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The 2nd Great Awakening

In the 1820's and 1830's, all women, irrespective of their color, were discriminated from nearly all universal suffrage. They were socially neglected and had no right to participate in an election or hold a political position. Furthermore, they had unfair working conditions when compared to their male colleagues. However, in the 1850's, women began to fight for their rights, especially their voting rights (Norton et al. 408). Due to the religious fervor of the Second Great Awakening, which inspired people to create a just society, most individuals began to challenge the social structure in the United States and demanded reforms.

The Second Great Awakening was influential in the introduction of social reforms that increased women's rights in the United States. Before its occurrence, women had no right to vote, own property, or be elected for political posts; however, this movement enabled them to gain rights equal to that of men. Its effectiveness was first realized when Wyoming allowed women to serve as jurists. This regulation initiated the right of women to have equal employment opportunities as men. Later, in 1920, the United States introduced the 19th Amendment, which prohibited any of its citizens from being denied the right to vote because of his/her gender (Norton et al. 410). Consequently, the Second Great Awakening was essential in fostering women's rights.

The Second Great Awakening was also influential in terms of abolishment and sport movements. Reformers were passionate in speaking of the injustices of slavery and in helping

slaves escape from their masters. For example, after Sojourner Truth was freed from slavery in 1827, she became an important speaker for women's rights and abolitionism (Norton et al. 402). Finally, religious reformers during the period viewed sports as a way of fighting crime. In particular, they believed that these games were essential for improvement of public health, development of sound morals, and in the building of character (Norton et al. 403). Accordingly, they promoted 'clean' sports, such as athletics, and were against gambling and 'unvirtuous' games, for example, cockfighting, skittles, animal baiting, gander pulling, target shooting, and shuffleboards (Norton et al. 411). Their opposition against the aforementioned games led to the destruction of sports' bars.

During the first half of the 19th century, women in the United States faced social negligence and unequal rights as compared to men. They were not allowed to vote and suffered from unfair working conditions. The reformers inspired by the Second Great Awakening were effective in ensuring that women were no longer viewed as second-class citizens. The movement saw positive social reforms leading to the abolition of slavery and equal voting rights.

Works Cited

Norton, Mary, et al. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States, Volume II: Since 1865*. 8th ed.. Cengage Learning, 2007.

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