

University Mentouri Constantine
English department

**Women
During
the New
Deal**

**Case of study: Frances Perkins and
Mary Bethune**

Produced by : AYACHE Nedjma

**Supervised by:
Dr. Magherbi Nacer**

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Abstract

This work turns around how extent did women impose their presence in the American society during Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration. Francis Perkins and Mary Bethune are taken as a case of study. Mary Bethune as a minority in both sides; first being an African American, and second as a female, succeeded in finding the way to balance a career, a life, and a family. Also, Francis Perkins contributed in changing the lives of many Americans, in addition to maintaining a successful career, regardless of gender.

The work speaks about a historical background of women positions before the coming of Roosevelt to office as a president. It shows mainly, how the image of the female had changed from the “female stay-at-home” to breadwinners. Also, It includes the perceptions that women had at that time to achieve equality with men in the workforce. In addition to that, it demonstrates Mary Bethune’s and Francis Perkins’s progressions as public leaders, and deals with the new programs that were executed for the benefit of the whole society. The result of this work is that, women could be able to take on more responsibility in the office .Also; they were able to not rely on men to participate at politics.

Résumé

Cette recherche est basée sur la capacité féminine à imposer son existence dans la société Américaine pendant le gouvernement de Delano Roosevelt .Mary Bethune et Francis Perkins sont considérés comme cas d'étude. Bien que Mary Bethune soit une femme qui fait partie de la minorité noire ; elle a pu créer un équilibre entre sa carrière professionnelle et sa vie privée. Même chose pour Francis Perkins qui au cours de sa riche carrière a fortement changé la vie de beaucoup d'Américains.

La recherche met le point sur l'ancienne histoire de la position de la femme, avant que Roosevelt profite de son poste autant que président .Elle montre le changement de l'image de la femme d'une femme au foyer à une femme gagne-pain. Il décrit aussi les idées acquises par les femmes pour établir l'égalité entre femmes et hommes dans la vie professionnelle. Ce travail met la lumière sur le progrès réalisé par Perkins et Bethune autant que leaders public. Il évoque également, les nouveaux programmes acquièrent au bénéfice de toute un peuple et que l'élément féminine peut se chargé de la responsabilité du poste sans compter sur la responsabilité masculine dans le domaine politique.

ملخص

يتمحور هذا البحث حول مدى تمكن النساء من فرض وجودهن في المجتمع الأمريكي خلال فترة حكم ديLANO روزفالت، حيث ارتأينا اختيار كل من ماري بتيون و فرنسس بركنس كدراسة حالة. فرغم كون ماري بتيون امرأة من الأقلية السوداء، إلا أنها تمكنت من إيجاد الطريق إلى تحقيق التوازن بين مشوارها المهني، و حياتها الخاصة. كما أن فرنسس باركنس شاركت من خلال مشوارها الحافل في تغيير حياة العديد من الأمريكيين.

يتعرض هذا العمل إلى الخلفية التاريخية للمرتبة المحتلة من طرف المرأة قبل فترة حكم روزفالت ، كما يتطرق إلى كيفية تغير صورة المرأة من ربة بيت إلى كاسبة قوت، إضافة إلى الأفكار المكتسبة من قبل النساء لتحقيق المساواة مع الرجال في الحياة العملية. الى غير ذلك ، يسلط هذا البحث الضوء على التطور الذي وصلت إليه كل من باركنس و بتيون كقادة شعبيون بالإضافة إلى البرامج الجديدة المطبقة لمصلحة المجتمع بأكمله، و قدرة العنصر النسائي على تحمل مسؤولية المنصب و عدم الاعتماد على الرجال للمشاركة في السياسة.

Introduction

The New Deal was a defining moment in American history comparable in impact to the Civil War. Never before had so much change in legislation and policy emanated from the federal government, which, in the process, became the center of American political authority. The progressive surge was also unique because it came at a time of economic collapse. Previously, in such crises government curtailed reform and reduced spending to balance the budget and so provide the stability thought necessary to help economic progress resume. The activist New Deal reversed that pattern in its effort to lift the country out of hard times and so altered American social and economic policy forever.

Roosevelt's political education was rounded out by his wife, Eleanor. It was she, serious, bookish, compassionate, who showed Franklin the terrible conditions she had discovered as a settlement house worker in lower Manhattan and introduced him to the remarkable women volunteers who were leading the fight to improve the lives of the poor and outcast. In drawing Franklin deeper into the lower-class world, Eleanor was able to convince him that he should learn to work with big-city machines. Women participated in FDR administration since the first lady contributed in FDR's decisions.

Women as minorities, throughout The United States of America took part in documenting the most important and controversial chapter in United States history. Franklin D. Roosevelt, through his numerous programs included in the New Deal, created jobs for those women left unemployed and in need of financial assistance. The Works Projects Administration, one of the New Deal programs, encompassed multiple public works jobs, but also included many projects which serve women in general. Women of all social backgrounds participated in those programs socially or economically.

There were women who succeeded in keeping their touch in the American history. Mainly, Francis Perkins who becomes the first woman Cabinet office being appointed Secretary of Labor under FDR. She was instrumental in the passage of the Wagner Act, the Social Security Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act, three of FDR's most important achievements. She was also responsible for innovative ideas

for working people such as unemployment insurance, minimum wage, and maximum hours. The National Council of Negro Women is organized. As a constructive force for Negro women, the group concentrated on the status of African American women in America and pushed for their acceptance into labor unions, government jobs, and the military.

Her connections with women who were in the forefront of the social reform movement at the time was especially important during the depression because she was aware of the efforts made by women to keep families intact during extreme economic difficulties. She is considered to be our most influential First Lady, and many of the programs included in the New Deal can be directly contributed to her efforts.

“Mine has not been an easy road. Very few of my generation found life easy or wanted it that way. Your road may be somewhat less rugged because of the struggles we have made. ” (Goodwin, p.160). This quote captures Mary McLeod Bethune’s personal sentiment about her struggle to overcome an overwhelming number of obstacles in her path to earning a prominent place in American history. Bethune overcame poverty in rural South Carolina, discrimination, personal losses, and relocation to the Deep South, intimidation from the Ku Klux Klan, and administrative issues as leader of her own school. She was one of the nation’s first African American college presidents, and Mary McLeod Bethune’s legacy is powerful.

This study was an attempt to identify to what extent did the American women succeed in keeping their touch in the American history during the New Deal period? It demonstrates the experiential factors that influenced women like Francis Perkins and Mary Bethune to work and to obtain a high position in society and politics during a period of reconstruction.

Chapter One:

Women and The New Deal

I. Women Contributions Through History

The contributions that women have made to the history of the United States of America are rarely acknowledged. Most of the children in the country had grown up not knowing that women were at the forefront of the anti-slavery, civil right, social reform, and suffrage. They stood up for others, but few have stood up for them.

The first women's movement began around 1848 at Seneca Falls, New York, when Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and others formed organizations to fight for votes for women. The movement came to fruition in 1919 when the 19th Amendment became part of the Constitution. Seneca Falls Convention – the first political gathering specifically held to address the rights of women. 240 women attended, and the women drafted the “Declaration of Sentiments,” a feminist model of the Declaration of Independence. Written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, it stated that “all men and women were created equal” and included 18 grievances among them were women's inability to keep their own wages, women's inability to obtain an education, and lack of the right to vote. Also, The National Women's Loyal League is formed. Organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B Anthony, the league passed a resolution to launch a petition campaign urging Congress to vote.

Suffragists began organizing. Susan B Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton founded the National Women's Suffragist Association, while Lucy Stone organized the American Women's Suffragist Association. The intention was to bring the anti-slavery and women's right movements together to fight for both simultaneously. Black leaders felt that the two issues should be separate, so Stanton and Anthony broke away with the intention of seeking an amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing women the right to vote. Feminists felt that as long as half the population was denied rights, all other issues were secondary. The first woman argues a case before the Supreme Court was Attorney BelvS. She Lockwood petitioned the Supreme Court for permission to plead a case. When denied, she appealed to Congress which passed a bill enabling female attorneys to argue before the highest court in the land. (Nancy,p.25)

Jane Addams founded the Hull House. Hull House provided the poor and immigrant residents of Chicago with assistance. Hull House provided medical service, child care, English classes, legal aid, citizenship classes, vocational training and a host of other services to the poor and immigrant populations of Chicago. Hull House existed at a time when Chicago offered few services to its residents. It produced a new profession – social work. Jane Addams and her activist supporters became advocates for their constituents and worked for reforms in child labor, sanitation, housing and working conditions. Addams was the first woman awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In addition to that, The American Women's Suffrage joins forces becoming the National American Women's Suffrage Association. The focus of the group shifts from a constitutional amendment to advocating change in state constitutions. When the reality sets in that state by state change is more time consuming, they revert back to the plan for constitutional amendment. Mainly, the National Women's Trade Union League is formed to improve the wages and working conditions for women.

In 1911, The Triangle Shirtwaist fire occurs in New York City. One hundred women perish in the fire because they are locked in the fire and unable to escape. Leaders of the National Women's Trade Union League petitioned for new laws regulating safety conditions in factories. As a result of these petitions, the most comprehensive factory safety laws and standards were enacted in New York State, and paved the way for future national laws.

In 1915, The Women's Peace Party forms. Feminist Leaders of the era such as Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and others formed the party in an effort to avert the U. S. participation in World War I. They requested that President Woodrow Wilson mediate for peace rather than U. S. involvement. Their slogan was "Listen to the women for a change." After the war, the group merged with its European counterparts forming the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom which still exists today, and is active in trying to resolve conflicts around the world as well as nuclear disarmament. Jeanette Rankin becomes the first woman elected to the United States Congress. Additionally, Rankin was the only member of Congress to vote against U. S. involvement in WW II. The 19th Amendment is passed by Congress, giving women the right to vote. All but one of the women who began the

campaign in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, lived to see the passage of the Amendment. Elizabeth Cady Stanton passed away in 1902 and Susan B. Anthony in 1906.

During the New Deal Era Francis Perkins becomes the first woman Cabinet office being appointed Secretary of Labor under FDR. She was instrumental in the passage of the Wagner Act, the Social Security Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act, three of FDR's most important achievements. She was also responsible for innovative ideas for working people such as unemployment insurance, minimum wage, and maximum hours.

In 1935, the National Council of Negro Women is organized. As a constructive force for Negro women, the group concentrated on the status of African American women in America and pushed for their acceptance into labor unions, government jobs, and the military.

Eleanor Roosevelt transforms the role of the First Lady. Because President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, her husband, was confined to a wheelchair, Mrs. Roosevelt was his eyes and ears, traveling around the country, reporting her findings to him. She was influential in insuring that the New Deal included programs specifically for women, and assured African Americans that New Deal policies addressed their needs and concerns. As a result of her efforts, the African American voting bloc shifted its loyalty from the Republicans to the Democrats. She was strongly committed to equality and civil rights, and when the military doubted the abilities to African Americans to fly planes, she fought stereotyping by flying with Black pilots.

Mrs. Roosevelt gave women journalist exclusive access to her in an effort to promote their careers. Her connections with women who were in the forefront of the social reform movement at the time was especially important during the depression because she was aware of the efforts made by women to keep families intact during extreme economic difficulties. She is considered to be the most influential First Lady, and many of the programs included in the New Deal can be directly contributed to her efforts.

The World War II increases the need for Women Workers. As a result of the U. S. entrance into WWII, and the vast number of men who entered the military, more opportunities for employment were available to women in industries that had been previously prohibited to women. Between 1940 and 1945, women in the work force rose from 12 to 19 million. (Lois, p.97) Barriers to employment like age and marital status were lifted and women were able to work in industries such as plane manufacturing to support the war effort.

Known as “Rosie the Riveter,” documentary films have shown their enthusiastic efforts as they became skilled laborers in factories doing jobs previously held by men. Additionally, women were able to fill jobs in government, teaching and other industries that previously excluded women. African American women were afforded the opportunity to leave low paying domestic service positions and obtain higher paying jobs in defense factories. One half of the domestic worker population quit to take the more lucrative and higher status jobs that were available.

Married women also returned to work to assist in the war effort, often becoming the breadwinners of the family. These women, many for the first time in their lives, were now responsible for the distribution of their paychecks, giving them a newfound independence.

II. Women Contributions During The New Deal

1- The New Deal

The New Deal reflects the domestic reform program of the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It was first used by Roosevelt in his speech accepting the Democratic Party nomination for president in 1932. The New Deal is consisted of two phases. The first one was on (1933-1934), and the second period was between (1935-1941).

The first New Deal is regarded as a relief and a recovery from the Great Depression through programs of business regulation, agriculture, inflation, and public works. Congress established numerous emergency organizations mainly, the National Recovery Administration (NRA) (1) ,the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) (2), the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA (3), the

Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Public Works Administration. In addition to that, Congress instituted farm relief (4), banking (5), and founded the Tennessee Valley Authority (6). In 1934, it founded the Securities and Exchange Commission also, passed the Trade Agreement Act, (7) and the National Housing Act.(8)

The second phase of the New Deal provided social and economic legislation to benefit the mass of working people. The Social Security System was established in 1935, the year the National Youth Administration and Work Projects Administration were set up. The Fair Labor Standards Act was passed in 1938. The Revenue Acts of 1935, and 1937 provided measures to democratize the federal tax structure. A number of New Deal measures were invalidated by the Supreme Court. In 1935 the NRA was struck down and the following year the (AAA) was invalidated. The President sought to reorganize the Supreme Court, and other laws were substituted for legislation that had been declared unconstitutional.

2- Women and the New Deal

The New Deal created programs primarily for men. In many states there were laws that prevented both husbands and wives holding regular jobs with the government. So, it was rare for both to have a relief jobs. The first projects of the New Deal only hired men, but it soon became clear that the government needed to help women as well.

The first New Deal program to directly assist women was the Works Progress Administration (WPA). It hired single women or women with disabled or absent husbands. While men were given unskilled manual labor jobs, usually on construction projects, women were assigned to sewing projects. They made clothing and bedding to be given away to charities and hospitals. Women also were hired for the WPA's school lunch program. Both men and women were hired for the arts programs (such as music, theater and writing). The Social Security program was designed to help retired workers and widows, but did not include domestic workers and farmers.

Women and men were affected in quite different ways by the economy of the period. It relied heavily on so-called "sex-typed" work, or work that employers typically assigned to one sex or the other, and the work directly associated with

males. Women primarily worked in service industries, and these jobs tended to continue during the 1930s. Teachers, nurses, telephone operators, these were the dominant jobs. In many ways, employers lowered pay scales for women workers, or even, in the case of teachers, failed to pay their workers on time. But women's wages remained a necessary component in family survival. In many Great Depression families, women were the only breadwinners.

An important corrective to a male-centered vision of that period is to note that while men's employment rates declined during the period, women's employment rates actually rose. In 1930, approximately 10.5 million women worked outside the home. By 1940, approximately 13 million women worked for wages outside the home. (Evans,p.32) Even so, women's work continued to be less than well regarded by American society. Critics, when criticizing most work opportunities for women, criticized women for replacing men of much-needed jobs.

Laws between 1932 and 1937 made it illegal for more than one person per family to find employment within the federal civil service. Despite the protestations of Eleanor Roosevelt, the New Deal program the Civilian Conservation Corps (9) , developed in 1933, had a formal policy against hiring women. Many New Deal job programs cast women in traditional housekeeping roles. Camps operated by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) specifically for young women taught household skills. FERA work relief projects employed women in producing such goods as canned foods, clothes, and mattresses for distribution to needy families. Women were employed as housekeeping aides to families in need of household help. Other federal agencies paid women much less than men or gave preferences to male job seekers over female ones.

Fewer women found positions in business in the Great Depression than in the 1920s. The teaching profession grew slightly less female during the Great Depression; women had constituted 85 percent of teachers in 1920, but by 1940 they constituted only 78 percent. (Deckard,p.150)

Eleanor Roosevelt provided some moral support to American women in the troubled 1930s. Her newspaper column, "My Day," in national periodicals reached an eager audience. Although Eleanor Roosevelt was the mother of five children, the first

lady was nonetheless not known for her housewifery skills initially. As a young mother Roosevelt had even once hung her daughter Anna outside her bedroom window in a box with wire sides so that the child could nap in fresh air; the child's cries had significantly scared the neighbors.

3-The Female Involvement into the Work world

The feminist ideals that had grown during earlier periods faltered further during the New Deal period due to the pressing economic concerns. Groups that had supported women's rights, including the radical National Women's Party and the educational body, the League of Women Voters (formed out of the former National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1920), remained in the political background during the 1930s. Women did, however, take part in labor's struggle to take advantage of the legal changes that made organizing workers more possible. So, women become a vital part of the labor movement during the era of the New Deal.

The agencies that were concerned with feminist issues were further divided on how to concentrate their efforts. Many believed that obtaining the right to vote was all the legislative support they needed, so they turned their attention to other concerns, such as the peace and welfare improvement movements. Some demanded protective work legislation, while others remained on not changing their minds in pushing for equal treatment in the job market. And still others were aimed to forget the issue of feminist rights until economic hardship had ended. The "new women" of the '30s floundered in a decade of significant gains in the struggle for sexual equality.

The League of Women Voters exemplified the notion that the fight for women's rights ended with the passage of the 19th Amendment in the early 30's. In 1931, the league's president went so far as to claim that "nearly all discriminations have been removed." (Deckard, p.284) Therefore, many issues concerning women or issues promoted by women reformers simply failed from lack of support. (Berry,p.56) The 1930s began with the tenth anniversary of woman's suffrage, but any attention to the matter revealed that in those ten years, women had had little effect on the political world. Josephine McGowan writes in the *Commonweal*: « The 19th Amendment has wrought no miracle in politics. It has neither brought about dire consequences

foretold by the anti-suffragist nor yet produced the millennium of which the pioneers dreamed. » (McGowan,p.403)

McGowan noted that while women gained the right to vote, many were indifferent to their new privilege and remained uninformed on current issues. Politics was still considered a man's concern, and most women did not have the motivation to challenge this view. (McGowan,p.403)

During the 1940 presidential race, the ERA became an election issue for the first time when the Republican Party offered its support to the cause. (Banks,p.157) Senate hearings in 1931 revealed that the Women's Party supported the amendment as a protection from the current discrimination against women in salary, hiring and education. Listing approximately 1,000 discriminatory state laws -- including laws in 11 states which gave a husband control over his wife's wages the party argued against those who the ERA would weaken protective legislation. (Wilson,p.14) Such legislation often restricted the number of hours a woman could work, or the type of labor she could perform, making her less competitive in the industrial workforce.

Indeed, feminists refused protective legislation on the principle that it impeded equal rights for men and women, while other women recalling the exploitation of women workers in 19th century sweatshops asked for special legislation to protect women from unscrupulous employers. (Berry,p.58) Support for male and female differentiation strengthened during the '30s after a decade of decline.

Even those women who did manage to break into the political spectrum failed to unite women in a common struggle for equal rights. Caroline O'Day, elected to Congress in 1932, opposed the ERA because of its feared impact on protective legislation. As a social worker and member of the Consumer League, she believed women needed a governmental shield from labor evils. Hattie Caraway of Arkansas became the first woman senator popularly elected to her seat and won re-election in 1938.(Deckard,p.187) President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, praised for seeking the advice of women in his administration, named Frances Perkins as the first woman cabinet member. But she herself asserted that married women ought not to shirk their responsibilities to their families by seeking outside employment. (Lutz,p.321) McGowan further commented:

« In ten years, we have seen the political potentialities of women voters recognized by farseeing politicians who have rather grudgingly in many instances taken them into the councils of their parties, making them vice-chair of this or that local or state national committee; for the time has not yet arrived when men will voluntarily entrust to women the actual dispensation of party authority or patronage. » (McGowan,p.402)

In the Atlantic, Albert Jay Nock tried to please the feminine pride in agreeing that women could perform as well as their male .He emphasized that the female must stand firm in her role as moral model. He stated, "Women can civilize a society and men cannot." (Nock,p.551)

Nock's article remains an interesting mirror of the popular opinion of the applying their civilizing skills and avoid centering on the "male-oriented" instinct of workmanship. He seemed to look upon women in the workforce as acceptable. He argued: « One may easily see how our society, if it had to, might get on without women lawyers, physicians, stockbrokers, aviators, preachers, telephone operators, buyers, cooks, dressmakers, bus conductors, architects." (Nock,p.553) He went on to assert that society could not survive without women serving as a civilizing force. »

Nock, and the majority of the U.S. population , believed that women could civilize" not through roles as legislators, educators, administrators or preachers, but through the comforting domain of their immediate households. Only in molding their young ones and prodding their husbands toward responsible action could women serve their natural purpose. He stated:

« Our society cannot be civilized through women's attainment of the ends that feminism has hitherto set before them, laudable and excellent as those are. It can be civilized by giving an intelligent direction to the interest and purchasing power of women ». (Nock,p.553) His feminine ideal of woman as intelligent consumer, while insulting to the many who found themselves struggling to produce as well, was well received in 1936.

The key cause of this readiness to accept any excuse to remove women from their quest for equal rights stemmed from the increasing competition in the job

market. Economic hardship forced many women into the working world, but the scarcity of jobs made men resent the added number of individuals struggling for positions. Throughout the 1930s, the sexist request that women refrain from entering the realm of the employed to solve the men's unemployment problem came from labor unions, state and federal governments, and employers alike. (Nock,p.554) Efforts were made to remove married women from the workforce. A 1932 American anti-nepotism law for government workers stated that only one spouse could work. While the law did not specifically state that the wife should be the one discharged, three out of every four who were dismissed under the law were female.

Once again, prominent women only enforced these sexist tendencies. Mrs. Samuel Gompers proclaimed:"A home, no matter how small, is large enough to occupy a wife's mind and time. (Berry,p.59) She called women working outside the home "unnatural". Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins supported the concept of family wages. Mary Dewson, who organized the Women's Division of the Democratic Party in 1932, believed women possessed specific qualities best suited for the "sanctity and security" of the home. (Berry,p.59)

The potential role of women as mothers made the search for equality not only irrelevant but possibly dangerous. Alma Lutz addressed this problem in her Atlantic article, indicating that women should have the right to be protected. She argued that women had proven themselves capable, competent workers, and should therefore enjoy legislation insuring equal pay for equal work, instead of laws that placed them in special classes. (Lutz,p.322)

During the New Deal period, the percentage of master's degrees and doctorates earned by women dropped significantly. While female university education increased substantially, those who attended college founded a high quality comprehensive education replaced by classes that emphasized training for women's roles in the household. (Nock,p.556) Women's magazines promoted the virtues of motherhood and homemaking, condemning those who became involved in areas outside women's sphere. (Nock,p.557) Without training or public support, the '30s working woman faced numerous obstacles in fighting for a suitable job.

The public failed to admit that women composed a large sector of the working class and could not be dismissed with the passage of a few laws. Most were not working to obtain a career, but to keep their families sheltered and fed.

Lutz encouraged society to accept women in the workplace. Men's wages in industrial sections frequently could not support a modern-sized family, and the increasing percentage of employed married women reflected that problem.

In some households, in fact, the wife left her husband in charge of caring for the home and children while she worked an outside job. But while the number of married women in the work force actually increased by 50 percent between 1930 and 1940 - despite the Depression -women found enormous obstacles blocking their entry into certain fields. Most women found work in factory and clerical jobs, as traditional barriers against women in professional fields.

So, while large numbers of women worked during the Depression, their status had decreased. The non-unionization of women was one cause. The American Federation of Labor was established for organized, skilled, craft workers, and most women still held unskilled factory jobs. In addition, most unions continued to view women as temporary workers. But most prevalent were sexist attitudes that blocked women from entering unions and allowing women workers to organize. (Berry,p.100)

Lutz encouraged men to recognize the benefits of allowing women to join unions: « If men will encourage women to organize, if together they will work for equal pay for equal work, for an adequate wage for both, they will be able to maintain a higher wage standard.. It is strange that the American Federation of Labor does not see this. » (Lutz,p.323)

The New Deal, then, proved to be a period of equal rights support. After the 1920s fervor of change, the struggle for egalitarian ideals faltered. Some were satisfied with the effects of the 19th Amendment, some turned their attention to other matters of social justice, and some felt women could be better aided by protective legislation, but most still believed that women belonged at home.

Mary Bethune and Francis Perkins were considered as active members in the American society during the New Deal Era. The Next chapters illustrate how extent these two women succeeded in keeping their touch as iron women in the American society.

Notes

1 WPA. Works Progress Administration, 1935: a national labor program for the unemployed ; created useful construction work for unskilled men projects for women and arts projects for unemployed artists, musicians and writers.

2 Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), which insured deposits for up to \$2,500. To deal with deflation, the nation went off the gold standard. In March and April in a series of laws and executive orders, the government suspended the gold standard for United States currency.

3. The Agricultural Adjustment Act created the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) in May 1933. The act reflected the demands of leaders of major farm organizations.

4 congress instituted farm relief setting total output of corn, cotton, dairy products, hogs, rice, tobacco, and wheat. The farmers themselves had a voice in the process of using government to benefit their incomes.

5 Emergency Banking Act, drafted in large part by Hoover's top advisors. The act was passed and signed into law the same day. It provided for a system of reopening sound banks under Treasury supervision, with federal loans available if needed.

6 The Tennessee Valley Authority, a project involving dam construction planning on an unprecedented scale in order to curb flooding, generate electricity, and modernize the very poor farms in the Tennessee Valley region of the Southern United States.

7 drafted by Budget Director Lewis Williams Douglas, was passed on March 14, 1933. The act proposed to balance the "regular" (non-emergency) federal budget by cutting the salaries of government employees and cutting pensions to veterans by fifteen percent.

8 The National Housing Act, created in 1937 with some Republican support to abolish slums.

9 CCC, a program includes school lunches, building new schools, opening roads in remote areas, reforestation, and purchase of marginal lands to enlarge national forests.

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Chapter Two:

Frances Perkins

Frances Perkins (1880-1965) was one of the most influential women of the twentieth century. Government official for New York State and the federal government, including Industrial Commissioner of the State of New York from 1929-1932, Perkins was named Secretary of Labor by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933. As FDR's friend, Perkins helped the president fight the economic ravages caused by the Great Depression and make great strides toward improving workplace conditions.

I. Biography

Fannie Coralie Perkins, called Fanny by her family, was born in Boston on April 10, 1880. Her parents soon moved to Worcester, but both were from Maine. The Perkins farm, the Brick House in Newcastle, Maine, where they returned every summer, is still in family hands. Today, it is the site of the Frances Perkins Center, created by her grandson, Tomlin Perkins Coggeshall. (Berg, p.28)

Perkins's father, a stationer, enrolled her in the Worcester Classical High School. Unusual for that era, it was assumed that she would go to college. She entered Mount Holyoke in 1898, was elected vice-president of her class in her third year, president in her final year, and after graduation, permanent class president. The class motto, "Be ye steadfast," from 1 Corinthians 15, would become her own motto throughout a life of public service.

At Mount Holyoke, Perkins took a new course in American history taught by Annah May Soule where the students made a survey of working conditions in factories. This, a reading of Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives*, and a speech made on campus by Florence Kelley, impressed her deeply. She joined the newly formed Mount Holyoke chapter of the National Consumers' League. After college she taught sciences in various places, but found her way to Chicago's Hull House and Chicago Commons, then to the Philadelphia Research and Protective Association that helped immigrant girls, including African-Americans from the South, who were often preyed on when they reached the city. (Berg, p.28)

She began studying economics at the University of Pennsylvania under Simon N. Patten who sent her to New York to work at the New York School of Philanthropy and to begin courses at Columbia University leading to a Master's degree in Economics and Sociology. In April 1910, she became Secretary of the New York City Consumers' League, and following the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, took a similar position with the Committee on Safety. In 1913, she married Paul C. Wilson, then working for John Purrier Mitchel, who would become Mayor of New York. They would have one surviving child, Susanna, born in 1916. (Berg, p.29)

II. The Triangle Fire

Perkins personally witnessed the event that had the most impact on her need for social reform. The Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire, which occurred on March 25. It was the worst factory fire ever in New York City. Within 15 minutes, 146 workers, most of them young women, perished, almost 50 jumping to their deaths from the eighth and ninth floors of the building at the northwest corner of Washington Place and Greene Street. Perkins was across Washington Square Park at the time and ran over when she heard the alarms. She later remembered, "People who had their clothes afire would jump. "It was a most horrid spectacle...There was no place to go." (Berg, p.29)

A week later at a rally sponsored by the Consumers' League at the Metropolitan Opera House, 3500 people heard Rose Schneiderman, a leader of the Shirtwaist Makers Union, give a powerful speech in which she said, "The life of men and women is so cheap and property is so sacred." Schneiderman couldn't have been more right. The Triangle's owners were not found liable and collected \$65,000 in insurance money for property damage. Three years later the building owner paid only \$75 to each of a small number of families who lost a loved one. (Magill, p.35)

Within a few months of the fire, former President Theodore Roosevelt recommended Perkins as executive director of the Committee on Safety, which would work for improvements in workplace safety. As a result of the Committee's work, New York State established a Factory Investigating Commission with Senator

Robert F. Wagner as chairman, Assemblyman Alfred E. Smith as vice-chairman, and, later, Perkins as its executive secretary. The Commission investigated working conditions in the broadest sense and was responsible for a great deal of substantive legislation to protect workers.

Francis Perkins proclaimed: “Everybody who jumped—and a good many did jump from the ninth and tenth floors—was killed. And the other people who died were all people who were burned or smothered by the smoke in the factory itself.

This made a terrible impression on the people of the state of New York. I can’t begin to tell you how disturbed the people were everywhere. It was as though we had all done something wrong. It shouldn’t have been. We were sorry. We didn’t want it that way; we hadn’t intended to have 147 girls and boys killed in a factory. It was a terrible—it was a terrible thing for the people of the City of New York and the state of New York to face.

I remember that Al Smith—the action happened on a Saturday. I happened to have been visiting a friend in the park on the other side of the park, and we heard the engines, and we heard the screams and rushed out and rushed over where we could see the trouble was. We could see this building from Washington Square, and the people had just begun to jump when we got there. They had been holding until that time, standing in the windowsills, crowding, being crowded by others behind them, and the fire approaching closer and closer, the smoke closer and closer.

Finally, the men were trying to put up, trying to get out this thing that the firemen carry with them, a net, to catch people if they do jump. And they were trying to get that out, and they couldn’t wait any longer. I mean, they began to jump. This is when the window was too crowded, and they were jumping. They hit the sidewalk. The net broke. It was a terrible distance, and the weight of the bodies was so great at the speed at which they were traveling that they broke through the net. And every one of them was killed. Everybody who jumped was killed. And it was a horrifying spectacle.” (Magill, p.40)

The fire helped spur a wave of organizing for unionization and workplace safety regulation. As a New York state official, Frances Perkins was instrumental in reforming the New York labor laws to protect worker safety.

III. Perkins and Al Smith

Smith was a strong advocate of the social responsibilities of government and first met Perkins when she went to Albany to lobby in support of legislation for the Consumers' League. (1) Smith helped her in the fight for the 54-hour bill, which prohibited men under 18 and all women from working more than 54 hours in a week.(Trout,p.535)

Smith was elected governor in 1918 and, having worked with Perkins on the Factory Commission, he appointed her to the state Industrial Commission, one of the top administrative posts of the Labor Department. Perkins later became its chairman. She handled judicial and regulatory issues and presided over workmen's compensation cases, which required a combination of technical knowledge, legal reasoning, sympathy, and common sense.

Smith served three more terms as governor and was a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1924, but lost to William G. McAdoo. In 1928 he won the nomination but lost to Herbert Hoover, partially due to his Catholicism, opposition to Prohibition and sympathies for immigrants. Smith did not return to elected office and came to strenuously oppose both Roosevelt and the New Deal even though in his own political career he had supported many ideas that later became enshrined in New Deal legislation . (Trout, p.536)

These experiences changed Perkins forever and she was determined to make a difference. From this point on Perkins would spend the rest of her life in public service

IV. Perkins And Roosevelt

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945) was elected governor of New York as a Democrat in 1928, even though Al Smith lost the presidency that year. Many of the policies Roosevelt put in place as governor, from unemployment relief to public utility regulation, would become part of federal programs in the New Deal.

New York was the country's largest manufacturing state and was hard hit by the Depression, but in early 1930 almost no one was willing to think in terms of state aid to the unemployed. Nonetheless, in March 1930 Roosevelt announced a Committee on Stabilization of Industry for the Prevention of Unemployment making New York the first state to take such a step. And at a governors conference in the same year he committed himself to unemployment insurance, becoming the first political figure to do so. In August 1931 Roosevelt called the legislature into special session to address the crisis, saying that society has an obligation to "prevent the starvation or the dire want of its fellow men and women." The legislature listened and passed the Wicks Act, which created the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration and New York became first state to provide state aid for relief. The program eventually aided 40% of New Yorkers.(Segal, Brzuzy, p.95)

Roosevelt appointed Perkins Industrial Commissioner of New York. She was the first woman to hold the role and oversaw thousands of employees in one of the largest state agencies. Perkins advised him to think about it, but Roosevelt wouldn't change his mind. In her role Perkins worked to introduce unemployment insurance, expand public works, improve and expand state employment agencies, which were crucial at the time. Although many were skeptical whether a woman was capable of holding such an important office, Perkins performance soon won over many of her critics.

Perkins was aware of the opposition to her nomination and appointment as secretary of labor. She used skills she learned as a social worker to overcome these barriers. Perkins worked hard to bring together the different factions of labor including workers and management into many of her decisions. Through these approaches she gained the respect of many leaders. Perkins role in the administration that was

looked upon by the entire county for help opened a window of opportunity for the types of reforms that she believed so strongly in.

V. Perkins During The New Deal Period

When Roosevelt accepted the Democratic nomination for president in 1932, he promised a “new deal for the American people.” Roosevelt promised to act quickly to solve the damages caused by the Great Depression, and stated “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”(Segal, Brzuzy, p.101)

When Roosevelt announced that Perkins would be his Secretary of Labor, it caused William Green, the head of the country’s most powerful union, the American Federation of Labor, to announce he could “never become reconciled to the selection” because she was a woman, and worse, not a union member. Yet when Roosevelt died in office 12 years later, the only two cabinet members who had kept their posts for the duration of the administration were Perkins and Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior. .”(Segal, Brzuzy, p.102)

Frances Perkins proclaimed: “I came to Washington to work for God, FDR, and the millions of forgotten, plain common workingmen.” (Berg. 30)

She stated:” I promise to use what brains I have to meet problems with intelligence and courage. I promise that I will be candid about what I know. I promise to all of you who have the right to know, the whole truth so far as I can speak it. If I have been wrong, you may tell me so, for I really have no pride in judgment. I know all judgment is relative. It may be right today and wrong tomorrow. The only thing that makes it truly right is the desire to have it constantly moving in the right direction.” (Berg, p.30)

If I look back on the tragic years since 1929, it seems to me that the Americans as a Nation, not unlike some individuals, have been able to pass through a bitter experience to emerge with a newfound insight and maturity. They have had the courage to face their problems and find a way out. The heedless optimism of the boom years is past. They stand ready to build the future with sanity and wisdom.

I think that the process of recovery is not a simple one. The Americans during the New Deal period cannot be satisfied merely with makeshift arrangements which will tide their over the present emergencies. They must devise plans that will prevent their recurrence in the future. The task of recovery was inseparable from the fundamental task of social reconstruction.

1. The National Security and Social Security Programs

The new agencies and programs created during the first year of Roosevelt's tenure were justified in terms of economic recovery and reform. They included the Agricultural Adjustment Administration to restore fair prices for farm products; the Tennessee Valley Authority to provide electricity and flood control, and the Civilian Conservation Corps to put young men to work. But it was the National Recovery Administration (NRA) that was the centerpiece of "the first New Deal," as the programs created in 1933 became known.

The NRA was modeled in large part on the government-business partnership established by the War Industries Board in WWI. The NRA allowed businesses to "stabilize" prices but, in turn, workers got higher wages and the right to organize and bargain in unions. The voluntary "blanket code" businesses were supposed to adopt included a minimum wage of 30-40 cents an hour, a maximum work week of 40 hours, and the end of child labor. (Magill, p.45)

But the NRA was only partially successful because it couldn't effectively administer the codes without an enforcement mechanism, which was not provided. The codes also tolerated labor inequalities, for example, allowing blacks and women to receive lower wages for doing the same job as white men. In the end, large companies dominated the code writing process and used it to drive up prices, limit production, lay off workers, and divide markets among themselves at expense of smaller competitors. In 1935 the Supreme Court ruled the NRA unconstitutional, but other laws would take its place.

In June 1934 Roosevelt sent a message to congress announcing his support for some form of "social insurance" that would address unemployment and old age. This concept eventually became the Social Security Act, which was drafted to create

a system of insurance rather than one of welfare. Business response varied. The National Association of Manufacturers called it the “ultimate socialistic control of life and industry” but the Chamber of Commerce was generally supportive.

Roosevelt wanted Perkins to insure the Act passed and told her, “You believe in it. Therefore I know you will put your back to it more than anyone else and you will drive it through.” And Secretary of Labor Perkins did work for its passage as the chairman of the Committee on Economic Security, created by executive order to “promote greater economic security.” (Magill,p.46)

The Social Security Act created ten different programs to assist Americans in need. Although most people associate “social security” with the retirement pension, the act also provided direct assistance to the elderly, poor, blind, dependent children and their mothers. It also established a cooperative federal-state system of unemployment compensation financed by federal taxes on employers. Social Security was beneficial to millions of citizens, but it also excluded domestic workers and agricultural laborers, thus large numbers of blacks and women were not helped by it.

Perkins stated: “Our idea of what constitutes social good has advanced with the procession of the ages, from those desperate times when just to keep body and soul together was an achievement, to the great present when "good" includes an agreeable, stable civilization accessible to all, the opportunity of each to develop his particular genius and the privilege of mutual usefulness.” (Berg, p.31)

Perkins programs show how the social rights of people improved, and the basic social rights won a measure of government guarantee. Her ideas give the idea that the New Deal was a success and it helped the American people in getting out of the depression.

2- Working Protection

When the Supreme Court ruled the National Recovery Act unconstitutional in May 1935, many of the New Deal's programs that sought to improve working conditions were interrupted. For the next several years, Roosevelt, Perkins, and many others advocated legislation to protect workers. While campaigning in Bedford, Massachusetts, Roosevelt received a letter from a girl who told of having her weekly factory wages cut from \$11 to as little as \$4. He told a reporter, "Something has to be done about the elimination of child labor and long hours and starvation wages." (Magill, p.48)

In 1937 the president sent the bill that became the Fair Labor Standards Act to Congress with the message that a "self respecting democracy...can plead no justification for child labor, no economic reason for chiseling workers' wages." The Act was the last of the major New Deal efforts. It set a minimum wage, a maximum work week, and banned child labor. It created a Wage and Hour Division within the Department of Labor, which had the power to investigate any manufacturer and enforce standards in courts. The Act mainly, covered about 11 million workers. While it did protect children in manufacturing jobs, it did not cover those in agriculture, and the children of migrant workers continued to be exploited. (Magill, p.49)

In spite of this law and others, the record of the New Deal with regard to women was mixed. As early as 1930, there were over 10 million women working outside the home as domestics, farm laborers, nurses, teachers, secretaries, and garment workers, but many women's jobs were not covered by the new laws. (Magill,p.51).To a great degree, the women's reform agenda of the New Deal was about protection, rather than equality, partially because it grew out of progressive era feminism, which stressed special protections for women, not equality.

Perkins said: "Much of the legislation was enacted into law, oh, within a couple of years, I mean, you know, hearings and so forth and bringing out the supporters and modifying the bill, so that we got—we really got a big draw out of that one episode, which, as I've thought of it afterwards, seems in some way to have paid the debt that society owed to those children, those young people. It's their contribution to the people of New York that we have this really magnificent series of

legislative acts to protect and improve the administration of the law regarding the protection of workpeople in the City of—in the state of New York.” (Trout, p. 538)

Also, she stated: “The door might not be opened to a woman again for a long, long time, and I had a kind of duty to other women to walk in and sit down on the chair that was offered, and so establish the right of others long hence and far distant in geography to sit in the high seats.” (Trout, p. 538)

What is curious by modern standards of party politics was how Perkins was able to continue her work in Albany as Industrial Commissioner of New York up until the time of FDR's election to the White House in 1932. Perkins, starting with a social worker background modeled after Jane Adams and Jacob Riis, had the blessing of Theodore Roosevelt who recommended her to Al Smith for a job in Albany. She remained in Albany during Franklin Roosevelt's term and then was appointed for the entire time of FDR's presidency. Always interested in Social Security, she also worked on the evolution of the National Recovery Act, finally declared unconstitutional and later proposed in separate parts. Some important aspects of NRA included the National Labor Relations Board, wage and hours laws, and child labor regulations.

I think that Perkins and Roosevelt shared similar ideologies on how to help the country recover from the Depression. The Social Security Act consisted of two forms of social welfare aid, social insurance and public assistance. Social insurance was funded through payroll taxes gathered from every working American. It was an economic resources received by to those who had paid their dues to society. Workers and their dependents would be entitled to a monthly check at the age of retirement, death or due to a disability. The measure was supported because it was not viewed as a handout, rather a payback of money that was collectedly deposited. Public assistance was the controversial part of the Social Security Act. It provided financial assistance to those who fell below the poverty line. It was controversial because it required that money be distributed to those in need without any direct payment in to the program. The creation of these programs has helped millions of individuals and families reach and maintain self sufficiency.

In my opinion, although there have been changes made to the initial programs, and the controversy remains about the role that the government should play in supporting its citizens. During her tenure as Secretary of Labor, Perkins influence reached much farther than the Social Security Act. She is credited for overhauling the Department of labor.

The professor of history Berg, G weighs in Frances Perkins and the following of economic and social policies viewed that Perkins spearheaded the fight to improve the lives of U.S. workers, resulting in unemployment compensation programs, child labor laws, and the 40-hour work week. According to Downey, Perkins pushed for massive public works projects that created millions of jobs for unemployed workers. She bolstered the nation's labor movement and improved the standard of living across the nation.

Both Perkins and FDR understood the importance of creating programs that would translate into political support. In my view there has been way too much emphasis on the so-called "Hundred Days," FDR's very busy first three months or so in office in 1933 hundred days. But what historians refer to as the "Second New Deal," in 1935, was of more importance. Along with passage of the Social Security Act, it also included two other key measures. The National Labor Relations (or Wagner) Act guaranteed, for the first time in American history, the right of workers to join or form independent labor unions and to bargain collectively for improved wages, benefits, and working conditions. The Emergency Relief Appropriations Act allocated \$5 billion for large-scale public works programs that eventually employed over 8 million Americans on a vast array of construction projects. The popularity of these programs, all of which delivered tangible material benefits to many millions of struggling citizens. (Magill, p.106)

Programs like Social Security and the Wagner Act did not just "happen"; nor were they "given" to Americans by the New Deal. Roosevelt, Perkins, and other key policy makers were being pushed by grassroots movements and Left radicals. Unemployed councils, farmer cooperatives, a newly energized Communist Party, union organizers, consumer groups, and old age pension advocates were all pressuring the

government to take a more central role in helping citizens get through the worst crisis ever faced by American capitalism

3- Perkins and Stricks

The emergence of a powerful trade union movement was one of the most important social and political developments to result from the New Deal. When the Supreme Court declared the National Recovery Act unconstitutional, it invalidated the Act's guarantee of collective bargaining. Senator Robert Wagner of New York and others introduced what became the 1935 National Labor Relations Act (the Wagner Act). The Act created an enforcement mechanism in the form of the National Labor Relations Board, which could require employers to bargain with unions. The effects were that; there were about 3 million union members in 1932, less than 8% of the employed population, but by 1939 union workers totaled almost 9 million, or 18%. (Segal, Brzuzy, p.109)

Part of this increase was due to John L. Lewis, the leader of the United Mine Workers, who created what became the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1936. The CIO organized workers based on their industry rather than by their skill, as the American Federation of Labor had done. The power of this new "industrial unionism" was manifest in the great "sit-down" strike at General Motors, which forced the company to recognize the United Auto Workers in 1937. (Segal, Brzuzy, p.110)

Labor militancy was a powerful force across the nation during the New Deal. In 1934 a strike of longshoremen had tied up ports along the west coast for two months when San Francisco employers used strikebreakers to move some goods. The action precipitated a riot in which police killed two strikers. Harry Bridges, a longshoreman from Australia living legally in the U.S, persuaded union members to launch a general strike, which paralyzed the city for four days. At the time Roosevelt was on vacation aboard the *USS Houston* while Perkins was in charge of the response to the strike. Although some urged the general strike be broken by force, Roosevelt, advised by Perkins, remained calm and it ended peacefully in four days when strikers agreed to arbitration, which led to union recognition for the longshoremen. (Segal, Brzuzy, p.112)

Opposition to the New Deal was particularly strident from conservatives and some business leaders, but criticism came from across the political spectrum. In 1934 wealthy Democrats and their allies founded the American Liberty League (which Al Smith joined) to oppose the New Deal's "dictatorial" policies. The Communist Party and Socialist Party were also critical at times, but didn't gain much support. Father Charles Coughlin of Michigan, later known for his anti-Semitism, was a harsh critic of what he believed was Roosevelt's failure to fight strongly enough against the "money powers." Finally, populist Senator Huey Long of Louisiana advocated much more drastic distribution of money through what he called the Share-Our-Wealth Plan. Yet none of the criticism in itself was enough to derail the New Deal completely. (Trout, p.539)

Another way in which the New Deal was attacked was through Perkins for her refusal to act regarding Harry Bridges after the San Francisco general strike. At the time, the Bureau of Immigration was part of the Department of Labor, and opponents insisted Bridges was a communist and Perkins was legally required to deport him. But the FBI, San Francisco police and others had investigated and found the accusations against Bridges unsubstantiated. In 1937 the House of Representatives formed a Committee on Un-American Activities (which would later go on to infamy thanks to Joseph McCarthy) under Martin Dies to investigate Perkins. The Committee recommended she be impeached. But in 1938 the House Judiciary Committee exonerated Perkins by unanimously ruling that there were no grounds for impeachment. The accusations took their toll on Perkins. (Berg, p.32)

Perkins brought with her years of front line work in the inner cities. She saw the devastating conditions that children and women were forced to work in. She understood the meaning of a living wage and having the ability to provide for your family. Perkins combined these experiences with a drive to make a difference. Her time in the settlement houses and working in New York taught her the value of utilizing the political system to accomplish her goals. Perkins was ahead of her time, both as a woman and a political social worker. She paved the way for many women to follow.

Perkins is considered as the first female member of the presidential cabinet. She was largely responsible for the U.S. adoption of social security, unemployment insurance, federal laws regulating child labor, and adoption of the federal minimum wage.

Perkins had a cool personality. Her results indicate her great love of workers and lower-class groups. She was well-suited for the high-level efforts to effect sweeping reforms, but never caught the public's eye or its affection.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, President Truman kept the cabinet intact, but soon asked Perkins and others to resign as of July 1. Their relationship remained very cordial. Truman always remembered that she had given him his first federal job as director of the Federal Reemployment Service in Missouri in 1933. He asked her to consider what other government jobs she would like to have, and she asked to be head of the Social Security program, which she called the act nearest to her heart. Truman said he would consider it.

The Frances Perkins Building that is the headquarters of the United States Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. was named in her honor in 1980.

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Chapter Three:

Mary Jane Bethune

Bethune, Mary McLeod

African-American educator, civil and women's rights activist, adviser to United States presidents, government official and humanitarian who devoted her life to the improvement of educational opportunities for African-Americans. Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune probably ranks as the most influential African-American woman in U. S. history. It was she who helped to initiate the black pride movement in America. "Look at me," she often said. "I am black. I am beautiful." (Goodwin, p. 162)

First Black Woman to Establish a Four Year Accredited College - Bethune-Cookman College. First Woman to Receive a Major Appointment from the Federal Government Director of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration - Under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

I. Biography

On July 10, 1875, two years before the end of Reconstruction, Mary Jane McLeod was born to two former slaves, Samuel and Patsy Macintosh McLeod, near Maysville, South Carolina. She was the fifteenth of seventeen children; most of her brothers and sisters were born in slavery. Once her family was reassembled from various plantations after slavery, her parents acquired five acres of land and built a family home known as the "Homestead". Her mother continued to work for her former owner, and her father cultivated cotton on their land. Young Mary Jane, as was the custom in the cotton regions of South Carolina, was in the fields along with the adults. (Goodwin, p. 162)

I think that this might be understandable in light of the endemic human suffering and the near catastrophic conflict which plagued the nation in those years. Yet her story is one which in any other time might have been as notable as that of those African Americans who followed her in pursuit of justice, equality and opportunity for their people.

The time spent working in the cotton fields in Maysville helped shape Mary McLeod's keen work ethic and values regarding the importance of the use of the hands in labor and success. But Mary McLeod knew that God intended more for her

than working in the cotton fields. She had a burning desire to learn how to read and write and was not happy until she was allowed to attend Maysville's one room schoolhouse. McLeod became the prize student of the teacher, Emma Jane Wilson, who recognized her outstanding skills. Miss Wilson recommended McLeod for a scholarship to attend Scotia Seminary near Concord, North Carolina.

Upon graduation from Scotia in 1894, McLeod was awarded a scholarship to Dwight Moody's Institute for Home and Foreign Missions in Chicago. This rising young scholar had dreamed of going to Africa to minister to the spiritual and educational needs of her ancestors. However, this future "foremost woman of her race in the United States" was informed that there were "no openings for Negro Missionaries in Africa". (Holt, p 7). In a very few years, Mary Jane had absorbed all there was to be had from the "teaching" aspect of the school, and merited a certificate.... Her Catechism and Confession of Faith being duly accepted, she was received as a member of the Presbyterian Church. (Holt, p. 29)

II. Bethune career in Education

Mary McLeod was not one to have gone that far to be discouraged from her "missionary spirit-the spirit of doing things for others". Following a year at Moody's Institute she returned to Maysville to become Miss Wilson's assistant at the Presbyterian Mission School. Restless and unrequited in her ambition, she requested and received from the Presbyterian Board of Education an appointment at the Haines Institute in Augusta, Georgia. Here she honed her programmatic educational philosophy from the dynamic Lucey Craft Laney. It was at the Haines Normal and Industrial Institute that McLeod gained experience in a predominately female setting with primary, grammar, and elementary normal and industrial courses. Laney also helped create a city hospital. The lessons McLeod learned from her one year's experience at Haines served her well when she established her own school.

Bethune was one of the first youngsters to sign up for a new mission school for black children built near her home. She recalled, "That first morning on my way to school I kept the thought uppermost, 'put that down - you can't read,' and I felt that I was on my way to read." (Holt, p 46). Bethune was not only on her way to read, she was on

her way to a lifelong career devoted to educating a people only a generation or two away from slavery.

Sometime between 1897 and 1898, McLeod was transferred by the Presbyterian Board to Kendell Institute at Sumpter, South Carolina. Here she continued to teach and render social services. But most importantly, she met Albertus Bethune, a former schoolteacher turned haberdasher. They were married in early May 1898; on February 3, 1899, she gave birth to Albertus McLeod Bethune Jr., in Savannah, Georgia. Their relationship vacillated between his desire to make money and her dream of continuing her mission work. Moreover, she now had an added responsibility-raising a son. While living in Savannah, Mrs. Bethune met Reverend C.J. Uggans, a Presbyterian pastor from Palatka, Florida. He offered her the opportunity to start a school in that city.

She started a community school and worked in the jails two and three times a week, and in the sawmills and among the young people in clubs. Bethune stayed in Palatka five years, until she was encouraged to go to Daytona by Reverend S.P. Pratt who informed her that the area was fertile ground for her missionary spirit.

Having received an education at Maysville Presbyterian Mission School, Scotia Institute, and Moody's Bible Institute, having gained teaching experience at her primary school with her mentor Emma Wilson, and having arrived in Daytona Beach in 1904. Bethune labored the next twenty years, dividing her time and energy between making the school a success and building for herself a national reputation.

In Daytona, Florida, in 1904 she scraped together \$1.50 to begin a school with just five pupils. She called it the Daytona Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls. A gifted teacher and leader, Mrs. Bethune ran her school with a combination of unshakable faith and remarkable organizational skills. She was a brilliant speaker and an astute fund raiser. She expanded the school to a high school, then a junior college, and finally it became Bethune-Cookman College.

Mary Bethune stated: "had no furniture. I begged dry goods box and made benches and stools; begged a basin and other things I needed and in 1904 five little girls here started school, I made my learning, what little it was...service and

cooperation, rather than something that would put me above the people around me." (Holt, p. 54)

At this stage I can say that, first Bethune was teacher, administrator, comptroller, and custodian. Later she was able to secure a staff, many of whom worked loyally for many years. To finance and expand the school, Bethune and her pupils baked pies and made ice cream to sell to nearby construction gangs. In addition to her regular classes, Bethune organized classes for the children of turpentine workers. In these ways she satisfied her desire to serve as a missionary.

As the school at Daytona progressed, it became necessary to secure an adequate financial base. Bethune began to seek financial aid in earnest. In 1912 she interested James M. Gamble of the Proctor and Gamble Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, who contributed financially to the school and served as chairman of its board of trustees until his death. (Holt, p. 60)

In 1923 Bethune's school for girls merged with Cookman Institute of Jacksonville, Fla., a school for boys, and the new coeducational school became known as Bethune-Cookman Collegiate Institute, soon renamed Bethune-Cookman College. Bethune served as president of the college until her retirement as president emeritus in 1942. She remained a trustee of the college to the end of her life. By 1955 the college had a faculty of 100 and a student enrollment of over 1,000. (Holt, p.76)

Still not that distant from her own condition of poverty, Bethune knew how to be creative in survival. She was not beyond begging in the more conventional meaning of the term. "From week to week Mrs. Bethune faced the daily problem of meals for the children. She would go to the orange-growers to ask for the "pulls" which had been withheld from the market." (Holt, p.63) Acutely aware of the role of the African-American community in providing both the basis of support for the institution and a source of the institution's student population Bethune worked closely with them to fulfill both functions. She did so in a manner which would allow the poverty-burdened community a sense of ownership and a feeling that they

contributed to their children's education. The School grew almost faster than Mrs. Bethune could keep up with it.

Educating and training girls was only part of Mrs. Bethune's vision. She was essentially a missionary, with all that the word implies: making converts from "wrong going" to "good doing"....and making her fellow human beings more happy through the simple fundamental habits of living which had been imbued in her. This profound spiritual drive had expressed itself in social works. (Holt, p.112). It would be this boundless energy and comprehensive approach to her endeavors which would be both the basis for her success and a source of her potential demise.

Mrs. Bethune was, strictly speaking, a lecturer, in the sense that she was enlightening an audience of adults who were paying in advance to be informed upon a subject on which the lecturer has specialized knowledge. Instead she was a gifted speaker conducting a straight publicity campaign for the express purpose of fund raising in order to operate and maintain said school. (Holt, p.110) And if this were not enough she had a sincere and affectionate style of interaction, honed while fund raising for her school, which resulted in countless friends and supporters whose assistance would be the basis of the success of both her school and her career. Even in the segregated South Bethune's charm would enable her to accomplish her mission. "In the final analysis Bethune presented the public image of a woman who so affable that even southern whites could hardly be offended by her approach, but who, at the same time, clearly expressed a vision of racial equality." (Franklin & Meier (editors), p. 196)

Yet at the level of society and locales where Bethune spent the last half of her life of advocacy, she was often the only African American present. In these settings she endured the form of racism dispensed by the upper classes. Her lot being cast so much among white people from the very beginning Mary McLeod Bethune faced the problem of how she was to be addressed. She would make no concession to Southern custom of refusing to prefix the name of a Negro with "Mr." or "Mrs." If one had attained a certain prominence which in itself forbade publicity the familiar use of the first name, the sidestepping form of address would be "Doctor." This

condescending avoidance of the issue of the equal status of Negroes as persons in their own right, Mrs. Bethune found intolerable. (Holt, p.180)

I think that, it would be her involvement in African-American women's issues which would put Bethune in to the highest levels of American society. Even when she enters professional life, she never loses site of the ordeal of the African-American woman, second-class because of race and gender. Even when Mrs. Bethune might seem to be most deeply immersed in her school, at no period did she lose sight of her long-time dedication to the cause of Negro women.

III. Bethune career as a Public Leader

Mary McLeod Bethune became a public leader in the second decade of the twentieth century. As an adult, Bethune's influence soon extended far beyond the South. She was a gifted organizer and became a leader in the effort to build coalitions among black women fighting for equal rights, better education, jobs, and political power.

She led a drive to register black voters in Daytona Beach which earned her a visit from the local Ku Klux Klan. Moreover during this period, Bethune was elected president of the State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. During four years in office, she organized scattered clubs of black women throughout the Southeast to combat school segregation and the lack of health facilities among black children. In 1924, Bethune became the eighth president of the prestigious National Association of Colored Women's clubs (NACW). Among her accomplishments, during her first four years as president, was the acquisition of a national headquarters in the nation's capital. (Holt, p.178)

Even greater recognition was bestowed upon her as a leader in education. In 1928, she attended the Child Welfare Conference called by President Calvin Coolidge. During Herbert Hoover's administration, she was again summoned to Washington to attend the National Commission for Child Welfare. According to

biographer Rackham Holt, she was "the expert on educational boards, able to supply the facts on the Negro institutions" that received federal aid. Bethune likewise served on the Hoover Commission on Home Building and Home Ownership.

IV. Bethune during the New Deal Period

1-The National Agencies

In 1933 Bethune was appointed to the Planning Committee established by the Federal Office of Education of Negroes in the spring of 1934. In addition, she was able to carry on her duties as president of her Daytona Beach school, and to organize the National Council of Negro Women in New York City. Bethune's increasing involvement in national conferences on education, child welfare, and home ownership, as well as her reputation as a moving spirit in the black women's club movement, brought her into contact with a widening circle of influential people which eventually included the Roosevelt. Bethune's next appointment within the Roosevelt administration would be the one which most impacted upon the lives of the rank-and-file African American.

Subsequently her recognition as a "leader" in the "black world", and her affiliation with the architects of the New Deal reform program, led to her service as an advisor on minority affairs in the Roosevelt administration. Bethune's appointment as advisor on minority affairs in the National Youth Administration (NYA) is an interesting story. This position would offer Bethune her greatest vantage point to advocate for the issues which had been so important to her, but it would present her with challenges which would both tax her talents and expose her to uncharacteristic criticism.

Working in Washington, as one of the first African Americans to hold an appointed office, as a woman, and as someone accountable to a whole chain of authority above her, Bethune was out of her element. Her charismatic, hands-on, proactive approach, which had been the engine of her success, did not translate well to the bureaucratic office setting. That part of the criticism levied against her is, in part,

justified. She can be held accountable for the gaps in her skills, just as she received so many accolades for her qualities. "While supposedly representing black interests, the member of the 'black cabinet' all found themselves working under serious constraints imposed by membership in the federal bureaucracy." (Franklin & Meier, editors, p. 191)

What she should not be held accountable for is the criticism that she did not do enough personally to move President Roosevelt and his administration to act on issues of injustice and bigotry against African Americans. "The most important was the failure of Bethune's division in many instances to challenge the Roosevelt administration's reluctance to demand a desegregated society." (Franklin & Meier, p. 195)

As a result of her activities in the women's movement in the 1920s and 1930s, she attracted the attention of Eleanor Roosevelt, who invited her to a luncheon at her New York home for representative leaders of the National Council of Women of the United States. It was at this social gathering that Bethune met Sara Delano (Mrs. James) Roosevelt, mother of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. According to Bethune, the friendship that grew from this initial meeting "became one of the most treasured relationships of my life." Subsequently, she developed a "close" friendship with the Roosevelt women probably led to her government appointments.

A series of events in the early 1930s led to a large meeting of black leaders later in the decade in Washington, D.C., to chart the social, political, and economic destiny of millions of black Americans. The events were the election of President Roosevelt, the appointment of Mary McLeod Bethune as director of minority affairs in the NYA, and the advent of the Great Depression.

In 1937 and again in 1939, with the approval of Aubrey Williams, NYA executive director, Bethune issued calls for national conferences on the problem of black Americans. She established the conferences' theme when she wrote to the president that, "until now, opportunity (had) not been offered for Negroes themselves to suggest a comprehensive program for the full integration into the benefits and the responsibilities of American democracy." Delegates from around the nation sent

recommendations to Roosevelt and to Congress, which they considered fundamental to resolving the problems facing "the Negro" and its youth. ." (Goodwin, p. 228)

Bethune's determination helped national officials recognize the need for advancing the employable conditions for black youth. The NYA's final report, issued in 1943, stated that, "more than 300,000 black young men and women were given employment and work training on NYA projects. These projects opened to these youth, training opportunities and enabled the majority of them to qualify for jobs heretofore closed to them." Within the administration, Bethune used her position as Director of Negro Affairs to advocate for the appointment of black NYA officials to positions of political power. (Goodwin, p. 228)

Bethune's administrative assistants were numerous and served as liaisons between the National Division of Negro Affairs and the NYA agencies on the state and local levels. The high number of administrative assistants made up a reasonable work force commanded by Bethune. This attributed to better job and salary opportunities elsewhere. During her tenure Bethune also pushed national executives to approve a program of consumer education for blacks, a foundation for black crippled children and planned for a compile of studies pertaining to black workers' education councils. However, these programs were rejected by national officials due to inadequate funding and fear of duplicating the work of private governmental agencies. The NYA was terminated in 1943.

Bethune's way of working surreptitiously to accomplish her goals contributed to the impression she was doing little or nothing. Many of her contemporary critics would not know what she was doing out of the limelight. It would require the time consuming research of historians to discover Bethune's "...behind-the-scenes correspondence with NYA white administrators regarding the inclusion of black youth in NYA work projects that afforded training aimed at the skilled and semi-skilled positions in the job market yields the portrait of an aggressive and often outspoken woman." (Franklin & Meier (editors), p. 197)

2-The Black Cabinet

Eleanor Roosevelt respected Bethune to the extent that the segregation rules at the Southern Conference on Human Welfare in 1938, being held in Birmingham, Alabama, were changed on Roosevelt's request so she could sit next to Bethune. Roosevelt frequently referred to Bethune as "her closest friend in her age group." Bethune, in her turn took it upon herself to disperse the message of the Democratic Party to black voters, and make the concerns of black people known to Roosevelt at the same time. She had unprecedented access to the White House through her relationship with the First Lady. She used it to form a coalition of leaders from black organizations called the Federal Council on Negro Affairs, but which came to be known as the Black Cabinet. (Franklin & Meier (editors), p. 197)

The role of the Black Cabinet was to serve as an advisory board to the Roosevelt administration on issues facing black people in America. It gathered talented blacks in positions within federal agencies, creating the first collective of black people enjoying higher positions in government than ever before. It also served to show to voters that the Roosevelt administration cared about black concerns. The group gathered in Bethune's office or apartment and met informally, rarely keeping minutes. Although as advisers they had little role in creating public policy, they were a respected leadership among black voters and were able to influence political appointments and disbursement of funds to organizations that would benefit black people.

As a member of FDR's "black cabinet," Bethune was the only African American woman to hold an influential post in the administration. She met every Friday night at home with her black colleagues and civil rights leaders such as Charles H. Houston, Walter White, and A. Philip Randolph. She called the men together to stay apprised of their work and to use her influence to improve the lives of African Americans and fight inequality.

Aware of her critics Bethune did not alter her style. She would not respond to critics, even those that ultimately supported the same broad goals as she had all her life. But she would, on occasion, within the confines of her advisory role as a member

of the so-called Black Cabinet, speak frankly. In one instance when the group was discussing how racism was compounding the impact of the Great Depression on African Americans Bethune offered her own solution. "The only solution to the racial problem, Mary McCleod (Bethune observed, is "a straight forward statement and program of action from the President." (Goodwin, p. 447) Like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Bethune would have to wait for the judgment of history to determine whether she did not do enough to end racism, or she did not challenge the white establishment as effectively and as directly as was necessary. But her demonstrable contributions were significant.

Bethune's position gave her access not only to the president but, on occasion, to a radio audience of millions. On the eve of America's entrance into World War II, she joined a panel discussion on NBC radio's weekly public affairs broadcast of "America's Town Meeting of the Air." The panelists addressed the question, what does American democracy mean to me? With her Victorian elocution and a thunderous tone, Bethune reminded her listeners that African Americans had always been willing to die for American democracy but were still shut out from its promise of freedom.

- **The speech :**

"Democracy is for me, and for 12 million black Americans, a goal towards which our nation is marching. It is a dream and an ideal in whose ultimate realization we have a deep and abiding faith. For me, it is based on Christianity, in which we confidently entrust our destiny as a people. Under God's guidance in this great democracy, we are rising out of the darkness of slavery into the light of freedom. Here my race has been afforded [the] opportunity to advance from a people 80 percent illiterate to a people 80 percent literate; from abject poverty to the ownership and operation of a million farms and 750,000 homes; from total disfranchisement to participation in government; from the status of chattels to recognized contributors to the American culture.

As we have been extended a measure of democracy, we have brought to the nation rich gifts. We have helped to build America with our labor, strengthened it with our faith and enriched it with our song. We have given you Paul Lawrence Dunbar,

Booker T. Washington, Marian Anderson and George Washington Carver. But even these are only the first fruits of a rich harvest, which will be reaped when new and wider fields are opened to us.

The democratic doors of equal opportunity have not been opened wide to Negroes. In the Deep South, Negro youth is offered only one-fifteenth of the educational opportunity of the average American child. The great masses of Negro workers are depressed and unprotected in the lowest levels of agriculture and domestic service, while the black workers in industry are barred from certain unions and generally assigned to the more laborious and poorly paid work. Their housing and living conditions are sordid and unhealthy. They live too often in terror of the lynch mob; are deprived too often of the Constitutional right of suffrage; and are humiliated too often by the denial of civil liberties. We do not believe that justice and common decency will allow these conditions to continue.

Our faith envisions a fundamental change as mutual respect and understanding between our races come in the path of spiritual awakening. Certainly there have been times when we may have delayed this mutual understanding by being slow to assume a fuller share of our national responsibility because of the denial of full equality.

Yet, we have always been loyal when the ideals of American democracy have been attacked. We have given our blood in its defense—from Crispus Attucks on Boston Commons to the battlefields of France. We have fought for the democratic principles of equality under the law, equality of opportunity, equality at the ballot box, for the guarantees of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We have fought to preserve one nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Yes, we have fought for America with all her imperfections, not so much for what she is, but for what we know she can be.

Perhaps the greatest battle is before us, the fight for a new America: fearless, free, united, morally re-armed, in which 12 million Negroes, shoulder to shoulder with their fellow Americans, will strive that this nation under God will have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, for the people and by the people shall

not perish from the earth. This dream, this idea, this aspiration, this is what American democracy means to me." (Goodwin, p. 449)

I recognize that Bethune made what would be a final gesture to move the administration on issues of racial justice. The speech is about the problems of black Americans. Delegates came from around the nation in a forum which did attract attention from both the media and politicians. Bethune used her fame to bring forth issues without directly challenging the President. This speech was the highlight of her government career. As World War II approached Bethune's role would revert to being one more of symbolism than practice. She, and the other members of Roosevelt's black cabinet, would direct their attention to the war effort. Believing that the South was essential to the President's desire to maintain social programs while preparing for world war, his African- American advisors found themselves even more hamstrung. The military was segregated and there was little hope of changing that fact.

Known for her reputation as an educator, public figure in government, and black women's club activist, Bethune was also a Business woman. While much of her energy was devoted to keeping the University solvent, she also provided a better living condition for her parents and an education for her son and grandson. Two axioms of Bethune's philosophy, "not for myself, but for others," and "I feel that as I give I get," were confessed to Charles S. Johnson. But she was not one to rely upon chance for her economic security. She held a one-fourth interest in the Welricha Motel at the Bethune Volusia Beach, Inc., a resort purchased in 1943 to provide recreational facilities for black Daytonans, was located on a two-and-one-half-mile stretch of oceanfront property jointly owned by Bethune, George W. Engram Sr., and Joseph Nathaniel Crooms and his wife, Wealthy.

In addition to these ventures, Bethune invested in real estate mainly in the neighborhood of the University. The revenue from these investments enabled her to have a comfortable life for herself and her son and grandson. Also, Bethune used extra earnings from selling insurance to pay off the mortgage on the "Homestead" in Maysville, and bought a modern home for her parents.

Bethune had been engaged in activities connected with World War II. As early as 1942, she lobbied the U.S. War Department to commission black women officers in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), later the Women's Army Corps (WAC).

In 1944, she became the national commander of the Women's Army for National Defense, an all-black women's organization founded on November 15, 1942, by Lovonia H. Brown to seek "opportunities for service..., share in this fight for democracy..., and to provide an instrument through which our women could serve in this great crisis, with dignity and pride " (Holt, p. 162) Their motto, "Working for Victory, Planning for Peace," was echoed in Bethune's greeting at its first national meeting: "Today,...we are aware of the profound and worldwide significance of this war and the postwar era, that is rapidly emerging." (Holt, p. 162) The actions taken by Bethune during the war demonstrated her patriotism for a nation willing to fight racism abroad, but not practicing democracy at home.

Mary McLeod Bethune must have been gratified to see the political and social changes that occurred during her lifetime. Born into a family of ex-slaves, she lived long enough to witness the unraveling of the "separate but equal" doctrine by the U.S. Supreme Court decision. On this occasion she wrote in her weekly Chicago Defender column:

« There can be no divided democracy, no class government, no half-free county, under the constitution. Therefore, there can be no discrimination, no segregation, no separation of some citizens from the rights which belong to all.... We are on our way. But these are frontiers which we must conquer... We must gain full equality in education...in the franchise...in economic opportunity, and full equality in the abundance of life. » (Kennedy, p.378)

Her statement reflected her firm belief in American democracy and included her lifelong agenda for African Americans-education for all, the franchise for all and economic opportunity as a whole.

At the end, I can confirm that Bethune's legacy was a testimony to courage. The courage to challenge racism. The courage to face down the Ku Klux Klan. The

courage to take on the responsibility of feeding, housing and educating children. The courage to approach the elite for support, the courage to challenge a president. And all the while Bethune considered herself first and foremost an educator. Mrs. Bethune's quite justified appraisal of herself as an educator was more than proved through her intuitive, administrative sense, and power as a lecturer. In this field she was not excelled. She had the uncanny knack of retaining and using aptly words and phrases, and in creating object lessons by turning personal experiences into richly adorned parables. She was a teacher who had the courage and the determination to leave the world a better place than she found it.

She believed this would automatically lead to advancement for the entire race, as black women then were more inclined than black men to use public positions for group advancement. Bethune represents the strong, independent American female. She is considered as a sample of the real American woman, she succeeded in proving that the American women can be responsible.

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Conclusion

We can speculate that women enjoyed their jobs outside home. They took advantage in the New Deal programs and could be capable in maintaining a strong position in job fields that were referred to men. The New Deal witnessed many iron women who did a lot for changing the living conditions of the families suffering from the depression. Also, these women competed the political influences and succeeded in turning the wheel for the benefit of the society as a whole.

Mary Jane McLeod Bethune's life was representative of the lives of many African American women of her time: she was deeply grounded in religion and family, and intensely committed to racial advancement. Yet, Bethune became one of the most important African American women in American political history. She came to occupy a prominent place among a select group of black men and women designated as "race leaders" - men and women who devoted their lives to advancing African American equality. They became the public voice of the voiceless masses, speaking of the collective identity of people of color and arguing for social, economic, and political rights. Bethune became more than just a figure whose presence was both a symbol to her race and an indication of progress,

Bethune was certainly a pivotal member of this group as her efforts advanced equal opportunity for black Americans on all levels for nearly half a century. Yet, Bethune distinguished herself from other race leaders by steadfastly incorporating the struggle for gender equality with her efforts for black equality. By advocating and training black women for visible and increasing public leadership roles, she ensured an expanding role for African American women in the formal political realm. She believed this would automatically lead to advancement for the entire race, as black women then were more inclined than black men to use public positions for group advancement. Bethune's exposure to strong, independent female role models allowed her to develop her unwavering belief in the primary responsibility of black women for sustaining the race.

Perkins achieved an active advocate for improvement even within her own office, she fundamentally reorganized the Department of Labor to increase efficiencies, simplified the Bureau of Immigration, and increased the responsibilities of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Perkins' tenacious brand of leadership stemmed from firm idealism and belief in humankind. Perkins believed that in a successful democracy there must be a certain minimum unity of purpose and some contribution from the citizens as a whole to the idea and practice of the general welfare. Her ideology indicated that there must necessarily be a multiple of complications, sharp difference of opinion, and friction at many points, where the lives of millions of persons are involved.

Americans deserve a Secretary of Labor who can provide a well-balanced approach to the interests of both business and labor, not an ideologue with a blatant political agenda. Frances Perkins kept that balance, and helped pull our nation out of its worst economic catastrophe in history.

At the end we can say that women like Mary Bethune and Francis Perkins succeeded in keeping their touch in American history during The New Deal period. They can prove that women have always put others before themselves, they have been instrumental in solving the important social issues of this country, and they are powerful and can do anything, and get the job well done.

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