

# An Era of Reform

*To what extent did the reform movements of the mid-1800s improve life for Americans?*

## Introduction

In 1851, people gathered in a church in Ohio to discuss the rights of women. A tall African American woman named Sojourner Truth joined the crowd. As a former slave, Truth had learned to pay attention to white people, and now she listened as whites discussed whether women should have the same rights as men.

Truth heard one speaker after another explain that women didn't need more rights because they weren't smart or strong enough to do much besides raise children. Women, they argued, needed help from men, and one man summed it up by saying, "Women are weak."

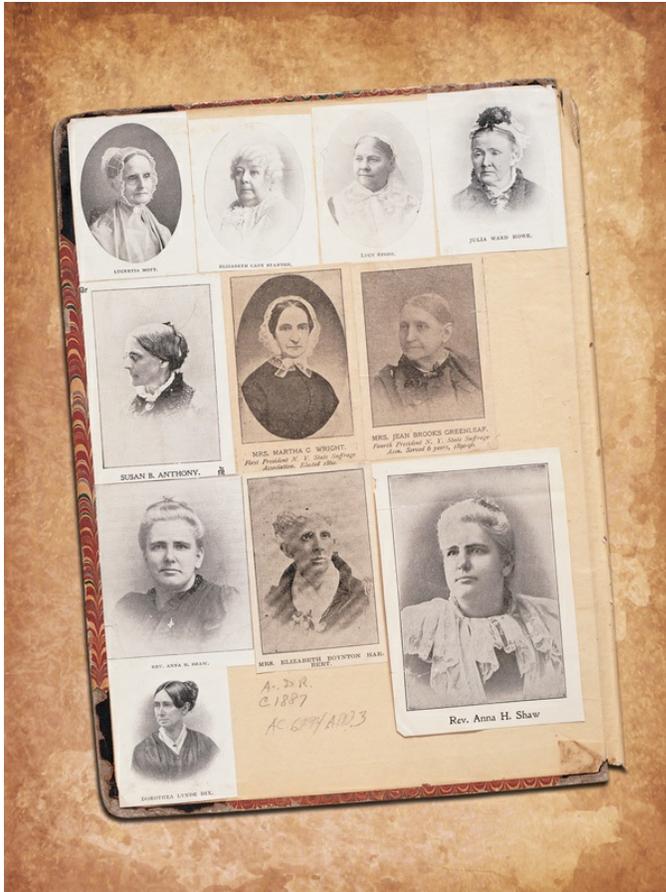
Truth had heard enough. She rose slowly to her feet and walked to the pulpit. The room grew quiet as everyone waited for her to speak.

"That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and have the best place everywhere," she began. "Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place!"

Her voice rose to a thunderous pitch. "And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head [outdo] me. And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it— and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen them most all sold into slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. And ain't I a woman?"

When she finished, people applauded. Some cried. Sojourner Truth represented two great reform movements in America in the 1800s: the movements for women's equality and to end slavery. Between about 1820 and 1850, many Americans devoted themselves to these causes as well as to improving education. In this lesson, you will learn to what extent these reform movements improved life for Americans.

# AN ERA OF REFORM



## Social Studies Vocabulary

abolitionist

Declaration of Sentiments

reform

Second Great Awakening

Seneca Falls Convention

transcendentalism

## 1. The Spirit of Reform

It was fitting that the meeting attended by Sojourner Truth took place in a church. New religious movements played a key role in inspiring thousands of Americans to try to **reform** society.

**The Second Great Awakening** A revival of religious feeling, which church leaders called the **Second Great Awakening**, swept across the nation from the 1800s to the 1840s. Day after day, people gathered in churches and big white tents to hear messages of hope. Preachers like Charles G. Finney, a leader of the movement, urged Christians to let themselves be “filled with the Spirit of God.” Their listeners prayed, shouted, sang hymns, and sometimes even cried for hours or fell down in frenzies.

Although this new movement appealed to people's emotions like the Great Awakening during the 1730s and 1740s had, this religious revival offered something new. In the past, most Christian ministers had said that God had already decided who would be saved, but now many preachers said everyone could gain forgiveness for their sins. Many of them taught that doing good works could help them to be saved.

This optimistic message attracted enthusiastic followers throughout the West and North and gave men and women alike a reason to work for the improvement of society. Charles Finney's preaching, for example, inspired many people to oppose slavery.

**Optimistic Ideas** Other optimistic ideas also inspired Americans during this time. In New England, Ralph Waldo Emerson, a former minister, was the central figure in a movement called **transcendentalism**. Emerson believed that every human being has unlimited potential, but in order to realize their godlike nature, people have to transcend, or go beyond, purely logical thinking. They can find the answers to life's mysteries only by learning to trust their emotions and **intuition**.

Transcendentalists added to the spirit of reform by urging people to question society's rules and institutions. Do not **conform** to others' expectations, they said. If you want to find God—and your own true self—look to nature and the “God within.”

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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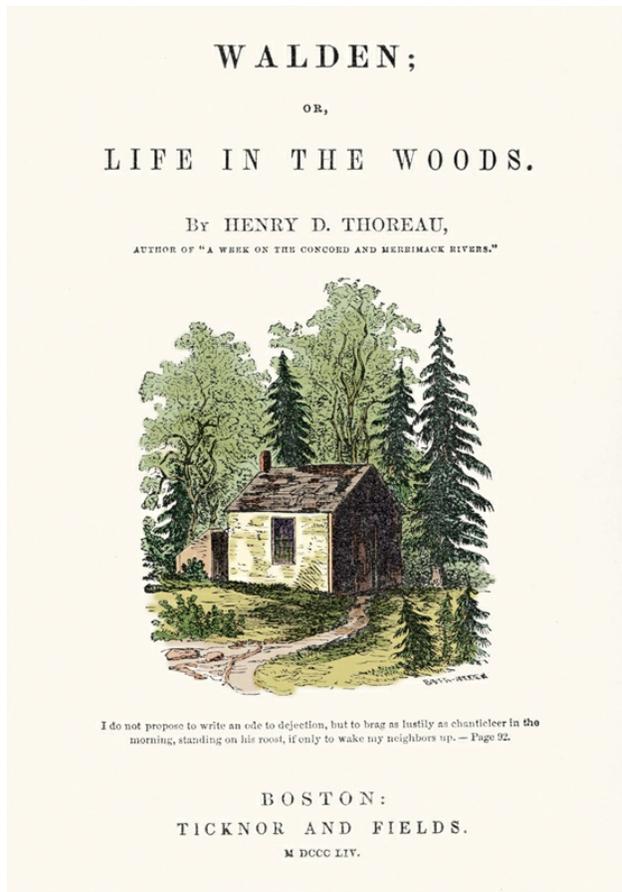
Emerson's friend Henry David Thoreau captured this new **individualism** in a famous essay. "If a man does not keep pace with his companions," wrote Thoreau, "perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears."

In 1845, Thoreau demonstrated that he practiced what he preached when he went into the woods near Concord, Massachusetts to live alone and as close to nature as possible. Thoreau spent more than two years in solitude, recording his thoughts in a 6,000-page journal. In 1846, he was jailed overnight for refusing to pay taxes because of his opposition to the government's involvement in the Mexican-American War.

**Model Communities** While Thoreau tried to find the ideal life in solitude, other transcendentalists tried to create ideal communities. In 1841, George Ripley started a community called Brook Farm near Boston. Residents at Brook Farm tried to live in "brotherly cooperation" instead of competing with each other, as people in the larger society did. They shared the labor of supporting themselves by farming, teaching, and making clothes.

Brook Farm was only one of hundreds of model communities started by reformers in the first half of the 1800s. While most of these experiments lasted only a few years, they were a powerful expression of the belief that people of good will could create an ideal society.





## 2. Prison Reform

One day in 1841, a Boston woman named Dorothea Dix agreed to teach Sunday school at a jail. What she witnessed that day changed her life forever.

Dix was horrified to see that many prisoners were bound in chains and locked in cages, while children accused of minor thefts were jailed with adult criminals. Were conditions this bad everywhere?

Dix **devoted** herself to finding out the answer to her question and visited hundreds of jails and prisons throughout Massachusetts. She also visited debtors' prisons, or jails for people who owed money, and found that most of the thousands of Americans in debtors' prisons owed less than 20 dollars. While they were locked up, they could not earn money to repay their debts and thus remained imprisoned for years.

**Treatment of the Mentally Ill** What shocked Dix most of all was the way mentally ill people were treated. Most were locked in dirty, crowded prison cells, and they were whipped if they misbehaved.

Dix and other reformers believed that the mentally ill needed treatment and care, not punishment. Although Massachusetts had one private asylum, or hospital for the mentally ill, only the wealthy could afford to send a family member there.

**Campaigning for Better Conditions** For two years, Dix gathered information about the horrors she had seen and prepared a detailed report for the Massachusetts state legislature. “I come as the advocate of helpless, forgotten, insane . . . men and women,” she said. “I proceed . . . to call your attention to the present state of insane persons, confined . . . in cages, closets, cellars, stalls, pens! Chained, naked, beaten with rods, and lashed into obedience!” Shocked by Dix's report, the lawmakers voted to create public asylums for the mentally ill.

Dix visited prisons in other states as well. After she prepared reports demanding humane treatment for the mentally ill, those states also created special mental hospitals.

Dix continued campaigning for prison reform for the rest of her life. By the time she died in 1887, most state governments no longer put debtors in prison, had outlawed cruel punishments like branding people with hot irons, and had created special justice systems for children in trouble. Dix had shown that reformers could lead society to make significant changes.



### 3. Education Reform

A second reform movement that won support in the 1800s was the effort to make education available to more children. The man who would become known as “the father of American public schools,” Horace Mann, led this movement.

**The Need for Public Schools** As a boy in Massachusetts in the early 1800s, Horace Mann attended school only ten weeks a year. The rest of the time, he had to work on his family's farm.

Mann was lucky to have even this limited time in school. In Massachusetts, Puritans had established town schools, but few other areas had public schools, or schools paid for by taxes. Wealthy parents sent their children to private schools or hired tutors. On the frontier, 60 children might attend a part-time, one-room school run by teachers who had limited education and received little pay. Most children simply did not go to school at all.

In the cities, some poor children stole, destroyed property, and set fires. Reformers believed that education would help these children escape poverty and become good citizens. Influenced by the need for education in its big cities, New York set up public elementary schools in every town as early as the 1820s.

Meanwhile, in Massachusetts, Mann became the state's supervisor of education and spoke out in towns and villages on the need for public schools. "Our means of education," he stated, "are the grand machinery by which the 'raw material' of human nature can be worked up into inventors and discoverers, into skilled artisans and scientific farmers."

Citizens in Massachusetts responded to Mann's message. They voted to pay taxes to build better schools, to provide teachers with higher salaries, and to establish special training schools for teachers.

**An Unfinished Reform** By 1850, many states in the North and West used Mann's ideas. Soon most white children, especially boys, attended free public schools.

However, most states still did not offer public education to everyone. Most high schools and colleges did not admit girls, and states as far north as Illinois passed laws to keep African Americans out of public schools. When towns did allow blacks to attend school, most made them go to separate schools that received less money. In the South, few girls and no African Americans could attend public schools.

Education for girls and women did make some progress. In 1837, Oberlin College in Ohio became the first college to admit women as well as men. When states opened the first public universities in the 1860s, most accepted female students.

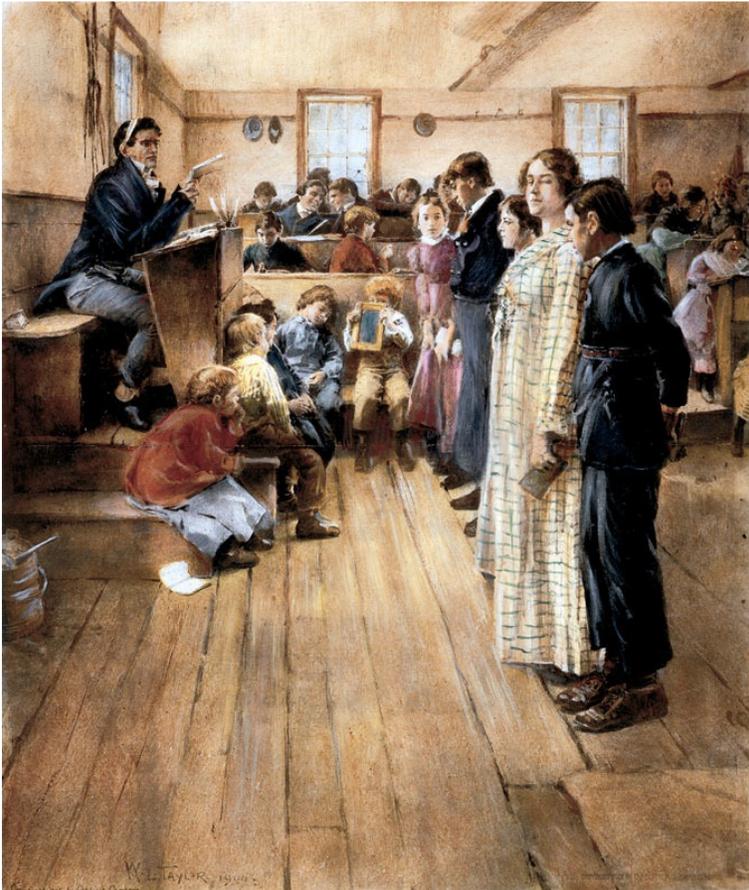
African Americans, however, had few options. When Prudence Crandall admitted a black student to her girls' school in Connecticut in 1833, white parents took their children out of the school. Crandall responded by opening a school for African American girls, but angry white people threw stones at the school and had Crandall jailed. In 1834, she was forced to close her school.

Horace Mann realized that much more needed to be done to increase

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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educational opportunities for women and African Americans. In 1853, he became the first president of a new college for men and women, Antioch College in Ohio. There, he urged his students to become involved in improving society. “Be ashamed to die,” he told them, “until you have won some victory for humanity.”



### 4. The Movement to End Slavery

In 1835, a poster showing two drawings appeared on walls throughout Washington, D.C. One drawing, labeled “The Land of the Free,” showed the founding fathers reading the Declaration of Independence. The other, labeled “The Home of the Oppressed,” showed slaves trudging past the U.S. Capitol building, the home of Congress. The poster posed a challenging question: How could America, the “land of the free,” still allow slavery? By the 1830s, growing numbers of people were asking this question. These people were called **abolitionists**.

**The Struggle Begins** Some Americans had opposed slavery even

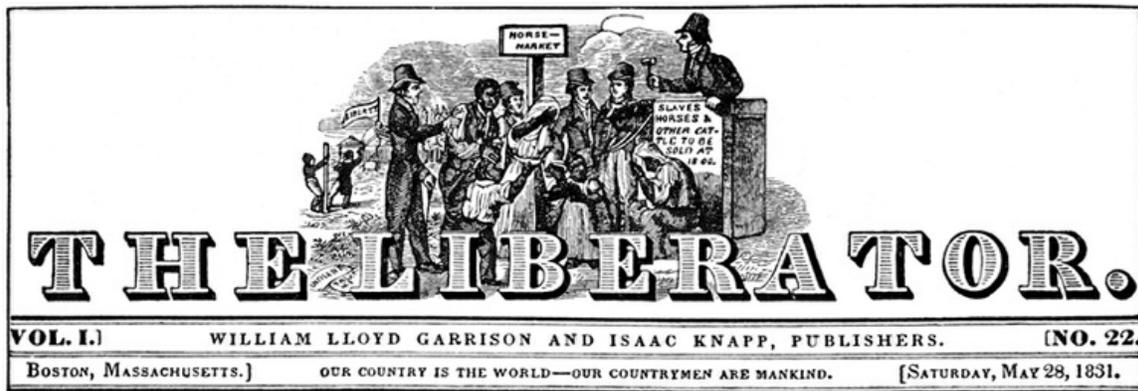
before the American Revolution began. Quakers stopped owning slaves in 1776, and by 1792, every state as far south as Virginia had antislavery societies.

Congress passed a law that ended the Atlantic slave trade in 1808. Although northern shipping communities had no more interest in slavery after it became illegal to import slaves, the northern textile mills still needed the cheap cotton that their labor in the South provided. Many Northerners still accepted slavery even though it had ended in the North by the early 1800s.

Abolitionists wanted to end slavery, but they did not always agree about how to do it. Some abolitionists tried to inspire slaves to rise up in revolt, while others wanted to find a peaceful way to end slavery immediately. Still others wanted to give slaveholders time to develop farming methods that didn't rely on slave labor.

From its earliest days, both blacks and whites worked in the abolition movement, sometimes together, sometimes separately. Black activists often kept their distance from their white counterparts. One African American journalist remarked, "As long as we let them think and act for us . . . they will outwardly treat us as men, while in their hearts they still hold us as slaves."

In 1831, a deeply religious white man named William Lloyd Garrison braved the disapproval of many Northerners and started a fiery abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*. In the paper, Garrison demanded the immediate freeing of all slaves. "I will be as harsh as truth," he wrote. "I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard!" In response, angry proslavery groups destroyed Garrison's printing press and burned his house.



**Frederick Douglass Speaks Out** One day, Garrison heard an escaped slave, Frederick Douglass, speaking at a meeting of abolitionists. Over six feet tall, Douglass spoke with a voice like thunder. When he described the cruel treatment of enslaved children, people cried. When he made fun of ministers who told slaves to love slavery, people laughed. When he finished, Garrison jumped up and cried, “Shall such a man be held a slave in a Christian land?” The crowd called out, “No! No! No!”

Douglass quickly became a leader in the abolitionist movement, and his autobiography, published in 1845, became an instant best seller. A brilliant and independent thinker, Douglass eventually started his own newspaper, *North Star*, whose motto read, “Right is of no Sex—Truth is of no Color—God is the Father of us all, and we are all Brethren [brothers].”

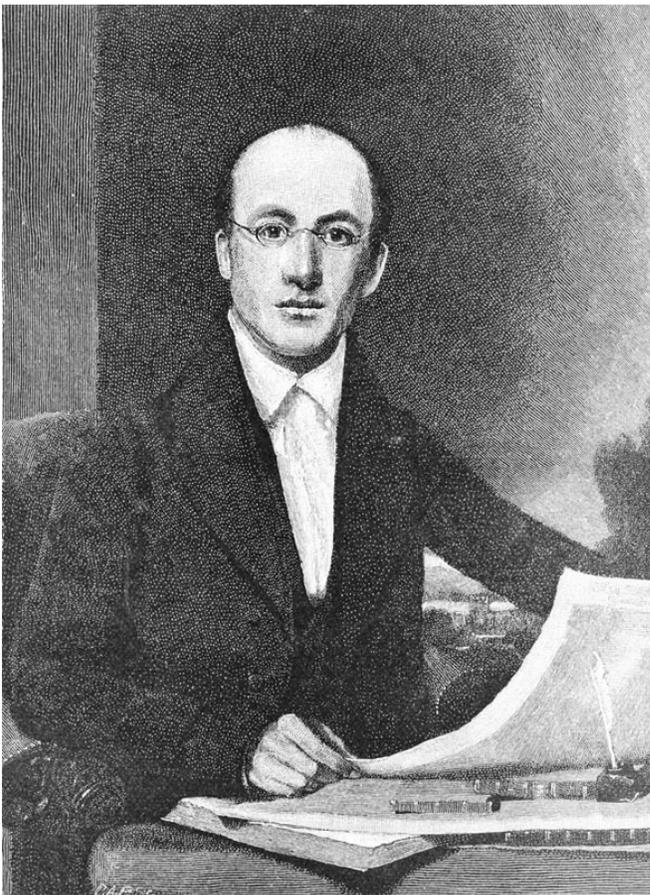
**Women Get Involved** Many women were inspired by religious reform movements to become involved in the fight against slavery, and, like other abolitionists, they sometimes faced violence. When a young woman named Angelina Grimke spoke against slavery, an anti-abolition mob threw stones at her. When she kept speaking, they burned the building she was speaking in.

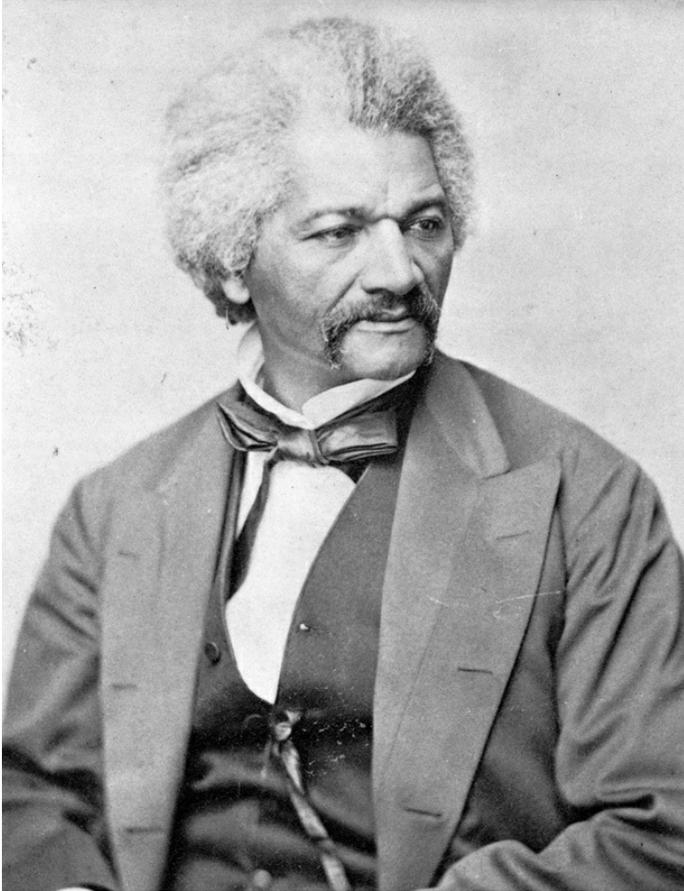
Angelina and her sister Sarah had been raised in a South Carolina slaveholding family, but after traveling North and becoming Quakers, they saw slavery in a new way. In the 1830s, the two sisters began speaking out about the poverty and pain of slavery. At first, they spoke only to other women, but soon they were addressing large groups of men and women throughout the North, leading the way for other

women to speak in public.

Some abolitionists, like Sojourner Truth, were former slaves. Truth had always been strongly spiritual and had preached throughout the North at religious meetings and on street corners. When she met Douglass and Garrison, their enthusiasm inspired her to speak out loudly about slavery. An outstanding speaker, Truth argued that God would end slavery peacefully.

Abolitionists were a minority, even in the North, but their efforts, and the violence directed at them, helped change Northerners' attitudes toward slavery. In addition, the antislavery fight helped pave the way for the next great reform movement: the struggle for women's rights.





### 5. Equal Rights for Women

Women abolitionists were in a strange position. They were trying to convince lawmakers to make slavery illegal, yet they themselves could not vote or hold office. They worked to raise money for the movement, yet their fathers and husbands controlled their money and property. They spoke out against slave beatings, yet their husbands could discipline them however they wanted.

Even wealthy women like the Grimke sisters started to see that women and slaves had much in common. “What *then* can woman do for the slave,” asked Angelina Grimke, “when she is herself under the feet of man and shamed into silence?”

**The Movement Begins** The organized movement for women's rights was sparked by the friendship between Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who had met in 1840 at the World Anti- Slavery Convention in London. When they arrived, they were outraged to

discover that women were not allowed to speak at the meeting and that the men who ran the convention made women sit in the balcony, behind a curtain.

The men's decision may have backfired because it was in the balcony that Mott and Stanton met. At first glance, the two women seemed quite different. Mott was 47 years old, the mother of four children, and an active reformer. Inspired by the Grimke sisters and her Quaker faith, Mott had preached against slavery in both white and black churches, and she also helped Prudence Crandall try to find students for her school for African American girls.

Stanton was 25 years old, newly married, and had never spoken in public. As a young girl, she had overheard women beg her father, a judge, to protect them from husbands who had beaten them, but he had to tell them that there was no law against it. Later, she attended Troy Female Seminary, the nation's first high school for girls, where she learned from her history studies that the United States did not treat women fairly. When she met Mott in London, she readily agreed that something had to be done about the injustices suffered by women.

**Unequal Treatment of Women** Even a fine education like Stanton's did not mean women would receive equal treatment. When Lucy Stone graduated from Oberlin College in 1847, the faculty invited her to write a speech. However, a man would have to give the speech since the school did not allow women to speak in public, a proposal that Stone ultimately refused. After graduation, she spoke out for women's rights. Because women could not vote, she refused to pay property taxes. "Women suffer taxation," she said, "and yet have no representation."

Stone's sister-in-law, Elizabeth Blackwell, wanted to be a doctor and had studied mathematics, science, and history, and yet she was rejected by 29 medical schools before one finally accepted her. In 1849, she graduated at the top of her class, becoming the country's first female doctor. Still, no hospitals or doctors would agree to work with her.

To overcome such barriers, women would have to work together. By the time Stanton and Mott left London, they had decided "to hold a convention . . . and form a society to advocate the rights of women."



**The Seneca Falls Convention** Eight years passed before Stanton and Mott met again. Over afternoon tea at the home of Mott's sister, they decided to send a notice to the local newspaper announcing a women's convention in Seneca Falls, New York. The organized movement for women's rights was about to begin.

On July 19, 1848, nearly 300 people, including 40 men, arrived for the **Seneca Falls Convention**. While many were abolitionists, Quakers, or other reformers, some were local housewives, farmers, and factory workers.

The convention organizers modeled their proposal for women's rights, the **Declaration of Sentiments**, on the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," the document began, "that all men and women are created equal."

Just as the Declaration of Independence listed King George's acts of tyranny over the colonists, the new declaration listed acts of tyranny by men over women. Man did not let woman vote, give her the right to own property, nor allow her to practice professions like medicine and law.

Stanton's presentation of the declaration at the convention was her first

speech. A few other women also spoke, including a 19-year-old factory worker named Charlotte Woodward. "Every fibre of my being," she said, "rebelled [against] all the hours that I sat and sewed gloves for a miserable pittance [small amount of money] which, as it was earned, could never be mine."

**Debate About the Right to Vote** After the convention passed resolutions in favor of correcting the injustices listed in the Declaration of Sentiments, Stanton proposed that women demand the right to vote. For many, however, this step was too much, and even Mott cried, "Thou will make us ridiculous! We must go slowly."

At this point, Stanton received powerful support from another participant at the convention: Frederick Douglass. Everyone who believed that black men should have the right to vote, Douglass argued, must also favor giving black women the right to vote, which meant that all women should have this important right. Inspired by Douglass's speech, the convention voted narrowly to approve this last resolution.

**The Legacy of Seneca Falls** The Seneca Falls Convention helped to create an organized campaign for women's rights. Sojourner Truth, who would later mesmerize an audience with her "Ain't I a woman?" speech, became an active campaigner in the movement.

Stanton didn't like speaking at conventions, but she could write powerful speeches. She befriended Susan B. Anthony, a reformer with a flair for public speaking. While Stanton stayed in Seneca Falls to raise her children, Anthony traveled from town to town, speaking for women's rights. Of their lifelong teamwork, Stanton said, "I forged the thunderbolts, she fired them."

Slowly, reformers for women's rights made progress. New York gave women control over their property and wages while Massachusetts and Indiana passed more liberal divorce laws. Elizabeth Blackwell started her own hospital, which included a medical school to train other female doctors.

Other reforms, including the right to vote in all states, would take decades to become reality. Of all the women who signed the declaration at Seneca Falls, just one would live to legally vote for a U.S.

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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president: Charlotte Woodward.



### Lesson Summary

Level: A

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**In this lesson, you read about the reform movements in the United States from about 1820 to 1850.**

**The Spirit of Reform** Many Americans were inspired by the Second Great Awakening, which emphasized the role of good works in the lives of Christians. Transcendentalist writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, who urged people to question society's rules and institutions, also inspired Americans, and some transcendentalists even formed communities that attempted to create an ideal society of cooperation.

**Prison Reform** Dorothea Dix pioneered the reform of prisons and the treatment of people with mental illness. Her efforts led to improvements in state prison systems and the creation of public institutions and hospitals for the mentally ill.

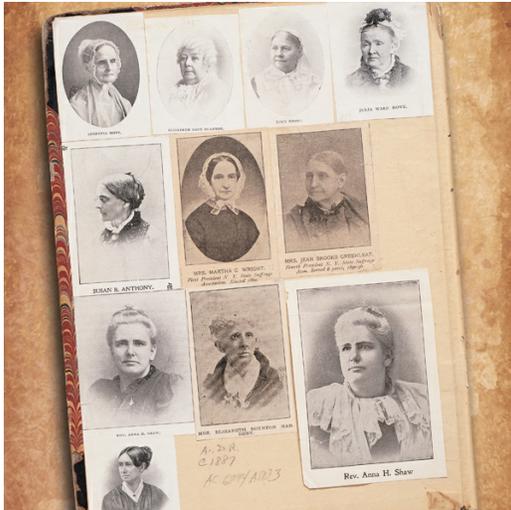
**Education Reform** Horace Mann led the movement to make education freely available to all, prompting many Northern states to establish public schools. Education reform did not improve opportunities for most girls, women, and African Americans, however.

**The Movement to End Slavery** Inspired in part by religious revivalism, abolitionists, including many women, worked to end the practice of slavery. Key leaders in the movement included William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Angelina and Sarah Grimke, and Sojourner Truth.

**Equal Rights for Women** The women's rights movement began with the Seneca Falls Convention, which was organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, and the Declaration of Sentiments. Susan B. Anthony was another key leader in the movement.

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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### Investigating Primary Sources

What Were the Priorities for Education in the 19th Century?

**The lives of school-age children changed during the Era of Reform. You are going to examine four primary sources about 19th century schools and then write a claim that describes the priorities for education at that time.**

In the colonial days of the United States, most children did not attend school. Instead, they worked on farms or learned a craft. Wealthy children may have attended private schools or had tutors, but children from poorer families did not have such opportunities.

Many American reformers wanted to change this. They were impressed by a pamphlet published in 1807 by a British teacher, Joseph Lancaster. Lancaster wrote *Improvements in Education as It Respects the Industrious Classes of the Community*, which included ideas for providing a good education to children from all walks of life. Read excerpts from the pamphlet to find out Lancaster's method for teaching many students at one time. Why did Lancaster's ideas appeal to American reformers? How might Lancaster's schools have been similar to and different from America's public schools today?

## *Improvements in Education*

*Now these twenty boys, if they were at a common school, would each have a book, and, one at a time, would read or spell to their teacher, while the other nineteen were looking at their books, or about them, as they pleased: or, if their eyes are rivetted on their books, by terror and coercion, can we be sure that the attention of their minds is engaged as appearance seems to speak it is? On the contrary, when they have slates, the twentieth boy may read to the teacher, while the other nineteen are spelling words on the slate, instead of sitting idle. The class, by this means, will spell, write, and read at the same instant of time. In addition to this, the same trouble which teaches twenty will suffice to teach sixty or a hundred, by employing some of the senior boys to inspect the slates of the others, they not omitting to spell the word themselves . . .*

*Many thousands of youth have been deprived of the benefit of education thereby, their morals ruined, and talents irretrievably lost to society, for want of cultivation: while two parties have been idly contending who should bestow it.—However, there is hope yet left; the common ground of humanity is adapted to all, none can conscientiously scruple to meet there.*

—Joseph Lancaster, 1803

### **Millions of Readers**

William Holmes McGuffey shared Joseph Lancaster's enthusiasm for education. Although McGuffey had little formal education himself, he began teaching children when he was 14 years old. He traveled in Ohio and Kentucky, teaching classes with as many as 48 students in a one-room school. Sometimes the ages of students in one classroom ranged from 6 to 21. Each of them brought a book from home to practice reading.

McGuffey wanted to put good reading books into the hands of all children. He believed that children needed to learn about a wide variety of topics, as well as the moral way to treat one another. In 1835, he began writing primers, which were school books that helped children learn to read progressively harder stories while also learning lessons on patriotism and good behavior. McGuffey Readers were filled with stories, poems, essays, and speeches and were among the first textbooks in the United States designed to be more challenging with each volume.

McGuffey Readers changed how children learned to read. The readers

used word repetition as a way to build strong reading skills. And unlike books used in earlier classrooms, McGuffey Readers helped students learn new vocabulary words by figuring out their meanings from the context of a story rather than by memorizing lists of word definitions. Between 1836 and 1960, at least 120 million copies of McGuffey Readers were sold.

Read this page from a McGuffey Reader from 1840. What kind of behavior is this story encouraging? How is this reader similar to materials that you use in school, and how is it different? Explain why this reader might have been useful to students and teachers.

### **“The Great Equalizer”**

Public education had been available in Massachusetts since 1647, but children did not always attend, and teachers were often not well-trained. While an impoverished young man named Horace Mann was school-aged in the early 1800s, he mostly taught himself from books in the local library. Eventually he went to college and became a lawyer and state senator.

Mann helped establish the Massachusetts Board of Education, and he became its secretary. This was the first such board in the nation.

Mann introduced the following six principles of education, many of which were controversial at the time: (1) Universal education is necessary because citizens cannot enjoy both freedom and ignorance. (2) Schools should be paid for and controlled by the public. (3) Schools should welcome children from all religious, ethnic, and social backgrounds. (4) There should be no religious influence over public education. (5) Children should be taught in the spirit of a free society. (6) Teachers must be well-trained and professional.

In his last year as secretary of the Board of Education, Mann wrote the following report. Read these excerpts and describe what Mann means when he says education is “the great equalizer.” Why does he believe education should be available to all? Why might this report and Mann's six principles have been controversial, and who might have disagreed with him?

## Report to the Massachusetts School Board

*If one class possesses all the wealth and the education, while the residue of society is ignorant and poor, it matters not by what name the relation between them may be called: the latter, in fact and in truth, will be the servile dependents and subjects of the former. But, if education be equally diffused, it will draw property after it by the strongest of all attractions; for such a thing never did happen, and never can happen, as that an intelligent and practical body of men should be permanently poor . . .*

*[Education] is a great equalizer of the conditions of men—the balance wheel of the social machinery . . . it gives each man the independence and the means by which he can resist the selfishness of other men. It does better than to disarm the poor of their hostility toward the rich: it prevents being poor . . . The spread of education, by enlarging the cultivated class or caste, will open a wider area over which the social feelings will expand; and, if this education should be universal and complete, it would do more than all things else to obliterate factitious distinctions in society.*

—Horace Mann, 1848

## The Elocution Movement

What is the difference between a dull reading of a speech and a passionate oration? Caleb Bingham, among others, said that the difference was elocution, or clear pronunciation and expressive speaking. Basically, when a speaker simply reads in a dull tone, the audience tunes out, while a delivery with dramatic pronunciation makes the audience pay attention. Many believed that school children must be taught how to give powerful oral presentations.

In 1797, Bingham published a book called *The Columbian orator: containing a variety of original and selected pieces, together with rules, calculated to improve youth and others in the ornamental and useful art of eloquence*. Students of all ages could use this book to read famous speeches and texts with “pronunciation” and “action,” meaning spoken clearly and with emotion.

Read the introduction to the 1817 edition of *The Columbian Orator*. Why was elocution viewed as important to citizenship? How does the push for elocution reflect the other changes in education that were emerging during this time?

### *Introduction to the Columbian Orator*

*The best judges among the ancients have represented Pronunciation, which they likewise called Action, as the principal part of an orator's province; from whence he is chiefly to expect success in art of persuasion. When Cicero, in the person of Crassus, has largely and elegantly discoursed upon all the other parts of oratory, coming at last to speak of this, he says, "All the former have their effect as they are pronounced. It is the action alone which governs in speaking; without which the best orator is of no value; and is often defeated by one, in other respects, much his inferior . . ."*

*And, indeed, if he had not judged this highly necessary for an orator, he would scarcely have taken so much pains in correcting those natural defects, under which, he laboured at first, in order to acquire it. For he had both a weak voice, and likewise an impediment in his speech, so that he could not pronounce distinctly some particular letters . . .*

*"The truth of this sentiment of the ancients, concerning the power and efficacy of pronunciation, might be proved from many instances . . ."*

*—Caleb Bingham, 1817*

**Consider the four primary sources and explain what evidence they give about the priorities for education in the 1800s. What do these changes in education suggest about the other changes occurring in the nation during this period?**

ECLECTIC SERIES. 59

LESSON LXXXVII.




ones	were	birds	there
cage	have	bush	sor-ry
in-to	house	boys	sto-len
went	young	girls	gar-den
oth-er	would	pris-on	par-ents

One day, two boys went in-to a gar-den.  
 They saw a bird's nest on a rose bush.  
 Two lit-tle birds were in the nest.  
 One of the boys said,  
 'Let us take these birds in-to the house.  
 We can put them in-to a cage. By  
 and by they will sing for us.'  
 'No,' said the oth-er boy, 'birds have  
 par-ents, as well as boys and girls.  
 We will not take these young ones.  
 The old birds will feel ver-y sad.  
 Our par-ents would be ver-y sor-ry, if  
 we were sto-len and put in-to a  
 pris-on.'

## Schools and Schooling in Pre-Civil War America

Early American leaders agreed that the survival of democracy depended on an educated population. John Adams reminded his teenage son John Quincy that “the end of study is to make you a good man and a useful citizen.” Thomas Jefferson championed the pursuit of knowledge as a form of freedom stating, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.”

What would schools teach? The nation's founders made that clear in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which set the conditions for frontier lands to become new states. “Religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

### Where Children Learned

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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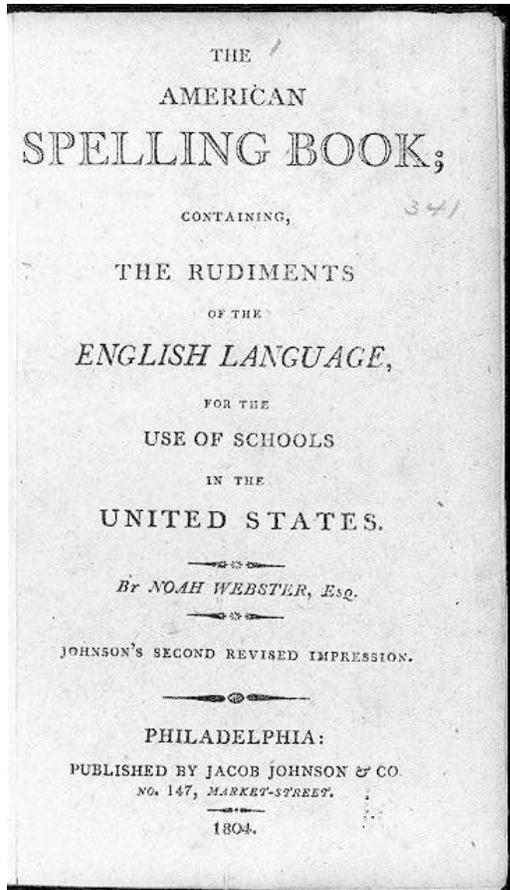
Education changed little from the Revolutionary War to the 1840s. Wealthy children were taught at home by tutors. Poor children often received no schooling at all. But most children, especially in New England, went to village schools. Residents paid taxes to build a one-room schoolhouse and hire a teacher. Parents contributed additional money for firewood, textbooks, and other necessities.

Children sat on benches along the sides of the room, with the teacher's desk at the front and a stove in the middle. Pictures, maps, and blackboards were extremely rare. Sometimes there were dozens of students at different levels of learning. (There was no system of first grade, second grade, and so on.) The teacher had to keep all the children busy. If students misbehaved, the teacher could hit them with a rod, ruler, or lash.

Most students were boys. Some girls attended village schools, but girls often learned to read and write at home, if at all. The youngest girls might attend “dame schools,” which were run by older women.

Few schools were in session as long as they are now. Usually the school year started around Thanksgiving and ended the following spring, when planting began.

### **What They Learned**



In Protestant New England, religion and morality were part of almost every reading, writing, and arithmetic lesson. Students learned to read from the Bible and from textbooks loaded with moral messages. Noah Webster's *Elementary Spelling Book* was one widely used textbook. Here is one reading lesson:

*As for those boys and girls that mind not their books,  
and love not the church and school, but play with such  
as tell tales, tell lies, curse, swear and steal, they  
will come to some bad end, and must be whipt till they  
mend their ways.*

After reading, students sharpened their quill pens, made ink from black powder and water, and worked on their penmanship. There was no lined paper in those days, so the first lesson, when students had paper, was to draw straight lines across the page. Then the teacher had students write sayings like “Contentment is a virtue.”

Spelling followed reading. The teacher spelled out words, and the students recited them back.

Then it was on to arithmetic. Math problems were often presented with references to the Bible. One typical problem asked, “Adam was 930 years old when he died, and 130 when Seth was born. How old was Seth when Adam died?”

### **The Decline of Village Schools**

In the 1820s and 1830s, the Second Great Awakening swept the country. During this time of religious enthusiasm, many new Protestant sects were born, and they had different views of the Bible. To them, the morality taught in village schools was bland and ineffective.

An even bigger challenge to village schools came from immigration. Roman Catholics arrived in America mainly from Ireland and Germany. They soon discovered that American schools used the King James translation of the Bible, which was Protestant. Catholic parents had three unhappy choices. They could try to change America's traditional method of education. They could send their children to a school that taught Protestant beliefs. Or they could not send their children to school at all.

Horace Mann and other reformers solved these problems by creating free public schools. The public schools stuck to basic moral lessons like the Ten Commandments while avoiding religious ideas that caused conflict. Although some strong believers disliked Mann's compromise, they found it hard to refuse free public education.

Children often learned at church schools, or Sunday schools, as well. Sunday schools became important places where religion was taught since it wasn't a main subject in public schools. Different denominations set their own Christian education plans.

### **Improving Education for Women**

Both boys and girls attended public schools, but girls and women had fewer educational opportunities than their male counterparts. Most teachers believed that a woman's role was to be a wife and mother. Girls were generally not encouraged to go to high school or college

unless they planned to be schoolteachers. Nor were they encouraged to study such subjects as history, mathematics, or the sciences.

Women reformers worked to change this situation. As early as 1814, teacher Emma Willard opened a boarding school in Vermont where girls learned mathematics, philosophy, history, and other subjects. In 1821, the city of Troy, New York, gave Willard money to start the Troy Female Seminary. Now called the Emma Willard School, it boasts of being the first school in the country to give girls the same educational opportunities as boys.

Another reformer, Mary Lyon, believed passionately that women needed and deserved higher education as much as men did. In 1834, she retired from teaching to start a college that would offer women the same kind of education that was available in men's colleges. Lyon worked hard to gather support and raise money. Three years later, she opened the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. Located in Massachusetts, Mount Holyoke became a model for other women's colleges. Today, Mount Holyoke College educates women for positions of leadership in society.

In 1851, Catharine Esther Beecher established the American Woman's Educational Association, which recruited women to teach on the frontier. Born in 1800, Beecher grew up in an educated household. However, because she was a woman, she did not receive much formal education. This motivated her to work for women's rights, establish multiple women's schools, and write essays on the role of American women in the home. Her book *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* was published 15 times.

The work of reformers like Willard, Lyon, and Beecher created new educational opportunities for girls and women. Still, men continued to dominate many occupations and fields of study. In the second half of the 20th century, a new women's movement championed true equality for women in both educational and occupational opportunity.

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- *The American Spelling Book: Containing the Rudiments of the English*

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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*Language, for the Use of Schools in the United States* by Noah Webster, 1822, p. 46.

Entire Selection:

<http://ia601401.us.archive.org/11/items/americanspelling00webs/america>

Accessed March, 2017

- An Ordinance for the government of the Territory of the United States northwest of the River Ohio., *known as* the Northwest Ordinance, the Confederate Congress, July 13, 1787.

Entire Selection: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/nworder.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/nworder.asp)

Accessed March, 2017

### **Brook Farm and the Utopian Dream**



**In the early 1800s, social reformers were seeking ways to**

**improve American life. Some were inspired by dreams of a perfect society. They formed model, or utopian, communities based on principles they believed would lead to a better world. One of the best known of these social experiments was Brook Farm in Massachusetts.**

In April 1841, the writer Nathaniel Hawthorne became a resident at Brook Farm. He had not yet achieved the fame that would come with the publication of his novel *The Scarlet Letter*. But he was well known in Boston literary circles and had friends in the transcendentalist movement. Seeking a place to live and write, he decided to join the Brook Farm community.

Soon after his arrival, Hawthorne got his first taste of farm life. He wrote about his first day of farm labor to his fiancée:

*April 14th, 10 a.m.— Sweetest, I did not milk the cows last night, because Mr. Ripley was afraid to trust them to my hands, or me to their horns—I know not which. But this morning, I have done wonders. Before breakfast, I went out to the barn, and began to chop hay for the cattle; and with such "righteous vehemence" (as Mr. Ripley says) did I labor, that, in the space of ten minutes, I broke the machine. Then I brought wood and replenished the fires; and finally sat down to breakfast and ate up a huge mound of buckwheat cakes. After breakfast, Mr. Ripley put a four-pronged instrument into my hands, which he gave me to understand was called a pitch-fork; and he and Mr. Farley being armed with similar weapons, we all three commenced a gallant attack upon a heap of manure.*

—Nathaniel Hawthorne, from a letter to Sophia Peabody, 1841

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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Hawthorne was not used to this kind of work, but he took to it with relish. He even referred to the manure pile as the “gold mine,” in a joking effort to glorify farmwork. It was “a delectable way of life,” he wrote. “We get up at half-past six, dine at half-past twelve, and go to bed at nine.”

Brook Farm was one of more than a hundred utopian communities that sprang up across the country in the first half of the 1800s. The word *utopian* comes from the 16th-century book *Utopia*, which describes a perfect society on an imaginary island. These communities were all based on ideals and practices aimed at building a new society, free of social ills like poverty, crime, and injustice. Most of the communities had religious foundations. But even those that did not, like Brook Farm, were meant to create a kind of heaven on Earth.



### **The Origins of Brook Farm**

George Ripley, a former minister, founded Brook Farm with his wife,

Sophia, and several partners in March 1841. Ripley was concerned about the social problems he saw in urban, industrial America. He wanted to form a rural community where people could live a healthier life, in harmony with nature. He also wanted to bring different social classes together and help the working poor.

In a letter, Ripley expressed his goals for Brook Farm. It would be a place, he said, to “combine the thinker and the worker . . . in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom, by providing all with labor, adapted to their tastes and talents.” He said that he hoped to “prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life.”

In Ripley's vision, residents at Brook Farm would enjoy the benefits of physical labor. But they would also have time to take walks, create art and music, and converse. It would be the perfect blend of work and play. The community would support itself by selling goods produced on the farm. Everyone would share the profits equally.

These ideas reflected the era's reform spirit. But they also arose from the special features of the transcendentalist movement. Transcendentalists believed that people carried the light of God within them. They could experience that light by opening up to the beauties of nature and a simpler life.

Many young people at the time were also filled with the spirit of change, or what they called the “Newness.” Freedom was in the air. Young men grew beards and let their hair grow long. They wore floppy hats and loose-fitting clothes. They embraced new ideas, such as vegetarian diets, and new ways of speaking. This sense of freedom was reflected at Brook Farm.

The farm itself was set in beautiful, rolling country just eight miles west of Boston. Its 170 acres were dotted with woods, pastures, and meadows. Running through the property was a little brook that gave the farm its name. A two-story farmhouse became the principal residence. Residents called it the “Hive” because it was the hub of activity. There was also a large barn with stalls for cattle and horses. Brook Farm was an ideal setting for a rural retreat.

## Life on the Farm

Everyone at Brook Farm was expected to work. But they were free to choose the kind of work they did. Women could plow the fields, if they wanted, and men could do housework. All labor was “sacred, when done for a common interest,” wrote one resident. Everyone was paid the same, and no one worked more than ten hours a day or six days a week. At the time, that was considered a short workweek.

Most residents seemed to enjoy work on the farm. One young woman, Marianne Dwight, took special pleasure in what she called “fancy work”: sewing caps and other clothing for sale in Boston. She believed that the money and skills gained through this work would help aid the cause of women's rights:

*. . . By and by, when funds accumulate (!) we may start other branches of business, so that all our proceeds must be applied to the elevation of woman forever. Take a spiritual view of the matter. Raise woman to be the equal of man, and what intellectual developments may we not expect? How the whole aspect of society will be changed! . . .*

Residents at the farm did more than work. They also held dances, attended concerts and lectures, and performed in plays. During the winter, they enjoyed snow sports like skating and sledding.

Children attended a school on the farm. The quality of education was excellent, and the school soon attracted students from the surrounding area. The school became the farm's most profitable activity.

By the summer of 1842, 70 people were living at Brook Farm. Most were not permanent residents, however. Students and other temporary lodgers lived there as well. Many visitors also came to the farm, including such noted figures as the writers Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

Other visitors were less notable, and some were downright odd. There

were “dreamers and schemers of all sorts,” one resident wrote. For example, one visitor claimed he could survive without sleep, until he was caught snoring in the library. Another claimed to live on a diet of raw wheat. But he was found behind the barn one day, eating table scraps set out for the chickens.

Although visitors paid for their stay on the farm, they did not contribute labor. The farm had to add new buildings to house them. This placed a burden on the farm's finances.

## **The End of the Dream**

In fact, Brook Farm's finances had never been solid. In the beginning, Ripley had asked members to invest in the farm, but few had done so. He had also hoped to sell farm products, but few residents had any farming experience. Furthermore, the farm's soils were not very good for growing crops. As a result, the farm was always short of money.

Residents began to drift away from the farm. Some complained of financial difficulties. Others tired of farmwork. Even Nathaniel Hawthorne lost his enthusiasm for farm life. He left after six months, saying he feared his soul might “perish under a dung-heap.”

In 1844, concerned about the future, Ripley and other residents decided to reorganize the farm. They established a new set of principles to promote small industry and put the farm on a firmer footing. They invited new members to join, including a number of craft workers and laborers. They also began construction of a new, much larger building and bought a steam engine to power new machinery. To pay for these improvements, the farm took out new loans.

Before long, however, tensions developed in the community. Some members insisted on holding religious services, which others opposed. Also, some of the new members complained of poor treatment by the original members. Creditors began to demand repayment of loans.

Difficulties were mounting when disaster struck. On March 3, 1846, a fire broke out in the new building and burned it to the ground. After that, more people chose to leave the community. The Ripleys and a handful of others stayed on until the fall of 1847. Then they, too, abandoned the farm.

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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Despite its short history, Brook Farm was not a total failure. It changed the lives of many of its members and influenced various reform movements, including the abolition and women's rights movements. It also inspired many people with its ideals of workplace equality and a simpler, more sustainable life. Those ideals live on today.

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- Letter to Sophia Peabody by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Brook Farm, Oak Hill, April 13–14, 1841.

Entire Selection: <http://books.google.com/books?id=uec9AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA227&lpg>

Accessed March, 2017

- Letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson by George Ripley, Boston, November 9, 1840.

Entire Selection: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6592/>

Accessed March, 2017

- Letter to Anna Q. T. Parsons by Marianne/Mary-Ann Dwight [Orvis], Brook Farm, August 30, 1844.

Entire Selection:  
[http://faculty.etsu.edu/LLOYDT/English%204087\\_5087/Readings/marianne](http://faculty.etsu.edu/LLOYDT/English%204087_5087/Readings/marianne)

Accessed March, 2017

### **Life for Northern Men, Women, and Families in the 19th Century**

Northern men and women mingled in a variety of ways during the 19th century. Men and women interacted with each other, but men also established separate ties with other men and women did the same with other women. The connections that men and women made during this time period were created for many reasons, such as friendship and love, social and family expectations, and economic status or need.

## Separate Spheres

In the early part of the 19th century, the American and British middle classes began to believe that men and women naturally belonged to different worlds, or spheres. This included many middle-class people who lived in the industrial cities and towns of the northeastern United States.

For women, their sphere was the home, the church, and their social groups. Bonds with mothers, sisters, and close female friends were considered to be important, so women visited one another almost daily. They would organize quilting circles or reading groups, attend charity meetings, or simply gather at someone's home to chat and have tea.

Historians have found evidence that same-sex relationships existed in the Northeast during the 19th century. Two women named Sylvia Drake and Charity Bryant lived together as a couple in the western Vermont town of Weybridge beginning in 1807. Records from the era show that Drake and Bryant owned property, and they had a business together as well.



To gain acceptance in their community, Charity and Sylvia spent decades helping their nieces and nephews and paying for their education, giving to the local church, and participating in charity work by running Weybridge's benevolent society. From studying their writings, historians believe that Charity and Sylvia loved each other deeply. When they each died, they were buried under one headstone that still stands in a cemetery in Weybridge.

A man's sphere was outside the home and included industry, commerce, and politics. Men focused on their professions like law and medicine. They also held positions like factory managers, office workers, and merchants. Men were responsible for preparing their sons for a career. For leisure, they often met for sporting events or went to taverns. Men and women would, of course, marry and raise children together, but they usually socialized in their separate spheres.

### **True Womanhood (The Cult of Domesticity)**

Industrialization and the separation of social groups by gender led to an idea called True Womanhood, or The Cult of Domesticity. Since machines and factories were now able to produce goods, many middle-class families no longer needed women to work outside the home. Middle-class society felt it was now more important for women to use their energies to create a nurturing home where they would teach their children about personal and civic virtues. To do this successfully, women were expected to follow the ideals of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.



- Piety was associated with religion. Religion could be practiced within a woman's sphere of the home, and it was thought to calm her mind when it became "restless" In fact, followers of True Womanhood believed that a woman would not become a mother if she were not a religious person.
- Purity was about being chaste and waiting to have sex until a woman had married her husband. Women who were

not pure in this way were considered to be “fallen” women. They had a much lower standing in society and were not viewed as appropriate social companions for other women.

- Submissiveness meant that women were expected to accept the authority and ideas of others without question. Submissive women did not do things like complain about the tight corsets that they wore, and they always deferred to the wishes of their husbands, who were seen as their protectors. A submissive woman was considered to be a sensible person who knew her place.
- Domesticity asked women to maintain their piety, purity, and submissiveness, as well as keep their homes cheerful and peaceful places for their husbands and children to live. Home was considered to be a family’s private space.

True Womanhood was mostly abandoned when the Civil War began. Women from both the North as well as the South had to do things like teach, perform office or government work, or become store clerks. Men were either off fighting and could not do those jobs, or women needed the money because their male family members had been killed or disabled during the conflict.

### **Immigrant and Working-Class Families**

Two-parent families that included a mother and a father were not the only types of family units in the United States during the 19th century. Families could also include relatives or even people who were not related to each other. A small number of single people also ran households alone.

If you came from an immigrant or working-class family in the North or Northeast, the concepts of work and income were part of your daily life. These families needed every member to earn money so that the family would survive. Women often took in laundry or did sewing for wealthy families. Boarders, or non-family members who paid to live and eat with people they usually did not know, were another way for families to earn income. Immigrant families often expected their children to find work instead of going to school. When immigrant and working-class families were unable to produce enough income to support everyone, their family structures frequently broke down completely.

## Prominent Abolitionists

During the 1830s, abolitionism grew in popularity as the issue of slavery came to the forefront of the American social climate. The movement incorporated free African Americans like Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass, as well as white activists like William Lloyd Garrison.

Despite its growing appeal, not everyone supported abolitionism. Some people wanted to keep slavery because it was essential to the southern economy. Others just thought it was wrong that white people were working together with black people. These anti-abolitionists made the life of an abolitionist a dangerous one. On multiple occasions, mobs attacked or killed abolitionists.

However, many people believed the cause of abolition was worth the risk of violence. Theodore Weld and Wendell Philips, both white and well-educated, joined the movement during the 1830s. Their contributions would prove important to the cause of abolitionism.

### Theodore Weld

Weld, born in 1803, supported the abolitionist cause in multiple ways. He left school at Lane Seminary in Ohio, leading a group of students to Oberlin College, a progressive school nearby. Oberlin was progressive because it was the first college in the United States to admit women and African Americans. The college had a reputation for quickly adopting the newest ideas of social activism.

In addition to organizing students to join him at Oberlin College, he also worked for the American Anti-Slavery Society, recruiting people to join the cause and training them to spread the word themselves. The American Anti-Slavery Society was active in holding meetings, publishing pamphlets, sending petitions to Congress, and sending speakers across the country to talk about abolitionism. All of these tactics worked to spread the abolitionist movement, and were successful in alerting more people about the atrocities of slavery.

During his work, Weld met Angelina Grimke, who was also active as an abolitionist. The two married and settled in New Jersey, where Weld took time off of work to raise his family.

Despite his impressive work organizing and training abolitionists, Weld is perhaps best remembered for his writing. He wrote many pamphlets over his career, notably one called *Slavery As It Is*. The most influential work of the abolitionist movement, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, is said to be partly based on Weld's pamphlet. In fact, Weld was the person who initially recruited Harriet Beecher Stowe, the writer of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, to the abolitionist movement.

### **Wendell Philips**

Wendell Philips, born in 1811, was a wealthy Harvard lawyer. He chose to give up his high class lifestyle to devote all of his attention to the abolitionist cause, joining William Lloyd Garrison at *The Liberator*.

While Weld gained fame for his writings, Philips was best-known for his voice. When another prominent abolitionist, Elijah Lovejoy, was murdered by an angry mob of anti-abolitionists, Philips delivered an emotional defense. His speech was so profound that people recognized him from that point onward as one of the best speakers of his time.

Once he established himself as a great speaker, Philips continued to work with Garrison at *The Liberator*. Garrison wrote as Philips spoke, and together they cried out against slavery, demanding abolition.

### **Legacy of the Abolitionists**

Both Weld and Philips played prominent roles in the abolitionist movement. Each of them saw the opportunity to make an important difference, and history justified their decisions. With their help and thousands others, slavery was eventually abolished in the United States during the Civil War.

After the war, Weld retired to his home in New Jersey. Philips, however, kept working. After Garrison resigned from his role as the president of the American Anti-Slavery Society, Philips succeeded him, and continued fighting for the rights of African Americans. Even though they had been emancipated, they were still not seen as equals in American society and were treated poorly by many people.

### **Women Speak Out for Equal Rights**

Many individuals contributed to the growth of the women's movement in the first half of the 19th century. Four notable examples are Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Margaret Fuller. Below is a brief biographical sketch of each woman, along with an excerpt from her words. What is each woman's message?

### **Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906)**

Susan B. Anthony was born in Adams, Massachusetts. As a young woman, her Quaker family encouraged her work in the fight against slavery. She was angry, though, that she was not allowed to speak at any public meetings.

Anthony believed that women would not be able to improve society until they could vote. She dedicated her life to the cause of women's rights. Working with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she organized the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869

When Anthony tried to vote in 1872, she was arrested and fined \$100. Her death in 1906 came before women achieved the right to vote. In 1979, the United States government honored her life's work by making her the first woman to be featured on an American coin—the Susan B. Anthony silver dollar.

In a speech Anthony delivered in cities across the country, "Women Want Bread, Not the Ballot," she commented:

*. . . It is said women do not need the ballot for their protection because they are supported by men. Statistics show that there are 3,000,000 women in this nation supporting themselves. In the crowded cities of the East they are compelled [forced by circumstances] to work in shops, stores and factories for the merest pittance [small sum]. In New York alone, there are over 50,000 of these women receiving less than fifty cents a day. . . .*



### **Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902)**

Born to a wealthy New York family, Elizabeth Cady Stanton had the best education a woman could get at the time. As a young woman, she married an abolitionist. At the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, Stanton and other women were forced to sit upstairs behind a screen. There she met another delegate, Lucretia Mott, and the two banded together to fight for women's rights.

Stanton and Mott organized the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. Stanton also helped Susan B. Anthony found the National Woman Suffrage Union. Like Anthony, she did not live to see women vote. She died in 1902, nearly two decades before the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted women the right to vote, was approved.

In her speech "Solitude of Self," delivered to the House Judiciary Committee in 1892, Stanton told them:

*. . . if we consider her [woman] as a citizen, as a member of a great nation, she must have the same rights as all other members, according to the fundamental principles of our Government. . . .*

*. . .*

*. . . The strongest reason why we ask for woman a voice in the government under which she lives; in the religion she is asked to believe; equality in social life, where she is the chief factor; a place in the trades and professions, where she may earn her bread, is because of her birthright to self-sovereignty [self-rule]; because, as an individual, she must rely on herself. . . .*

### **Lucretia Mott (1793-1880)**

Lucretia Mott was born in Nantucket, Massachusetts. As a child she attended a coeducational Quaker school. In adulthood, she worked with her husband in the abolitionist movement. She refused to buy cotton cloth or cane sugar, products that were made by slave labor.

Like Stanton, Mott realized the need to work for women's rights when she was prevented from participating in the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. She helped Stanton organize the convention at Seneca Falls in 1848. She spent her life speaking on topics of social reform: abolition, women's rights, temperance, and world peace. In 1866 Mott became the first president of the Equal Rights Association, a group committed to African American and woman suffrage. She was active in such causes up to the time of her death at age 87.

In a letter to Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1855, Mott wrote:

*. . . Thou wilt [will] have hard work to prove the intellectual equality of Woman with man—facts are so against such an assumption, in the present stage of woman's developement. We need not however admit inferiority, even tho' we may not be able to prove equality. . . .*

### **Margaret Fuller (1810-1850)**

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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Margaret Fuller was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She could not attend Harvard, which was at that time a school for men only. But she was well educated in classic and modern literature by her father. Fuller became one of the first professional women journalists in the United States. She wrote mostly about social issues, such as the treatment of women prisoners and the insane. In her most important work, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), she discussed the unequal treatment of women and offered suggestions for improvement. Fuller was only 40 when she died tragically in a shipwreck.

In her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Fuller wrote:

. . . It should be remarked that, as the principle of liberty is better understood, and more nobly interpreted, a broader protest is made in behalf of Woman. As men become aware that few men have had a fair chance, they are inclined to say that no women have had a fair chance . . .

. . .

. . . What Woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern [achieve understanding], as a soul to live freely and unimpeded [not controlled], to unfold such powers as were given her when we left our common home. . . .

- 
- "Women Want Bread, Not the Ballot," speech delivered repeatedly by Susan B. Anthony, 1870–80.

Entire Selection:

[http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/resources/index.html?body=bread\\_not\\_ballot.html](http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/resources/index.html?body=bread_not_ballot.html)

Accessed March, 2017

- "Solitude of Self": Speech to the House Judiciary Committee by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, February 18, 1892

Entire Selection: <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/the-solitude-of-self-speech-by-ecs-to-the-house-judiciary-committee-speech-text/>

Accessed March, 2017

- Letter to Elizabeth Cady Stanton by Lucretia Mott, Philadelphia, March 16, 1855.

Entire Selection: <http://www.mott.pomona.edu/transcription.htm>

Accessed March, 2017

- "Frailty, they name is WOMAN; The Earth waits for her Queen." in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* by Margaret Fuller, 1845, pp. 24, 38.

Entire Selection: <http://books.google.com/books?id=VjApAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA15&lpg>

Accessed March, 2017

## **The Declaration of Sentiments Adopted by the Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York (1848)**

In 1848, a women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York. Two American abolitionists named Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the meeting. They did so because they had both attended an anti-slavery convention in London years earlier, but women were not allowed to be on the convention floor. The injustice of this restriction simply because they were women drove Mott and Stanton to found the women's rights movement in the United States.

People assembled at the Wesleyan Chapel to discuss what an announcement in the local paper called "the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of women." Men were invited to attend, but they were asked to wait until the second day of the convention so that women could meet in private on the first day.

On July 19, Elizabeth Cady Stanton gave a speech to the 200 women who had come to the chapel. Stanton had written a document over the past several days before the convention. It was intentionally similar to the Declaration of Independence, with a preamble that stated, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights . . ." Stanton's draft then listed in detail several injustices that she felt women had been forced to endure in the United States. Her words also urged American women to become organized so that they could fight for their rights.

Someone proposed a rereading, and as they listened again to the words, paragraph by paragraph, they made some changes. They decided not to take action until the second day, when the men were present. On the morning of July 20, after reading the minutes of the previous days events, Stanton read the edited version. It was adopted by a unanimous vote.

Below is the document that Elizabeth Cady Stanton as it was read and adopted on the second day of the convention in 1848. It is also known as the "Declaration of Sentiments and Grievances."

**“Declaration of Sentiments” as approved at Seneca  
Falls Convention  
July 20, 1848**

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given; as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.

He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in Church as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation,—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

Firmly relying upon the final triumph of the Right and the True, we do this day affix our signatures to this declaration.

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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Signed: Lucretia Mott, Harriet Cady Eaton , Margaret Pryor, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eunice Newton Foote, Mary Ann McClintock, Margaret Schooley, Martha C. Wright, Jane C. Hunt, Amy Post, Catharine F. Stebbins, Mary Ann Frink, Lydia Mount, Delia Mathews, Catharine C. Paine, Elizabeth W. McClintock, Malvina Seymour, Phebe Mosher, Catharine Shaw, Deborah Scott, Sarah Hallowell, Mary McClintock, Mary Gilbert, Sophrone Taylor, Cynthia Davis, Hannah Plant, Lucy Jones, Sarah Whitney, Mary H. Hallowell, Elizabeth Conklin, Sally Pitcher, Mary Conklin, Susan Quinn, Mary S. Mirror, Phebe King, Julia Ann Drake, Charlotte Woodward, Martha Underhill, Dorothy Mathews, Eunice Barker, Sarah R. Woods, Lydia Gild, Sarah Hoffman, Elizabeth Leslie, Martha Ridley, Rachel D. Bonnel , Betsey Tewksbury, Rhoda Palmer, Margaret Jenkins, Cynthia Fuller, Mary Martin, P. A. Culvert , Susan R. Doty, Rebecca Race, Sarah A. Mosher, Mary E. Vail, Lucy Spalding, Lavinia Latham, Sarah Smith, Eliza Martin, Maria E. Wilbur, Elizabeth D. Smith, Caroline Barker, Ann Porter, Experience Gibbs, Antoinette E. Segur, Hannah J. Latham, Sarah Sisson.

The following are the names of the gentlemen present in favor of the movement: Richard P. Hunt, Samuel D. Tillman, Justin Williams, Elisha Foote, Frederick Douglass, Henry Seymour, Henry W. Seymour, David Spalding, William G. Barker, Elias J. Doty, John Jones, William S. Dell, James Mott, William Burroughs, Robert Smallbridge, Jacob Mathews, Charles L. Hoskins, Thomas McClintock, Saron Phillips, Jacob P. Chamberlain, Jonathan Metcalf, Nathan J. Milliken, S.E. Woodworth, Edward F. Underhill, George W. Pryor, Joel D. Bunker, Isaac Van Tassel, Thomas Dell, E. W. Capron, Stephen Shear, Henry Hatley, Azaliah Schooley.

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- "Declaration of Sentiments" by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as revised and adopted by the Seneca Falls Convention, 1848.

Entire Selection: <http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/seneca.html>

Accessed March, 2017

## Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Address on Women's Rights (1848)

Along with presenting the "Declaration of Sentiments" at the 1848 Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, Elizabeth Cady Stanton delivered snippets of an address on women's rights.

Scholars believe this speech was later fully developed at and presented in September 1848 at Waterloo following the Convention and secondly, on October 6 to the Congregational Friends at Farmington. Writing to her daughters, Stanton called it her "first speech."

Fellow suffragist Lucretia Mott was at both conventions and referred to Stanton's speech in September at Waterloo as "thy maiden speech."

Stanton returned to the address as a source for countless articles and but lost her original manuscript for several years. She recovered it in 1866.

The address appealed to listeners with wit, emotion, and religion. She also spoke about the rights men have that should be given to women as well, like the right to vote and owning property.

Stanton would continue to give different forms of this speech many times in her lifetime while speaking up for women's rights.

Below is one version of the speech that has been attributed as her Seneca Falls Keynote Address.

*We have met here today to discuss our rights and wrongs, civil and political, and not, as some have supposed, to go into the detail of social life alone. We do not propose to petition the legislature to make our husbands just, generous, and courteous, to seat every man at the head of a cradle, and to clothe every woman in male attire.*

*None of these points, however important they may be considered by leading men, will be touched in this convention. As to their costume, the gentlemen need feel no fear of our imitating that, for we think it in violation of every principle of taste, beauty, and dignity; notwithstanding all the contempt cast upon our loose, flowing garments, we still admire the graceful folds, and consider our costume*

## AN ERA OF REFORM

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*far more artistic than theirs. Many of the nobler sex seem to agree with us in this opinion, for the bishops, priests, judges, barristers, and lord mayors of the first nation on the globe, and the Pope of Rome, with his cardinals, too, all wear the loose flowing robes, thus tacitly acknowledging that the male attire is neither dignified nor imposing.*

*No, we shall not molest you in your philosophical experiments with stocks, pants, high-heeled boots, and Russian belts. Yours be the glory to discover, by personal experience, how long the kneecap can resist the terrible strapping down which you impose, in how short time the well-developed muscles of the throat can be reduced to mere threads by the constant pressure of the stock, how high the heel of a boot must be to make a short man tall, and how tight the Russian belt may be drawn and yet have wind enough left to sustain life.*

*But we are assembled to protest against a form of government existing without the consent of the governed—to declare our right to be free as man is free, to be represented in the government which we are taxed to support, to have such disgraceful laws as give man the power to chastise and imprison his wife, to take the wages which she earns, the property which she inherits, and, in case of separation, the children of her love; laws which make her the mere dependent on his bounty. It is to protest against such unjust laws as these that we are assembled today, and to have them, if possible, forever erased from our statute books, deeming them a shame and a disgrace to a Christian republic in the nineteenth century. We have met to uplift woman's fallen divinity upon an even pedestal with man's. And, strange as it may seem to many, we now demand our right to vote according to the declaration of the government under which we live.*

*This right no one pretends to deny. We need not prove ourselves equal to Daniel Webster to enjoy this privilege, for the ignorant Irishman in the ditch has all the civil rights he has. We need not prove our muscular power equal to this same Irishman to enjoy this privilege, for the most tiny, weak, ill-shaped stripling of twenty-one has all the civil rights of the Irishman. We have no objection to discuss the question of equality, for we feel that the weight of argument lies wholly with us, but we wish the question of equality kept distinct from the question of rights, for the proof of the one does not determine the truth of the other. All white men in this country have the same rights, however they may differ in*

*mind, body, or estate.*

*The right is ours. The question now is: how shall we get possession of what rightfully belongs to us? We should not feel so sorely grieved if no man who had not attained the full stature of a Webster, Clay, Van Buren, or Gerrit Smith could claim the right of the elective franchise. But to have drunkards, idiots, horse-racing, rum-selling rowdies, ignorant foreigners, and silly boys fully recognized, while we ourselves are thrust out from all the rights that belong to citizens, it is too grossly insulting to the dignity of woman to be longer quietly submitted to.*

*The right is ours. Have it, we must. Use it, we will. The pens, the tongues, the fortunes, the indomitable wills of many women are already pledged to secure this right. The great truth that no just government can be formed without the consent of the governed we shall echo and re-echo in the ears of the unjust judge, until by continual coming we shall weary him.*

*There seems now to be a kind of moral stagnation in our midst. Philanthropists have done their utmost to rouse the nation to a sense of its sins. War, slavery, drunkenness, licentiousness, gluttony, have been dragged naked before the people, and all their abominations and deformities fully brought to light, yet with idiotic laugh we hug those monsters to our breasts and rush on to destruction. Our churches are multiplying on all sides, our missionary societies, Sunday schools, and prayer meetings and innumerable charitable and reform organizations are all in operation, but still the tide of vice is swelling, and threatens the destruction of everything, and the battlements of righteousness are weak against the raging elements of sin and death.*

*Verily, the world waits the coming of some new element, some purifying power, some spirit of mercy and love. The voice of woman has been silenced in the state, the church, and the home, but man cannot fulfill his destiny alone, he cannot redeem his race unaided. There are deep and tender chords of sympathy and love in the hearts of the downfallen and oppressed that woman can touch more skillfully than man.*

*The world has never yet seen a truly great and virtuous nation, because in the degradation of woman the very fountains of life are poisoned at their source. It is vain to look for silver and gold from mines of copper*

*and lead.*

*It is the wise mother that has the wise son. So long as your women are slaves you may throw your colleges and churches to the winds. You can't have scholars and saints so long as your mothers are ground to powder between the upper and nether millstone of tyranny and lust. How seldom, now, is a father's pride gratified, his fond hopes realized, in the budding genius of his son!*

*The wife is degraded, made the mere creature of caprice, and the foolish son is heaviness to his heart. Truly are the sins of the fathers visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation. God, in His wisdom, has so linked the whole human family together that any violence done at one end of the chain is felt throughout its length, and here, too, is the law of restoration, as in woman all have fallen, so in her elevation shall the race be recreated.*

*"Voices" were the visitors and advisers of Joan of Arc. Do not "voices" come to us daily from the haunts of poverty, sorrow, degradation, and despair, already too long unheeded. Now is the time for the women of this country, if they would save our free institutions, to defend the right, to buckle on the armor that can best resist the keenest weapons of the enemy—contempt and ridicule. The same religious enthusiasm that nerved Joan of Arc to her work nerves us to ours. In every generation God calls some men and women for the utterance of truth, a heroic action, and our work today is the fulfilling of what has long since been foretold by the Prophet—Joel 2:28:*

*"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy."*

*We do not expect our path will be strewn with the flowers of popular applause, but over the thorns of bigotry and prejudice will be our way, and on our banners will beat the dark storm clouds of opposition from those who have entrenched themselves behind the stormy bulwarks of custom and authority, and who have fortified their position by every means, holy and unholy. But we will steadfastly abide the result. Unmoved we will bear it aloft. Undauntedly we will unfurl it to the gale, for we know that the storm cannot rend from it a shred, that the electric flash will but more clearly show to us the glorious words*

*inscribed upon it, "Equality of Rights."*

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- Address by Elizabeth Cady Stanton on Woman's Rights, September, 1848, p.3.

Entire Selection: <http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/ecswoman1.html>

Accessed March, 2017

## **Sojourner Truth: One Speech, Two Versions**

On May 29, 1851, Sojourner Truth spoke at the Woman's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. Truth was a former enslaved woman who became a preacher after she escaped. At the convention, she advocated for abolition and women's rights. The speech she gave became famous and widely known as the "Ain't I a Woman?" speech.

However, scholars disagree about what Truth actually said at the convention. She may have never even said the phrase "Ain't I a Woman?" at all! Several versions of Truth's speech were published. The most well-known version of the speech was published in 1863, 12 years after Truth gave the speech.

The first version of the speech was published on June 21, 1851 in the *Anti-Slavery Bugle*. This version was recorded by abolitionist Marius Robinson, a friend of Truth's.

### **Sojourner Truth's Speech in the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* June 21, 1851 Transcribed by Marius Robinson**

I want to say a few words about this matter. I am a woman's rights. I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that? I have heard much about the sexes being equal; I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much too, if I can get it. I am as strong as any man that is now. As for

intellect, all I can say is, if women have a pint and man a quart—why can't she have her little pint full? You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear we will take too much, for we cant take more than our pint'll hold. The poor men seem to be all in confusion, and dont know what to do. Why children, if you have woman's rights, give it to her and you will feel better. You will have your own rights, and they wont be so much trouble. I cant read, but I can hear. I have heard the bible and have learned that Eve caused man to sin. Well if woman upset the world, do give her a chance to set it right side up again. The Lady has spoken about Jesus, how he never spurned woman from him, and she was right. When Lazarus died, Mary and Martha came to him with faith and love and besought him to raise their brother. And Jesus wept—and Lazarus came forth. And how came Jesus into the world? Through God who created him and woman who bore him. Man, where is your part? But the women are coming up blessed be God and a few of the men are coming up with them. But man is in a tight place, the poor slave is on him, woman is coming on him, and he is surely between—a hawk and a buzzard.

The more popular version of Sojourner Truth's speech was published in the *New York Independent* in 1863. The transcription was written by Frances Gage, a poet and activist. In this version of the speech, Gage provides details about the crowd and how the speech was received.

**Sojourner Truth's Speech in the *New York Independent*  
April 23, 1863  
Transcribed by Frances Gage**

"Wall, chilern, whar dar is so much racket dar must be somethin' out o' kilter. I tink dat 'twixt de niggers of de Souf and de womin at de Norf, all talkin' 'bout rights, de white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all dis here talkin' 'bout?

"Dat man ober dar say dat womin needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted ober ditches, and to hab de best place everywhar. Nobody

eber helps me into carriages, or ober mud-puddles, or gibs me any best place!" And raising herself to her full height, and her voice to a pitch like rolling thunder, she asked. "And a'n't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! (and she bared her right arm to the shoulder, showing her tremendous muscular power). I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And a'n't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear de lash as well! And a'n't, I a woman? I have borne thirteen chilern, and seen 'em mos' all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And a'n't I a woman?"

"Den dey talks 'bout dis ting in de head; what dis dey call it?" ("Intellect," whispered some one near.) "Dat's it, honey. What's dat got to do wid womin's rights or nigger's rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yourn holds a quart, wouldn't ye be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?" And she pointed her significant finger, and sent a keen glance at the minister who had made the argument. The cheering was long and loud.

"Den dat little man in black dar, he say women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wan't a woman! Whar did your Christ come from?" Rolling thunder couldn't have stilled that crowd, as did those deep, wonderful tones, as she stood there with outstretched arms and eyes of fire. Raising her voice still louder, she repeated, "Whar did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothin' to do wid Him." Oh, what a rebuke that was to that little man.

Turning again to another objector, she took up the defense of Mother Eve. I can not follow her through it all. It was pointed, and witty, and solemn; eliciting at almost every sentence deafening applause; and she ended by asserting: "If de fust woman God ever made was strong enough to turn de world upside down all alone, dese women togedder (and she glanced her eye over the platform) ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now dey is asking to do it, de men better let 'em." Long-continued cheering greeted this. "'Bleeged to ye for hearin' on me, and now ole Sojourner han't got nothin' more to say.