholars. One of these women was Margaret Thatcher, who, during an interview with *The London Observer*, remarked, "I owe nothing to

[1] Rebecca Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1987), 212.

Women's Lib." Thatcher, whose nickname was "The Iron Lady," was known for her no-nonsense approach to politics and, on occasion, did not hesitate to let her feelings about the political system be known. "In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man," stated Thatcher, "If you want anything done, ask a woman."[2] It is no surprise that Schlafly would hold such a woman in esteem, for she was able to rise to the highest level of political power in her country without the support of the British women's liberation movement. Schlafly has made it known that she believes women are "capable of great achievement," but they have to make choices and suffer consequences.[3] In her mind, and the minds of other conservative women, feminism is not about equality or access to resources but about legitimizing the complaints and bad experiences of a few women and applying them to all women in America.

The anti-ERA movement in Georgia was no exception to this rule. Lee Wysong and Kathryn Dunaway were the key figures of the movement, but they were also representative of a broader coalition of women. The women involved in this movement were no less passionate or committed than the pro-ERA movement. They were fighting for their very livelihoods and for the sake of the women of Georgia, who wanted no association with the "radical, militant feminists" of the North.[4] Feminists point at Schlafly as the creator of the opposition to the ERA, but the fact remains that she was not responsible for the way these women felt about the amendment nor was she responsible for the lack of success that feminists had with recruiting women to the pro-ERA movement. She was responsible for mobilizing these women into a powerful political force that would defeat the major objective of the women's liberation movement and usher in a new movement, a counterrevolution that would seek to change the culture and future of America. Schlafly had the foresight to create an "alternative to women's

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[2] Elaine Partnow, *The Quotable Woman* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2001), 516.
[3] Phyllis Schlafly, interview by author, 25 October 2005.
[4] Lee Wysong, interview by Jeffrey Jones, 4 March 1995, Atlanta, Georgia.

lib" and introduce women across the country to this possibility. The origins of the New Right were established long before Schlafly became interested in anti-feminism, but she made conservatism a household ideology and brought it into the mainstream political process with her campaign against the ERA. The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 solidified the success of conservatism, a rise in political power which would not have been possible with the anti-ERA movement from coast to coast. Reagan's presidency cemented his "status as a permanent hero of the conservatives" and gave the movement considerable clout for the future generations of American politics.[5]

It is important to create an understanding of conservatism as a way of life, not just a political ideology. It is only recently that scholars have begun to explore the myriad expressions of grassroots conservatism throughout American history. Over the years, conservatism has shifted its form and focus. In the 1920s, the conservative movement was based in the platform of the Ku Klux Klan, who vowed to rid American of "Catholics, Jews, and African-Americans."[6] During the 1950s, the conservative movement focused its attention away from issues of racial discord and more toward defeating the global threat of communism. The rise of social movements in the 1960s and 1970s led to redefinition of conservatism that concentrated on limiting federal government interference in state matters and labeling feminists, homosexuals, and Civil Rights activists as enemies of America. In the early twenty-first century, conservatism has moved beyond its origins as a grassroots movement and become a major player in mainstream politics. Georgia and the rest of the Southern states are no longer considered of secondary importance.

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[5] *Eagle Forum*, Alton, Illinois: Eagle Forum, database on-line, accessed at http://www.eagleforum.org, 25 May 2006; Donald Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton, 2005), 290.
[6] Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origin of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 272.

On the contrary, they are vital in the grand scheme of electoral politics, for no presidential candidate can win an election without carrying at least some of the Southern states' electoral votes.

In an editorial of the *AJC*, anti-ERA activist Tottie Ellis stated that "the descendents of Scarlett O'Hara are not going to let the feminists and the federal bureaucrats steal our responsibilities and our integrity with their 'Extra Responsibilities Amendment."[7] The name of the STOP ERA Committee, "Stop Taking Our Privileges," speaks to the basic belief that the women who advocated against the ERA feared that the amendment would be damaging to their lifestyles, holding them accountable for more responsibility than they wanted or needed. The feminist movement made substantial headway in its fight for equality and liberation of women from the shackles of patriarchy, but not all women have embraced the concepts of equality and liberation, for many women are content with the achievements that have already been made and have no desire to further the role of women in society. Just as some activists feel the need to constantly work for the betterment of women, others are complacent about change and view the traditional roles offered to women with a degree of satisfaction. It is important for historians, when studying conservative women like Phyllis Schlafly and other anti-ERA activists, to keep an open mind and not cast judgment on these women for the choices that they have made in life. For, as Susan Faludi once stated,

> Feminism's agenda is basic: It asks that women not be forced to 'choose' between public justice and private happiness. It asks that women be free to define themselves – instead of having their identity defined for them.[8]

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[7] Carol Ashkinaze, "'Stop ERA' Rally Held At Capitol," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 26 March 1981, folder 7, box 4, Carol Ashkinaze papers.
[8] Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), xxiii.

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