

*Sex and the State: Sexual Politics in South Carolina in the 1970s* is an investigation of the interactions of feminists and the state during the intriguing decade of the 1970s. Nationally, women cooperated with officials of various agencies to push their agenda of self sovereignty. Using South Carolina as a case study highlights the power struggles inherent in such machinations. Inspired by the second wave of the women's movement, activists across South Carolina, in both small towns and urban settings, both worked with the state and manipulated it to suit their needs. The work focuses on four key aspects of the women's movement including: the abortion rights movement, the anti-sterilization movement, the anti-rape movement, and the anti-wife battering movement. Through these similar, but different, scenarios the actions of women who battled the system in pearls and southern accents are highlighted. Women across the country were in conversation with the state, calling for their basic rights of citizenship: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.