

When Carrie Frost was young, women were not considered to be full citizens of the United States. This meant women were not allowed to vote and, in many cases, they could not earn their own wages or own property.

But Carrie Frost didn't let those limitations define her. She had her own unique path to forge in the world.

As a young girl, Carrie loved fly-fishing. The sunshine reflecting on the water; the little 'whoosh' sound of casting a line; the big fat trout you could catch in Wisconsin streams—she loved it all. But at that time, fly-fishing was considered a man's sport.

There are many stereotypes about what women and men are supposed to do, and back then, fly fishing was considered unladylike.

But Carrie loved the outdoors, and she spent her childhood in the streams with her dad and siblings as much as she could.

Carrie's father was a skilled angler, and when she was young she wanted to impress him by learning all of the tricks of fly-fishing, like how to stalk a fish in super stealth-mode—minimizing noise and vibrations so that it didn't swim away.

She learned how to "fish the drift" and "shoot the line"; she perfected the "hopper dropper" and the "snake roll." She was a natural, and eventually, she was better than her dad!

People from Stevens Point called Carrie and her father "Stevens Point's experts in the sport!"

Carrie dreamt of spending all of her days fishing in streams, but when it came time to graduate high school, Carrie started thinking about what she might do as a grown-up.

Her choices were limited! Married women could not earn their own wages, so that was out. Single women could, but there were very few careers acceptable for women.

Carrie started working as a school teacher, but dreamt day and night about fish.

One day out on the river, Carrie loaded on her fly, cast out her line...and then reeled it back in. Cast out her line...and reeled it back in. Carrie was a champion fly fisher, but these fish just were not biting!

She inspected the fly...It was one of those common European-made flies that all the fly-fishers used. It would just not do!

Carrie had an idea: what if the flies were made with the fur and feathers of local animals that the fish were more used to?

Eager to create something new, Carrie got to work. She gathered local feathers, animal fur, and bristles from deer tails. She laid out all her Wisconsin wonders and started making flies right at her parents' kitchen table.

Soon, fishermen in Stevens Point started taking notice...because the fish were biting!

Demands for Carrie's flies grew quickly, and so she asked the housekeeper in her family's home to help make more. Then, some of her friends from town wanted to earn their own money and joined in. Soon, there was an all-female fly-making workforce set up in Carrie's parents' home. They even had a feather dyeing operation in their basement!

In 1896, Carrie opened her own fly-tackle business. It was so unconventional for a woman to own a business that she was worried that men might not buy her flies if they knew the company was owned by a woman. She used her initials instead of her first name, to help the company be successful despite the times she lived in.

Her business grew and grew. To keep up with demands she had to keep moving to bigger buildings, hiring more and more women to tie flies. At one point, Carrie employed

over 150 people—almost all of them were women!

Carrie Frost created new career and financial opportunities for women in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

Around Carrie's time, people all over the country were working to expand women's rights.

Today, much more work is still needed to bring equal rights to all people. Carrie's story shows us what is possible when you listen to your passions and follow your dreams, despite the odds and stereotypes of your time!