

# Answers: Coming of Age: Women in 19th C. America

1. True, largely because the Constitution of 1776, drafted in great hurry, did not differentiate by gender.
2. Oberlin College became the first Co-ed private college and Michigan State University became the first public university to become Co-ed.
3. Underwear—under “pants” created by Amelia Bloomer because hoop skirts would fly up exposing women. And the corset, to give mature women younger shapes.
4. In 1800 women had on average 7 live births, 1/3 -1/2 would not survive until age 5. In 1900 3 ½ live births on average for white women; black women and immigrant women had about 7.
5. In 1800 the dominant life was a shared life at the family farm or business—shared work, shared tasks, shared migration There was no working class except slaves so few people worked outside of their homes or home businesses, shops were generally in the home and families in the cities gardened in their yards.  
In 1900, the industrial revolution had created out of house/home work as the norm, wage earning out of the home, “women’s skills” for work outside the home in the wage economy, married women’s leisure, gender separate lives as the new norms.
6. Queen Victoria, who came to the throne the year Steven Grover Cleveland was born (1837). When Victoria and Albert went to the country palace at Balmoral in Scotland and tried to hike in the heather together, her fabric shoes offered neither support nor dryness. She commanded sensible shoes, made of leather—women would no longer be barefoot in summer! The Victorian Age was afoot!
7. Until they were 21; their brother until age 25. Since the average age at death was about 40 something, about half their lives— and without education or literacy or skills or freedom. In fact, many masters sold these people to Southerners before they reached their “freedom” age. Being “free” did not mean becoming voting citizens necessarily.
8. None. Even New Jersey women were amended out of the suffrage in subsequent constitutions. Political parties became all male organizations with men’s social bonding, rituals, and participation.
9. Women created women’s religious organizations, taught Sunday schools, organized charities and betterment societies (the Caldwell Women’s Club began as a Betterment Society)> won the franchise for widows in school board elections, spoke in public meetings confronted drunks, rowdies, family abusers and the like, demanded abolition and temperance, formed American Female Moral Reform Societies (445 chapters), publicly shunned male sinners and began to shop and bank without their husbands.
10. 242 pounds of coal, 14 pounds of kindling, and generating 27 pounds of ashed to clean. But stoves had reservoirs after the 1860s and hot water was always available—provided you kept it filled! Sewing machines became available by the late 1840s into the 50s and soon women were buying patterns made of paper and making their own clothes. The stove, by the way, required 54 minutes of work each day to keep it running: that is emptying ash, replenishing coal, blacking and polishing the stove and so on.