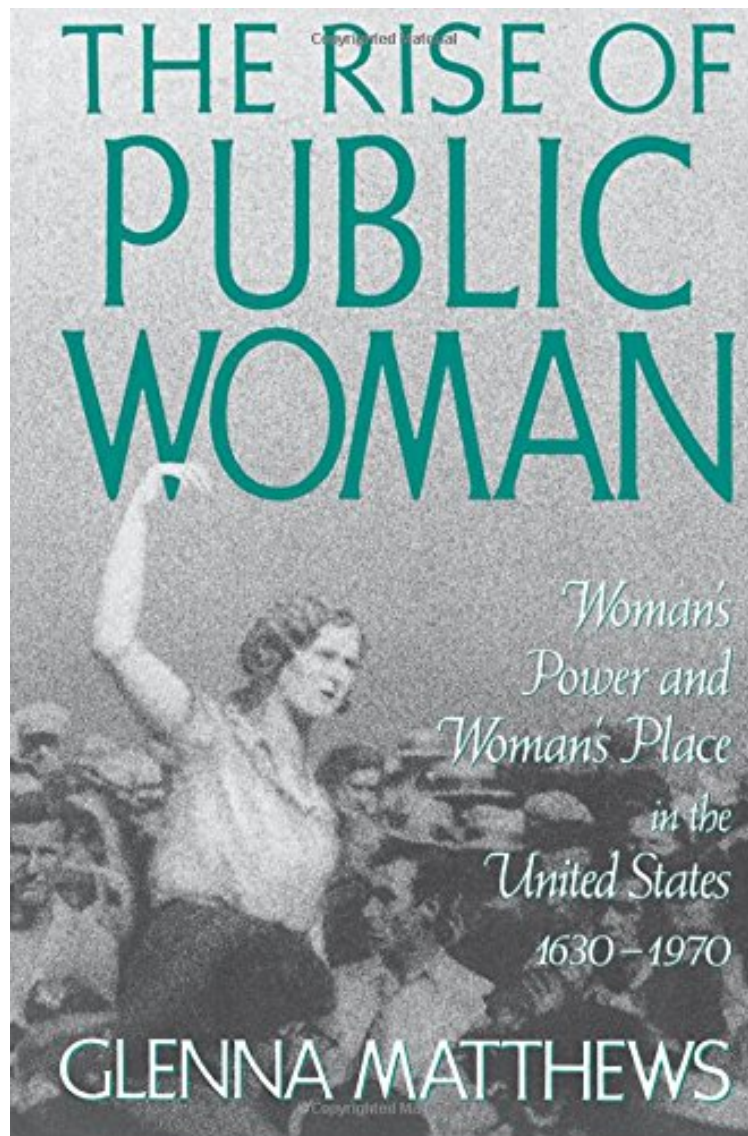


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The Rise of Public Woman: Woman's Power and Woman's Place in the United States, 1630-1970

Glenna Matthews

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This richly woven history ranges from the seventeenth century to the present as it masterfully traces the movement of American women out of the home and into the public sphere. Matthews examines the Revolutionary War period, when women exercised political strength through the boycott of household goods and Elizabeth Freeman successfully sued for freedom from enslavement in one of the two cases that ended slavery in Massachusetts. She follows the expansion of the country west, where a developing frontier attracted strong, resourceful women, and into the growing cities, where women entered public life through employment in factories and offices. Matthews illuminates the contributions of such outstanding Civil War women as Mary Ann "Mother" Bickerdyke, who supervised a cattle drive down the banks of the Mississippi so that soldiers would have fresh milk; Clara Barton, whose humanitarian work on behalf of the International Red Cross led her to become the first American woman to serve as official representative of the federal government; and Sojourner Truth, the impassioned black orator who devoted herself to emancipation. And Matthews brings the narrative to the 1970s, detailing the growing presence of women in American politics--from the suffrage marches of the early twentieth century, to the courageous stands women took during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. A fascinating and perceptive look at women throughout our history, *The Rise of Public Woman* offers an important perspective on the changing public role of women in the United States.

From Library Journal
In the early days of American history, Matthews argues, the idea of a "public" woman was necessarily associated with sexual impropriety. Women were politically invisible and economically restricted, and their public appearances were limited to narrowly prescribed times and places. Economic and cultural changes over three centuries have facilitated the expansion of public roles for women. Matthews summarizes and comments on existing research in this area and suggests future directions both for research and for progress. This useful overview is directed primarily to specialists in the history of women and should be acquired for women's studies collections.- Nancy C. Cridland, Indiana Univ. Libs., Bloomington
Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. "A valuable and immensely readable new contribution to American studies."--San Francisco Chronicle
"In breaking down the well-known history of the effort to win equality for women into four quite specific elements, Glenna Matthews has given that vital story a novel meaning as well as a closer analysis. The women's movement now means the achieving of new space, new power, new laws, and a new culture for women. Once again, as in her earlier, path-breaking study recognizing the American housewife, Matthews has thrown a bright, fresh light on a subject once thought to be all too familiar."--Carl Degler, Stanford University
"Glenna Matthews' account of women's evolving public voice is a tremendously enjoyable book--both moving and illuminating. It helped me put my own experience as an elected woman in the context of over 300 years of women's insistence on expanding their opportunities to shape the public world."--Loni Hancock, Mayor, City of Berkeley
"A wise, selective history as informative as her earlier *Just a Housewife*....She has found a way to hold the attention of readers who may not ordinarily stay with a historical theme."--Christian Century
"In an era when debate about women's place--in the home or in the White House--occupies politicians no less than theorists, historians of women have much to say. Drawing on this rich historical literature, Glenna Matthews surveys the efforts of diverse American women over three centuries to establish a public role commensurate with that of men. General readers especially will find *The Rise of Public Woman* an accessible and useful introduction both to the new scholarship and to the complex, ongoing struggle to reconfigure the gendered domains of public and private."--Jane Sherron De Hart, coauthor of *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of ERA*
"An unprecedented expansion in women's presence and influence in the public arena has taken place since the early 1970's. This expansion did not spring from an historical tabula rasa. In *The Rise of Public Woman*, Glenna Matthews begins to uncover and lay out the antecedents for today's movement of women into positions of visible leadership. This is an extremely worthwhile study which makes a long overdue contribution to our heretofore slim knowledge of the circumstances and events which facilitated women's growing participation in US public life."--Ruth Mandel, Director, Center for the American Woman and Politics, Rutgers University
"The material is fascinating. The sweep of the subject matter makes this an important book to have. The footnotes alone are worth the price."--Penelope Power, KLIATTT
From the Back Cover
In the 1630s, Anne Hutchinson - the wife of a Boston merchant and mother of fifteen children - defied the Calvinist clergy by holding meetings and espousing a controversial religious stance. When asked to stop, she did not, and as a result of her outspokenness, Hutchinson was subjected to two trials, then excommunicated and exiled to upstate New York. For 200 years, Hutchinson was held as the model of an American Jezebel, a female transgressor who threatened the community with social chaos and sexual impropriety. But as *The Rise of Public Woman* skillfully reveals, what was really on trial was not Anne Hutchinson but the expression of public womanhood. This richly woven history ranges from the 17th century to the present as it masterfully traces the movement of American women out of the home and into the public sphere. Matthews examines the Revolutionary War period, when women exercised political strength through the boycott of household goods and Elizabeth Freeman

successfully sued for freedom from enslavement in one of the two cases that ended slavery in Massachusetts. She follows the expansion of the country west, where a developing frontier attracted strong resourceful women, and into the growing cities, where women entered public life through employment in factories and offices. Matthews illuminates the contributions of such outstanding Civil War women as Mary Ann "Mother" Bickerdyke, who supervised a cattle drive down the banks of the Mississippi so that soldiers would have fresh milk; Clara Barton, whose humanitarian work on behalf of the International Red Cross led her to become the first American woman to serve as official representative of the federal government; and Sojourner Truth, an impassioned black orator who devoted herself to emancipation. And Matthews brings the narrative through to the 1970s, detailing the growing presence of women in American politics - from the suffrage marches of the early twentieth century, to the courageous stands women took during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. A fascinating and perceptive look at women throughout our history, *The Rise of Public Woman* offers an important perspective on the changing public role of women in the United States.